



Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

VOL. II NO. 1

FEBRUARY, 1986

Meeting Notice

The next two meetings are February 24 and March 24 at 8:00 PM at the museum. No special program has been planned, but come for the business session. If a program is organized later, an announcement will be made in the press.

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Slide Show Available

The slide show "Middletown: Then and Now" is available for presentation to public groups. It is based on the museum exhibit, containing many of the same views, but also numerous others. The additions have been made possible through the generosity of lenders or donors of Township pictures. The Society still seeks access to old pictures for the making of slides, for its reference collection and for inclusion in the traveling picture exhibit.

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Indian Exhibit Extended

The exhibit "New Jersey Indians and Their Times" has been extended through Sunday, March 30, 1986. In addition, many of the "Middletown: Then and Now" pictures have been re-hung in another room. Thus, two museum rooms are now open and both exhibits can be seen on the same visit.

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Croydon Hall's Herald

The original painting of the Croydon Hall Academy coat of arms was donated to Society by Esther Cavanagh. This wall plaque was painted by Ronald L. Combs, a heraldic artist, from Upper Montclair, N.J.. We also have his letter describing the work. The story behind its organization and symbols give an insight into heraldic art.

The coat of arms consists of the shield, the essential part, and two frequent, but non-essential components. They are the crest, an object placed on the shield, and a motto, which technically may not be part of the arms, but which is often linked with them. Heraldry has its own language. A complete description would fill this newsletter, so we focus on terms in the Croydon Hall Academy arms.



Heraldic art uses five colors and two metals. The colors are gules, red; azure, blue; vert, green; purpure, purple; sable, black. The metals are argent, silver and or, gold. The description of a herald often mentions the metal field last. Gold field heralds ending with "or" have left some puzzled readers asking "or, what?". Each point of the shield has a name. Ours

is divided in halves, the dexter and sinister sides, or the right and left sides respectively of the bearer.

Experts do not agree on the origin of heraldry. It depends, in part, what one considers arms. Some trace their origin to the time of Noah. An origin for a practical use would be the Middle Ages use of heraldic arms on the battlefield. They were quite useful for identification when illiteracy was wide-spread. Arms became a mark of social distinction. Royalty controlled their granting. England established a College of Arms in 1484 to govern use of arms.

The sinister half was borrowed from the present Great Seal of the State of New Jersey. The New Jersey seal, adopted in 1776, recognized the importance of agriculture not only with the three ploughs, but by including on its sinister side a representation of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture. The field is blue; the plows their natural color.

The dexter half was taken from the arms of the Borough of Croydon, England. It is divided into quarters by double red intersecting lines or "parted and fretted Gules". The first quarter contains three Cornish Choughs proper. This bird is black with red beak and legs. It is considered the king of crows and is a noble bearing of antiquity. "Proper" refers to illustrating in the objects natural color. The second quarter is "as many Cross patee fitchee Sable". Patee is a cross broadened at the extremities and narrow at the center, while a fitchee cross is pointed, an aid to early Christians who placed them in the ground during worship. Their color is black. The third quarter is "a Cross flory Azure charged with three Besant fesswise". The cross flory is decorated with flowers on each end which are circumflex and turning down. It is blue. The besants are pieces of gold without any impression. They were the current coin of old Byzantium and were supposed to have been introduced in arms by those in the holy wars. Fesswise is simply horizontally. The fourth is "a fesse embattled of the third in the fourth". A fesse is often merely a horizontal field. In this quarter, the fesse object may represent a belt of honor given as a reward for army service.

The crest was in honor of Dr. John M. Carr, founder of Croydon Hall Academy. Its origin is a seal on a letter regarding the settling of Plymouth and Rhode Island colonies in 1664, signed by Robert Carr in Boston.

The motto translates as "knowledge and character". It was a favorite of Dr. Carr, who instilled these qualities in his students. The Academy colors were argent and gules.

The painting is not now on exhibit, but it may be seen at the museum on request. The Society will exhibit its memorabilia relating to our building as the collection grows. We shall be writing more about the school and would appreciate hearing from those with memories to share. We also seek a 1974 "Column", the Academy's yearbook, the only one missing from our collection.

New Members

Paul T. Brady	- Middletown
Mr & Mrs William Broadhurst	- Middletown
Doranne Brown	- Leonardo
Mrs R. Gorsuch	- Chapel Hill
Thelma K. Jelliffe	- Middletown
Patricia McDermott	- Middletown
Mr & Mrs John McGahan	- Belford
Frank Romandetta	- Middletown
Mr & Mrs John A. St. Peter	- Oceanport
Mary Lou Strong	- Locust
Betsy Wyant-Regan	- Belford

Please Pay Dues Promptly

Enclosed is a dues remittance slip. Please ignore if you joined in September or later in 1985 (names are in the December and this newsletter), have paid recently or if you are an organization with whom we exchange newsletters. Prompt response from other members will be appreciated.

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Free Subscribers

We mail newsletters to those we think may be interested in the Society. If you are, joining to help defray the cost of the newsletter is appreciated. There is no obligation with membership, other than annual dues. There is also no obligation if you are sent free copies. We hope you like the newsletter and we are glad to spread our message to a wider audience.

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Help Wanted

No pay; flexible hours; receive satisfaction of helping Society and promoting Middletown history.

ACTIVE MEMBERS - Come to meetings, ascertain or suggest your interest and see if it can be worked into a Society program.

CURATORIAL ASSISTANT - Help determine how future exhibits should be displayed; develop plans for care and storage of collections.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT - Collect, prepare and sort the clippings and photographs that will form the largest part of our library-in-the-making; prepare catalog cards.

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR - Keep the press informed of meetings and Society activities.

REGISTER WATCHER - The help of an every day reader of the "Daily Register" is needed for the clipping of articles with an historic interest.

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A Reflector of Merit

The Society has received five copies of "The Reflector", a magazine-style newspaper once issued by the students of Middletown Township High School. They give us a view of education in the Township in the early twenties. We have a run from June, 1920 through June, 1921. They were donated by Frank and Eva Gleason.

The school newspaper was founded in May, 1913 as the "Interlude". It lived for one year, but reappeared in 1916 as the "Reflector". Publication appears to have been suspended in 1919, with the 1920 issues a widely hailed revival. The magazine was a mixture of news, literary work and humor. The June issue was a precursor of the school's yearbook.

The dates and themes of the school year's four issues were November, "Fall Number", February, "Alumni Issue", April, "Athletic Issue" and June, "Commencement Number". The "Reflector" for the school year 1920-21 numbered 36, 40, 52 and 62 pages respectively. All issues were long on sports news. The Middletown teams were not particularly successful, but strong emphasis was placed on sportsmanship.

The humor can be dismissed as sophomoric. Students then laughed at exchanges such as these: Teacher; "I want the room quiet", Student, "The room isn't making any noise". Student in writing class (which was taught then) "Teach me to make i's"; Teacher, "No, you are too young". Teacher; "J., correct this sentence. 'Our teacher am in sight'"; J., "Our teacher am a sight".

The 44 page June 1920 "Commencement Issue" pictured 23 seniors. It utilized a yearbook format followed in Middletown for many years, listing home section, nickname, quotation, activities and plans. One outstanding graduate was the Honorable Theodore J. Labreque, an outstanding debater and captain of the team that won the Rutgers Interscholastic Debating Banner. Debating was quite important and extensively followed then. The Banner winning debate on the evening of April 16, 1920 drew over 900 to the school auditorium, the largest number it ever held.

This "Reflector" included a class history. An intolerant act was noted, the smashing of busts of Goethe and Schiller on Armistice Day in 1918. A student recalled recently a healthier memory of youthful exuberance at the end of the war. The nearby grounds of Board of Education President Melvin A. Rice (now the Croydon Hall property) was off limits to students. However, to celebrate the war's end, the students paraded up the long driveway pelting one another with fallen, rotten apples. (Trivia buffs - was that Middletown schools first food fight?)

S. G. Winans, the supervising principal, editorialized that service was the key in preparing the "Reflector". Each student was encouraged to aim for service to mankind as brilliant and confidence inspiring as the Chapel Hill light, visible from the school office.

Business Manager David Castelbaum claimed that "Reflector" was one of the largest and best books published by Monmouth County schools, making Leonardo High and its students well known.

Four articles in the November, 1920 Fall Number are particularly revealing about the educational differences then and now.

Parental support for a proposed PTA was urged, as a means for parents and teachers to become better acquainted.

A Library Course was offered to senior girls that year. While few would become librarians, the course was to encourage learning about books. Benefits in business were also expected. Reading was a matter of great substance.

The Opportunity Class was an early effort of special education. Regular courses were given to the extent possible, but work also included an industrial period. Handwork was taught and articles made in such classes were sold to defray cost of lunches and

industrial class materials.

The Fire Squad had important duties. Boy students not only managed fire drills, but developed a fire evacuation plan which the school adopted.

The February 1921 Alumni Issue included the first message from the Township's Board of Education, written by R. A. Bowman. He noted that although Middletown Township was said to rank high educationally, the Board aimed to be first. Mr. Bowman outlined their policies including approval of consolidation of schools, free transportation of pupils, departmentalization of work in the upper grades and a focus on individual needs of pupils.

Everett Alexander described his 52 day trip as a seaman on a vacation trip to South America. They had a good time in Rio where prohibition was unknown, made stops for coal and to load coffee in Santos and ended with a stop in quarantine before docking in New York.

Student activities included a successful athletic fair fund raiser and the Red Cross. The "Reflector" noted every senior joined. Student government was only in the proposal stage.

Home economics was an important course. Students gained experience by cooking and serving teachers and other adults. Two breakfast menus included baked apples with whipped cream, oatmeal, lamb chops and french fried potatoes for one and pineapple and cherries, cream of wheat and breaded veal chops for another. There was no mention of fund raisers for breakfast.

The April, 1921 Athletic Issue editorialized on clean sportsmanship, the value of physical training in Middletown Township and, indicating the type of town we were then, "Athletics in the Rural Schools".

"School Nurse" described the responsibilities of Miss Scott, who was also attendance officer. She visited each township school every week. Once a week she inspected children for cleanliness. If a child was out of school for longer than one day, Miss Scott visited the home to find out why. If the child was ill, Miss Scott had a duty to see that proper care was administered.

The girls basketball team told of its special handicap. They played under both boys and girls rules which created "too much of a strain on the girls who comprise the team". Girls rules featured a sixth player, the side-center.

The June, 1921 issue was of similar format to a June, 1920 issue. Thirty-one seniors were pictured, an increase of eight. Two juniors carried the literary effort, Theodore O. Butterfass with an 88 line poem on youthful idealistic strivings, and Henry Douglass with a story on his trip to the Volcano of Kilauea on Hawaii.

Memories of the year included a closing of school due to a smallpox scare and the class trip. It was to New York, going on the steamer "Albertina" with the return on the railroad.

Another reminder of the differences in the times was the news from the grammar grades, which noted that this would be the last year of school for some eighth graders.

The "Reflector" underwent a radical change in the next school year, turning into a two page newspaper. The seniors published a yearbook simply titled "M.T.H.S. 1922 Yearbook". The format was similar to the commencement "Reflector", as was the 1923 yearbook, newly titled "The Odrancoel".

The magazine-style "Reflector" carried advertisements. A review of advertisers may be a trip down memory lane for some readers. They included Labreque's three stores at Campbells Junction, Brown's Grocery, Leonardo, Runyon's General Store, Belford, Bridle & Latham, Navesink Florists, Kraemer's Grocery, Belford, Quackenbush & Leonard Builders, Inc. Leonardo, Robert Banfield, Electrical Contractor, Leonardo, plus many from nearby towns.

Students in the twenties did not study computers or media, so had greater time for the three "R's". This article is an illustrator of contrasts, not a nostalgic look back at the "good old days". They were not as good in many respects. We praise the written work of the students then. We hope our students today have every modern educational advantage, but that the importance of reading and writing not be overlooked.

Edward E. Meyer

Elmer E. Meyer, 73, a member of the Society since 1985, died December 7, 1985. Mr. Meyer lived in Middletown Township before moving to Atlantic Highlands 23 years ago. He was an active local historian and geneologist and wrote on both subjects. Mr. Meyer wrote the Atlantic Highlands Historical Society's first newsletter, a role he filled for several years and published a Pierson family geneological newsletter up to the time of his death.

Mr. Meyer was a lender to the Society's "Then and Now" exhibit. He was a moving spirit in matters historical and will be missed.

Thanks

The Society thanks the following for their generous donations:

ELIZABETH H. BALDWIN - for a number of local clippings collected by her sister and Society member, Florence Brainard.

JULIUS COPPOLA and the COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COUNCIL - for a small collection of slides of historic properties.

MRS. EARL DE VESTY - for an historic newspaper and a "Stone Church" card.

FRANK AND EVA GLEASON - for a pair of 17" high brass candlesticks formerly owned by Melvin A. Rice and a collection of "ODRANOEL"s and "Reflector" magazines from the 1920's.

JUNE TRUEX HOFFMIRE - for a large, framed photo portrait of General William S. Truex.

TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLETOWN - for four municipal documents, the Master Plan,

General Ordinances, Planning and Development Regulations and the 1986 Reorganization Day Program.

MRS. THOMAS MORFORD, SR. - for a collection of 1890's photographs of several Township scenes, including some rarely seen.

STANLEY SAWICKI - for a spike from the Jersey Central Traction Co's trolley line at Campbells Junction and a glass insulator.

TOM'S OF MIDDLETOWN JEWELERS - for engraving of donation plaques.

Beers Atlas

The 1873 Monmouth County Atlas, originally published by Beers, Comstock and Cline, has been newly reprinted by Gerald Ceres of Holmdel. The price of the soft-bound edition is \$20.00. The atlas is available from the Society at its museum.

This is the first atlas of Monmouth County. It followed the 1872 Beers New Jersey Atlas and was issued at a great time of map publication. Beers also published several other New Jersey county atlases, as well as counties in other states. These atlases were issued near or prior to the publication of many county histories and are part of a great movement of counties discovering their heritage and identities following the Civil War.

Middletown Township is prominently featured on two double page maps plus smaller plans for the Middletown Village, Navesink, Lincroft (then Leedsville) and Port Monmouth - New Monmouth sections. It is an important work and will make a handsome addition to your library.



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.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PER CALENDAR YR.

Individual — \$5.00
Family — \$10.00

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