



Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

VOL. III NO. 2

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New Slide Shows

"Monmouth County Place Names" made its debut at the Keyport Historical Society on April 6 and will be shown again at the Shrewsbury Historical Society on May 21, 8:00 PM, at their museum on the southwest corner of Sycamore Avenue and Route 35. It outlines the process of place name research.

A Part II of "Middletown: Then and Now" is progressing. Most of the older pictures are gathered one or two at a time, often from snapshots or post cards. Slides and copy prints are made from originals, which are returned if the owners want them. Additional views are needed. Please call Randy Gabrielan at 671-2645, or write the Society, if you can help.

New Members

for 1986

Anthony Cabelo	New Monmouth
Richard Weiner	Brielle, N.J.
John G. Wood	Red Hill

for 1987

Joseph and Marie Anania	Middletown
John and Bette Bates	Middletown
David and Pauline Boyd	Leonardo
Bonnie Brower	Middletown
Jane Denton	Tinton Falls, NJ
Mary Ann Dziezyc	Eatontown, NJ
Julia Dodd	River Plaza
John Gallo	Lincroft
Margaret Gunkel	Oak Hill
Ramon Maxson	Locust
George and Mary Alice Moss	Rumson, N.J.
Gregory Orr	Leonardo
Edwin Phillips	Toms River, NJ
Louis and Jean Schlaufman	Vero Beach, FL
Richard Silverton	Matawan, NJ
Elizabeth Tindall	Colts Neck, NJ



A Study of a Historic House

The Township of Middletown hired an architect to make a historical structure report on the Whitlock-Seabrook-Wilson House, popularly known as the "Spy House". Short and Ford, historic project specialists, issued their findings in late 1986. The partial summary here is intended to give wider circulation to the commendable project.

The building is owned by the Township. The house is the subject of numerous legends, including the incorrect one that was a center of Revolutionary War spying activities. "Spying", or observation of enemy naval movements, was done from Garrets Hill, now part of the Navy's Earle Chapel Hill facility. The report's purpose is to document and illustrate the buildings original and later appearance, document present condition, provide a detailed architectural description as part of the building's permanent archival record, and to identify conservation and restoration needs and priorities. The three methods used were examination of older and current pictures, historical records, mostly from primary sources, and on-site physical examination.

The findings indicated that the western section is the oldest. It is on the left of this drawing by Charles Detwiler, which was not part of the study. It projects the appearance after the last of three sections (on the right) was added, but prior to the late 19th century addition of a second story by Reverend Wilson in the middle section. Evidence based on settlement patterns and the movements of Thomas Whitlock, the house's first owner, support a date of no earlier than 1686. Short and Ford indicate that parts of the building are structurally fragile, that interior finishes are deteriorated due to age and weather (noticeable after a short visit by any casual observer) and that inappropriate elements have been added over the years compromising architectural integrity. They recommend that this important building be preserved and restored in a historically appropriate manner. They also note that archaeological potential of the site merits consideration of such work when opportunity arises.

The oldest part of the house is attributed to Thomas Whitlock. He was likely English and settled with his English wife at Gravesend, in the Dutch colony of New Netherland, now part of Brooklyn, by 1654. Whitlock and others visited what became the Monmouth bay shore in 1663, seeking suitable settlement sites. The Dutch colony fell

to England in 1664, facilitating the expansion of English settlements. Whitlock arrived in 1664. His first residence cannot be conclusively determined, but the Short and Ford report and a preponderance of evidence indicate it was in Middletown village. The earliest evidence of Whitlock ownership of bay shore property is 1676, when the East Jersey Proprietors recognized his rights to eight parcels of land. Whitlock had dual residency in Monmouth County and Westchester County, New York from 1678 until 1686. He likely built his bay shore house no earlier than 1686, a date backed by various secondary sources and reinforced by a 1687 road return that recorded the formal opening of a road connecting Middletown village and the salt meadows of Shoal Harbor. Whitlock sold the house to his step-son Daniel Seabrook in 1696, but apparently lived there until his death in 1703.

The record reveals little about Daniel Seabrook after 1696. By 1717 the property was controlled by James Seabrook, either the son or brother of Daniel. The house was owned by a succession of Seabrooks until 1855. Seabrooks were active in municipal government and were prominent Township citizens. Thomas Seabrook was a major and later a lieutenant colonel in the New Jersey militia during the revolution and served in the New Jersey General Assembly from 1779 to 1781. The site's strategic location saw military activity during the war. However, documentary evidence is scant and the spying stories are unfounded, fanciful fiction. Shoal Harbor was, however, the landing site of British troops in April 1779, who made well-documented local raids.

Seabrooks were active and prospered in maritime trading. One, Thomas Seabrook, drowned in 1740 while a ship passenger on Long Island Sound. Another, Henry Seabrook, left the Middletown home in 1839, settling in Keyport, then part of Middletown Township, where he was a respected member of the Baptist Church. There the Rev. William V. Wilson was appointed pastor in 1841. Wilson married into the Seabrook family in 1842. His bride was Lydia, Henry Seabrook's younger sister. Business ties would also develop. Wilson had a long successful career in transportation and the church. He purchased the house in 1855 from the Seabrook estate and lived there most of his life. Wilson died in 1908 and willed the house to a daughter, Martha S. Griggs. The building was later a boarding house and a tavern. It was vacant for some years prior to purchase by the Township.

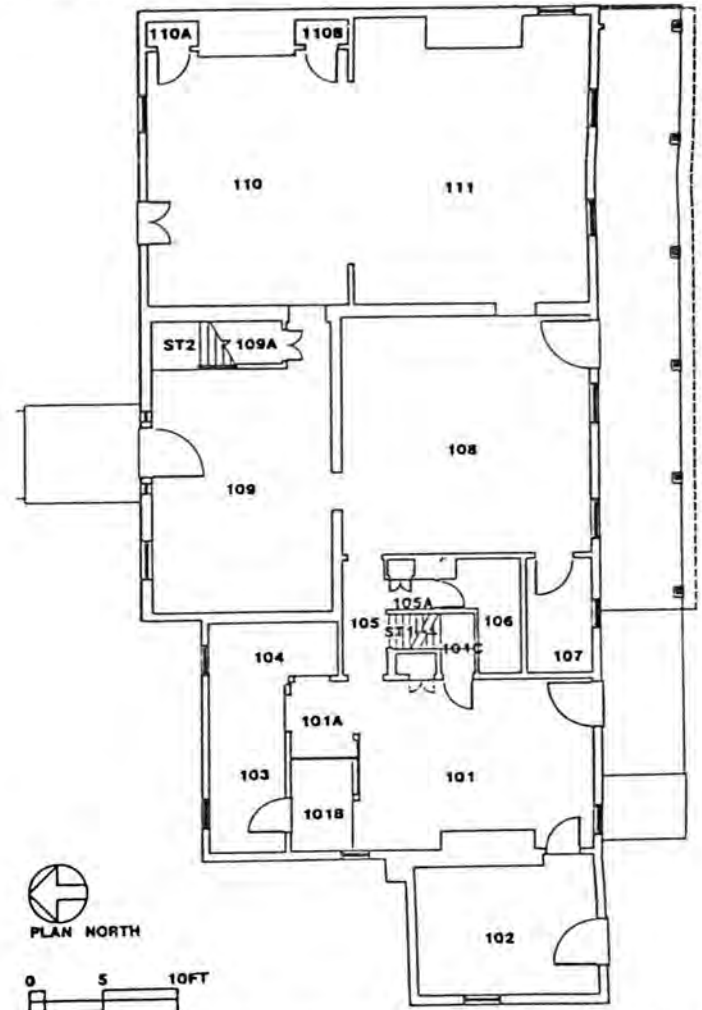
The architectural investigation employed several techniques including physical investigation, sketching and measuring, preparation of room survey sheets and photography, the latter two methods providing a graphic record of site observations and examination of material samples. The investigation was not conclusive that Whitlock built in the 17th century the oldest part of the house standing today.

The two main sections are a two story flat roofed section on the west and a two and one-half story gable roofed section on the east. The former is the original house and is on the left of our pre-final expansion sketch. A flat roofed porch extends from the western section. A lean-to shed is attached to the western end. The house is clapboard covered with a series of varied size windows.

The floor plans and physical description provide an excellent aid to understanding the building. Only the first floor is reproduced here and in a much reduced size. The following descriptions are very brief. Room 101, extensively altered, is the main room of the 17th century house. A section of the south wall's lath and plaster have been removed exposing rough timber, adzed posts and mud filling. 101A and 101B are appendages of and are similar to 101. The floor of 101B is open, exposing a pit of hand made bricks. Room 102 is a lean-to, now occupied by a modern kitchen. Alterations obscure many details. It is difficult to ascertain if this is part of the original house. If not, it is very old. Room 103 is a greatly altered part of the original house. It had been subdivided and was a kitchen steam room during the building's restaurant days. It is thought that Room 104, connected with 103, once opened to Room 109 of the building's second section. 105 is a passageway between first and second sections and contains stairs. It has been severely modified

with sloping ceiling and floor due either to settlement or alterations. Rooms 106 and 107 were once a single room used for storage during inn days. They are now public rest rooms with little original material left.

Parts of 105, 106 and 107 may have been part of the building's second phase. Alterations have obscured the original plan. Volume 2 of the report examines evidence in detail and projects the section as being a Seabrook 18th century construction rather than a Whitlock 17th century addition. Room 108 is now the main entry. The room is largely intact with the rear or north wall once having been an exterior wall. It contains a Dutch door with the two sections fastened together and a small fireplace. Room 109 is a rear entry added after 108. It contains two levels of flooring and stairs to the second floor. Different size stair risers indicate a likely prior, different floor configuration. There had been a fireplace on the west wall, with the entire wall once removed to open the space to 104. 109A is a closet.



The eastern section is estimated to have been built in phases in the latter part of the 18th century. The second story addition likely was made no earlier than 1798. Rooms 110 and 111 are a double parlor now used for meeting and exhibit space. The north wall of 110 has plaster removed to show timber frame construction with infilled brick nogging. Both rooms have fireplaces on their east walls, with neither their surrounds nor mantles original. Closets are next to the fire place in 110 and alcoves in 111. The C.1800 construction is dated by flooring nails, fireplace openings and floor joists. Later modifications leave little original finishes.

The center section was raised to two full stories by Rev. Wilson, perhaps in two stages, late in the 19th century. The historical record of the later additions are better recorded, through a painting and a photograph.

The report outlines needed work with relative standards of need. The Township is progressing with repairs.

The report concludes that although the house has been altered often and was victim to questionable efforts at restoration, it is well-suited to its role as a museum for history of the bay shore.

The Township is to be commended for seeking the best professional guidance to help resolve these often clouded historical and preservation issues.

The Lenape Revisited

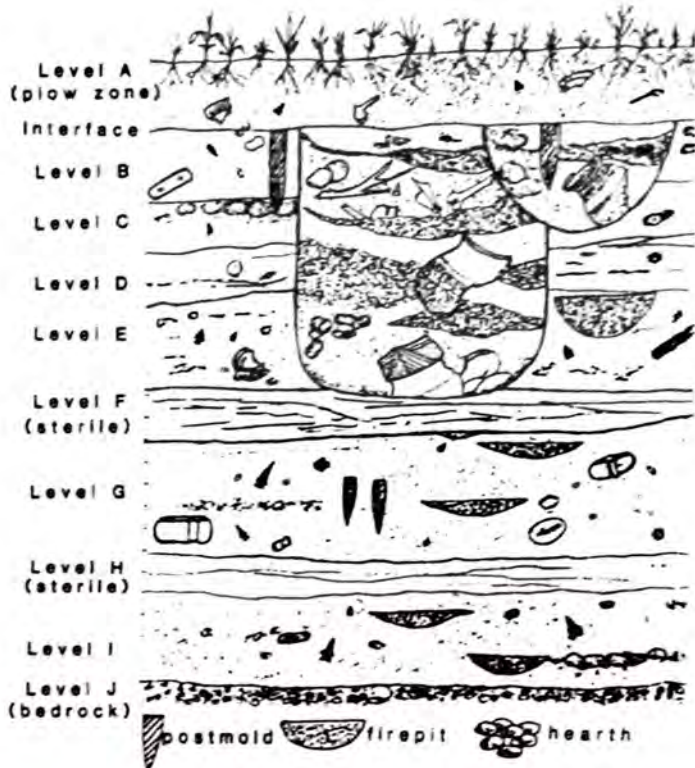
Herbert C. Kraft, New Jersey's foremost archaeologist and researcher of the Lenape Indian, recently issued his "The Lenape - Archaeology, History and Ethnography", a 303 page book. His slide talk "The Lenape - Correcting the Myths and Misinformation" and the book give a deeper, more accurate view of the Lenape and his times. It is particularly recommended to viewers of the Society's Indian exhibit of 1985-6.

Studying the Indian is made difficult by their having no written language. In addition, most early accounts of him are by European observers, who were prejudiced against our natives. The visitors thought them to be savage. Dr. Kraft used four sources of evidence, including writings of early Europeans, attempting to sort through the bias. A second was reports of missionaries, who were often free of explorer-settler style prejudice. The Moravians were close observers and one, David Zeisberger, spent sixty years among the Indians and recorded many details of their everyday life. Indian remembrances was a third source, but the most insightful evidence was obtained by archaeological searching. Archaeology is useful only for evidence that can survive in the soil. We will never learn more about their physical appearance and dress, Indian songs and dances, mythology and Indian interpersonal relationships, but an enormous body of knowledge was taken from the ground.

Basic misconceptions about the Lenape include their name, tribal or group organization, and travel patterns. Lenape is a word of the Unami dialect with various meanings including "common", "ordinary" or "real" people. It does not mean "original people". Lenni Lenape is redundant. "Lenape" is sufficient and is used throughout the book. The Lenape lived in nearly all of New Jersey, northern Delaware, Pennsylvania west to the Susquehanna River, southeast New York to the Kingston area and on western Long Island. Historical maps of the Indian period usually divide Lenape lands among three tribes, each with an animal symbol. They are false recreations and the names are not known in early Lenape use.

The entire Lenape settled area is called Lenapehoking meaning land of the Lenape. This territory is wooded, a major factor in shaping how the Lenape lived. Environmental and cultural differences make the Lenape as different from Plains Indians, such as the Cheyenne and Sioux, and from Pueblo Indians, such as Hopi and Zuni, as are major European ethnic groups different from one another. Dr. Kraft describes two major diversions of Lenapes, grouped along settlement and spoken language lines. A northern group, or Munsee, in New Jersey above the Raritan, Manhattan and in southern New York spoke a Munsee dialect of the Lenape language. They included separate bands with distinct identities including the Canarsee, Hackensack, Rockaway and Warranawankongs. They also included the Navesink. A southern group, or Unamis, settled near or in territory influenced by the Delaware River including central and southern New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware. These bands spoke a Unami dialect, had different customs and included the Brandywine, Naraticonck and Schuylkill.

The names Munsee and Unami do not have long Lenape use. Munsee first appeared in colonial Pennsylvania records in 1727. There is disagreement on its meaning. Munsee is traditionally defined as "people of the stony country", but some believe its origin means "on the island", originating from Indians living north of the Delaware Water Gap. Unami, meaning "person from down river" first appeared in 1757. Its reference is south of the Raritan River, Pennsylvania north to Easton and northern Delaware. A third name was mis-used for a New Jersey



Idealized stratigraphic profile of an archaeological site. The plow zone (level A) has been disturbed by centuries of plowing; historic objects are mixed with prehistoric artifacts, and tops of features are obliterated. The plow sole (interface) represents the contact between the disturbed upper portion and the undisturbed subsoil levels. Later features, such as postmolds and refuse pits, sometimes intrude into earlier levels, thereby disturbing the context of the more ancient deposits. Each layer (levels B-I) becomes increasingly older until bedrock or the bottom is reached (level J). Sterile layers (levels F and H) caused by flooding or wind deposition sometimes help to separate periods of occupation.

Reprinted by permission, Herbert C. Kraft

group, Unalachtigo. It first appeared in 1769-1773 to identify Lenapes living in or near Ohio.

All Indian names are not of traditional origin. Schuylkill is Dutch. The Lenapes are also known as the Delaware Indians. Delaware stems from an Englishman, Sir Thomas West, the third Lord De La Warre. Sir Samuel Argall named the bay for Sir Thomas, who was also governor of Virginia colony, in 1610. The name Delaware was later applied to the natives of the wide surrounding area.

Archaeology requires undisturbed sites, which were found on both sides of the Delaware, particularly in Warren County, New Jersey. Much is learned from human remains. The soil also tells about food, housing and life styles. The evidence indicates that life was difficult and death early.

Lenape society was structured along family lines. Lineage was followed through the maternal line. The Lenape took the pragmatic view that one could definitely ascertain the identity of a mother; knowledge of the father was not always definite. The Lenapes married early, the females at perhaps, thirteen or fourteen, and the males around seventeen - nineteen. A short life expectancy made early marriage a near necessity if one expected to see his children mature. The Lenape had a division of responsibilities by sex. The female was highly respected and owned the family home, despite the male having built it. She had a major food procurement role, probably obtaining a majority of it through cultivating crops and gathering wild growths. The male, however, brought in the protein through arduous hunting. Marriage was informal and divorce easy. The woman owned the home and she could let the husband know it was over between them by leaving his possessions outside the house. He could simply walk away from home and marriage. Indian life was based on mutual need, so one thought carefully before accepting early style "no fault" divorce.

Proper archaeological excavation requires a careful removal of small levels of soil. The site is eliminated in the study, making photographs and measurements the record of the project. A different tale may be told by each layer of earth. This process can reveal the evolution of a society. Different farming, hunting and food preparation implements trace changing lifestyles. Early Indians hunted or gathered wild food; cultivation of crops evolved later. Early meat meals were prepared by roasting or baking. Pottery was first used around 1000 BC, which expanded cooking possibilities to include stews and broths. Many axes are domestic tools rather than weapons of war. Farm implements required sharp edges. Many were discarded after becoming smooth. Their development helps trace agricultural history. Food included corn, clams, elk and fish. The bones of the latter are readily identifiable. Bones of the elk are often found having been processed for the extraction of marrow. Intact pottery is rare with only three examples found in New Jersey. Lenape pottery is round-bottomed, requiring three or more to support themselves in a standing position by their tops. New Jersey pottery was never painted. Ornamentation was by geometric patterns impressed in the clay by sticks or bones.

The region around the Highlands of the Navesink has traditionally thought to be a destination for seasonal distant travel by Delaware River area Lenapes. Two historic Indian routes are claimed to have ended in what became Middletown Township. Part of the Minisink Trail became Highway 35. Much of the Burlington Path is County Route 537. Both ended around the Navesink River. Shellfish were thought to be the Indians' object. However, fresh water clams were abundant in the Delaware. There is no evidence of widespread summer migration for fish. The Lenape were probably no more inclined to visit our shores for clams than would a Middletownite travel to Philadelphia for fish dinner at bookbinders when so many fine seafood restaurants dot our river and bay.

The Lenape developed an early trade relationship with the Europeans. It was based on mutual need of materials plentiful to the other. The Lenape found strange the Europeans' great desire for fur, which could be had merely for the hunting and preparation. The whites were delighted to trade commercially available products such as metal cooking tools and vessels and beads. Archaeological evidence has given revealing insight into the latter. Indians were thought developers of wampum made from shells. Few beads were found among early Indians. Wampum was developed after Europeans introduced the metal drill. The Dutch and English were not permitted to coin money and needed a medium of exchange acceptable to European and Indian. An elaborate system of wampum was developed, complete with cheating, stealing from graves, counterfeiting and an attempt to import European manufactured wampum unacceptable to the Lenapes. Glass beads and other common European ornamentation were popular with the Lenape.

European trade practice created a social change in Lenape life. Indian groups were governed by communal authority. Europeans were accustomed to dealing with a leader. One was appointed to fill this trade role and from it the position of chief evolved.

Interaction with Europeans and their different values brought the Lenape dispersal from their land, disease and death. Indians did not hold land exclusively, believing it was there for the use and enrichment of all. The In-

dians regarded the price of goods Europeans offered for their land as a goodwill gesture or as payment for usage rights. The resultant removal of the Lenape from his traditional land nearly obliterated their culture from New Jersey. Indians had always died young. Dr. Kraft estimates a 35% mortality rate by age 5. The Indians had no knowledge for treating minor ailments. Child birth took a toll. He rarely finds Indians surviving past the age of 35 or 40, contrary to inaccurate claims of longevity by early European writers. Disease introduced by the Europeans decimated the Lenape. Small pox was the greatest scourge, with measles and diphtheria also claiming many. Indians had a liking for alcohol beyond their ability to handle it, with deadly result. The Lenape population at the time of European settlement is estimated at only eight to ten thousand, a number readily consumed by the twin ravages of disease and dispersal.

Archaeology is also revealing about burial practice. The Lenape placed the body in a flexed shape, ostensibly returning it to a fetal position. The pragmatic Indians were actually making a smaller bundle for burial. Straight positioning came after exposure to the white man. Indians were respectful of the dead and were especially concerned for their spiritual well-being. They were not fearful of the corpse and would re-bury some who died away from home. They were buried at the site of death, but after decomposition of a year or so, the bones would be stacked and shipped home for re-burial.

The book is important to all area local historians. It is not only a detailed description of our native settlers; it redefines the basic knowledge needed for an understanding of them. Herbert C. Kraft's "The Lenape" may be ordered from the Publications Department, New Jersey Historical Society, 230 Bway, Newark, New Jersey 07104. The cost is \$24.95 plus \$1.75 postage and handling. MTHS has not planned to sell the book, but could change its decision if enough are willing to pre-pay an order.

Meeting Notice

The April meeting is the 27th, while we meet in May on the 25th, both 4th Mondays. The time is 8:00 at the Museum.

Dues are due.. Are yours paid?

Dues are the key source of Society revenue. We welcome new members. There is no obligation with membership, but we also welcome new participants in Society activities. Dues are only \$5 and \$10. We are pleased to distribute sample newsletters and hope they attract those willing to offer their support.

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.