

Thistle



Vol. XXV

April 1996



For those members, residents and friends who regularly inquire as to the progress on the Short Hills railroad station, this recent photo reveals that we are still a bit mired in construction materials, but the character of the walls, wood molding, bench and beams, tile walls and terrazzo floors is being carefully and tastefully restored and preserved.

Message From the President...

We are very proud of and excited about our "new" Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society building. If you saw the building 'before', you will appreciate the works-in-progress photograph. To keep you up-to-date on the work thus far:

- The heating system is in
- The electric wiring is in
- The wood floors are in
- The rough plumbing is in
- The ceilings have been replaced
- The window glass has been replaced
- The plaster walls have been repaired
- The bench has been repaired

Your financial contributions have made this possible. Thank you for that and for your interest and enthusiasm!

Lynne



Our Treasures

A quote from the March 1940 Woman's Club of Millburn Bulletin seems as appropriate today in light of the society's latest project:

"Truly it is necessary that we have a...house of our own. Then we would know more fully of our possessions...I did not count all 'our treasures' in the last Bulletin."

Since we will shortly have a house of our own, we, too, will know more fully of our treasures. We have also been extremely fortunate to be recently given many "treasures" to house in the station museum. We are always delighted to house, preserve, and use for reference, bits and pieces of Millburn-Short Hills history. If you have items that you would like to see shared and/or cared for, please call Lynne Ranieri at 379-5032.

Our sincerest thanks to the following people for enriching the lives of all residents by their donations to the town's attic and for scouring theirs:

- From the children of Catherine Jennette Hartshorn Campbell, a box of Hartshorn real estate records
- From the F. Irwin Smith ("Smitty") family, an MHS scrapbook, maps, "The Development of a Community" book, and much paper memorabilia
- From relatives of the Voorhees family (longtime local residents) and the estate executrix, MHS memorabilia, newspaper articles of local interest, Woman's Club bulletins, numerous photos of the area, 1940s SH cub scout uniform (and a photo of the original owner in it!), genealogical charts (that were used immediately to assist a researcher) and much more paper memorabilia
- From Karen Eastman, help in researching early real estate transactions
- From Robert Reinhardt, papers on the establishment of the historical society and districts
- From Gail Engelschjon, salvage and donation of innumerable bits of town history otherwise headed for the trash, including: very early, labeled Hartshorn window shade rollers, financial records from the Millburn Electric Company, early MHS yearbooks, local advertising items, books from and about Millburn Twp, magazines, early real estate information, and much more
- From Joan and Bob Daeschler, an early bottle found on their property

If something was presented to the society recently and is not included in this list, please contact us (or call Lynne at the number above) and remind us in order that we may acknowledge it and clarify the records. Virtually every donation listed above has already been used to assist either the society or an inquirer in research on homes or families in the township, or in researching the establishment of and history of businesses and the development of downtown. These generous efforts have greatly enhanced our archives and have provided the foundation for many suggestions for future exhibitions. Please consider calling the historical society to contribute to the archives

"Quick, Ida, call the police! I heard an aeroplane!"

(The following excerpts are taken from the 1916 Millburn police blotter)

Oct. 26, 1916 2:30 pm. John C. Milkie of Morris Town was arrested by Officer Nagel for speeding, making 20 miles an hour on Millburn Ave. He was fined \$10.55 by Judge McGee. He paid his fine. No. of drivers license: 20509. No. of auto license: 638 Manufacture.

Oct. 27, 1916 2:25 pm. Special Officer Russell Lyons arrested Mr. Dickerson of Mount Tabor for speeding 32 miles an hour through the center of the Town. No. of auto license: 53242 N.J. He did not appear at the appointed hour.

Nov. 4, 1916 A call from Chief Coaney's house about a man begging. Later the servant said he first asked for work. Officer Nagel arrested him. He said he was looking for work. I let him go on his promise to leave town. Instead of leaving town, he went back to the Chief's house, annoying the servant. He was arrested by Officer Nagel. After appearing before the Judge, was given 30 days in co. jail.

Nov. 5, 1916 A telephone call from Chief Coaney's house that a man was begging at their place. Officer Nagel went down in auto and arrested a man who had a card saying he was deaf and dumb and a half-breed Indian and had no friends. Also his father was killed in the Spanish-American War. It was signed George Deal. He was fined \$2.00 by Judge McGee. He paid.

Nov. 5, 1916 7:15 pm. Received a report from Edward Lonergan that someone had stolen 20 chickens from his mother's place on Spring St. They were taken sometime during Nov. 4-5 he thinks.

Nov 13, 1916 Mattie Pansano of Church St was arrested by Special Officer Cockner for driving his horse and wagon without a light after he ran into J.E. Woodruff's carriage, doing some damage. The Capt ordered him to appear at 7 pm, Nov 14 for a hearing. He was fined \$2.50 + .55 costs. He paid.

Nov 17, 1916 About 1:30 pm, Mrs. C Van Inwegen of 454 Wyoming Ave, Wyoming reported her set of black lynx furs missing from her back stoop. They were hanging out to air. She seen 2 boys in plumbing wagons, out in front of her house, with some old newspapers in it. Shortly after they left, she went downstairs and discovered her furs gone. Then she called up the police. Officer Nagel & Capt Brodesser started out to hunt for the boys. Not being able to find them, they reported the case to Maplewood police, also to SO Village police. Officer Patrick Skiffington of that dept later caught them in the village of SO and arrested them. They were turned over to us and taken to Millburn and locked up. The next morning they were given a hearing and held for the Grand Jury. The missing furs were found in their possession by the SO Village police. They denied stealing the furs. They said they bought them from a man with a gray mustache for 50¢, with two rugs & some rags. Value of furs \$40.

Nov 17, 1916 Dr Campbell of Short Hills phoned in and said there was an intoxicated man on the tennis court, Short Hills, flourishing a gun. I took Fred Taylor with me and went up in the auto and found Wm McCauley on Short Hills Ave intoxicated, with a revolver in his overcoat pocket. It was not loaded. He also had about 24 gun shells in his pockets. I placed him under arrest. He admitted his guilt at the hearing and was held in \$200 bail for Grand Jury action.

Jan 3, 1916 7:20 pm. Mr Nash of Old Short Hills reported that a man giving the name of BE William of Scotch Plains called at their home when Mrs Nash was away and said she ordered 6 bushels of potatoes. The servants got money enough together, \$13.50, and gave it to him. When Mrs Nash got home she said she had not ordered any potatoes.

Jan 9, 1916 11 am. Dominic Cicigliano of Newark was arrested by Officer Nagel & Capt Brodesser in Brantwood on Hobart Ave, charged with buying junk without a license. After appearing before Judge McGee, was fined \$25.00. The fine was paid.

Feb 7, 1916 3 am. Officer Wrotchford reported that a man thought to be a burglar at E.C. Wardens was a nephew who was drunk. He went in the cellar about 2 am.

Aug 29, 1917 6 pm. Sophia F----, age 24 yrs, a servant living at King Irving house, complained that she was in the family way and Joseph S---- was the cause of it. I sent her to Dr Campbell who said he could not tell for sure until another month had passed. At 9 pm she called in and said the man was at S.Hills station. I went up and talked to them. He said he was willing to marry the girl right away. They agreed to get married the next night, Aug 30 8pm.

Oct 22, 1917 Went into Short Hills RR station at 10 pm and found 93¢ and a pack of cards in the corner of the station, on a bench. Joseph Miller & Joseph O'Mara had been there together, but denied playing poker. I took the cards and money and told them if anybody was caught playing poker in the RR station, they would be arrested. Mr. Shepherdson was present at the time.

Nov 19, 1917 Mrs Maltby called in and said a peddler called at her home and defrauded her out of 29¢. I picked the men up. Two of them. I told Mrs. Maltby I had them in the police station. She said make them give up the 29¢, give them a reprimand and let them go. She did not want to make a complaint. I done as requested. They were working for Harry Kline. Harry Gomberg, Lewis Rodberg.

Nov 20, 1917 Mrs Harrison called in about a dog that was hanging around her house. It had no home, so I shot it. Capt B

Dec 1, 1917 Bill Moore called up the police station about 12:35 pm and said he was having trouble with an Italian. Moore complained that the Italian called him a German spy. Officer Wright said he did not see or hear anything, so he did not arrest him.

Feb 26, 1918 Mrs Pinnie H---- complained that her husband was not supporting her. On his promise to do better, was paroled after giving his wife \$10.00

Mar 28, 1918 Mr. Dyke, principal of S.Hills High School, complained about a pupil, Mary C----, 14 yrs, writing about Mrs Hutchings, a teacher in the school, on the sidewalk. I ordered the child to appear before the judge

Mar 29, 1918 Mr. Schreiber and Mrs Victor Mapes reports hearing an aeroplane during the night. None of the officers heard it.

James Talcott and Joseph P. Day

Thanks to Thomas J. Collins for submitting this charming early anecdote about one of the town's most prominent residents, Joseph P. Day, whose impressive estate was on Old Short Hills Rd. where the park is now.

The following is taken from pages 101 through 105 of a book titled James Talcott - Merchant by Wm. Hurd Hillyer, published in 1937 by Charles Scribner's Sons. This part of the book deals with Talcott's fabric business in New York City in the late 1800s:

"There were three office boys, one of whom was assigned to Mr. Talcott's personal service. Unusual skill must have been exercised in the selection of these boys, as so many of them turned out to be men of importance in after years. Joseph P. Day was a Talcott office boy in the '80s. Mr. Day, now famous in real estate, has told us what it meant to work for James Talcott:

It was his first job; and, he assures us, it was no sinecure. He used to arise at six o'clock in the morning, open up the store, sweep out, and have everything ready for the clerks when they arrived at half past seven.

One of Joseph P. Day's regular duties was to fetch up a cup of hot water several times a day for the aging head of the woolen department, a chronic sufferer from dyspepsia. Day's predecessor had never been able to hit upon the correct temperature, and the old gentleman used to sputter and complain that the water was too hot. When Joe Day brought it, he seemed to find it just right. One day he asked Joe how he managed to have the water of so uniform a temperature. 'I stick my little finger in to test it,' replied Day. The older man exploded. 'Don't you know that little fingers carry germs? Never do that again!'

For his first year's work, Day was paid the sum of \$100, which figures out to just \$1.92 per week. That was a fair salary for such work at that time. Day stuck to the job, and in three or four years he was getting a salary of \$5 a week. He saw that of all the people in Talcott's employ the salesmen were making the most money. So after he achieved his last raise he got Mr. Talcott's permission to go out and try to sell some goods. Prospective customers laughed at first when they saw this boy come in with samples, just as others had done years before when James Talcott himself had started making his rounds. However, they gave him a few small orders.

In the winter of 1892 there was a bad blizzard. The salesmen thought the weather was too severe for any attempts at selling. One afternoon they were all gathered around the big pot-bellied stove on the main floor. Day, on the contrary, had been out since early morning with his samples. When he came in he was nearly frozen. Mr. Talcott, who had joined the group about the stove, told him to 'come over and thaw out.' 'Well, Joe,' he said, 'it's rather a stormy day for you to be outdoors.' 'Yes, Mr. Talcott, but I always go out on stormy days. I prefer them.' 'Why?' 'Well you see I have no competition on those days. Plenty of time to show samples.'

Mr. Talcott nodded comprehendingly. 'And the answer.....?' 'The answer is, Mr. Talcott, that I have sold forty-three cases of goods.' And Joe showed him his orders.

Mr. Talcott addressed the other salesmen: 'Look here: This boy, Joe Day, goes out and sells all these goods while you fellows sit around. If a boy like Day can sell in this weather, you chaps can. I don't want to see any of you around here tomorrow, blizzard or no blizzard.' And Joe Day was made a junior salesman at \$10 a week.

Years afterwards, when Joseph P. Day had been graduated into the millionaire class in his chosen field, he still considered himself a protégé of Talcott, and habitually went to him for advice.

The Story of Taylor Park

(Many wonderful stories of the history of our township have been found in early editions of The Bulletin of the Woman's Club of Millburn, including this history of Taylor Park. The historical society would greatly appreciate donations of The Bulletin for the archives. If you have some to donate, please call the president, Valerie Bleier at 376-7048 or Lynne Ranieri at 379-5032. We are always happy to pick up donations to the archives, no matter how small.

This story is reprinted from the December 1938 Bulletin and is from an interview with Mr. William E. Summers. The introduction is by Stella J. Voorhees.)



Our First **Honorary Member**

Mrs. John Taylor

Millburn's greatest asset, Taylor Park, was given to the community by Mrs. John Taylor, as a living memorial to her husband, whose great love for flowers, trees, wide green lawns, beautiful views and all natural beauty made such a memorial most fitting.

Mr and Mrs Taylor together had previously given The Neighborhood House, which is still Millburn's leading charitable institution. Quoting from the Millburn Item-The chairman of the Township Committee said in part in accepting the park for the town, "I violate no confidence when I tell you the Township Committee had a little difficulty in calling the park Taylor Park. We wanted it so named, but all through the park negotiations we have been met by one who is inclined to hide her light under a bushel. I doubt if the people of Millburn will ever know the extent of Mrs Taylor's public-spirited generosity. She does not seek our plaudits and the consciousness of a deed well done is her reward."

"If we were located in New England we would be fairly tumbling over our many historical landmarks," said Mr. Wm. E. Summers, well known local authority on Millburn history. "But," he added sadly, "Millburn's policy seems to be to tear down and to obliterate its historical treasures."

As an example of this sacrifice of the old for the new, there was the old Isaac Hand homestead, located on the corner of Millburn Avenue and Lackawanna Place, where the Warner-Quinlan Gas Station now stands. It was a beautiful old home, one story and a half high, dormer windows with almost foot-wide old hand made brick, over two hundred years old. The Hands were among the first settlers and were related to the Whittingham family, Isaac Hand being an uncle of Israel D. Condit, who was grandfather of our Mr. Wm. R. Whittingham.

The story of Taylor Park is one of idealism, long beset with obstacles, but finally to become a dream realized. Be it said at the start that it was the "brain child" of Mr. Summers, though he gives all the credit to two Millburn women, Mrs. Elizabeth Whittingham and Mrs. John Taylor. "Please leave me out. Give all the credit to them. I wish none. It is quite enough for me to sit here in my office and just look at this beautiful park and know that it is a reality."

To begin at the beginning, many, many years back this whole section of Millburn, then known as Vaux Hall, was a part of Springfield. The Canoe Brook section is now Livingston and the countryside called "Turkey" was a part of Springfield in those days, but is now New Providence.

What is now Millburn was called Vaux Hall because the building on Main Street, now occupied by small stores and offices, was so named from Vaux Hall in England. It has a modern brick front covering old lintels, sandstone and hand made brick - but the black lettering on its old front still carries the name of Vaux Hall. Many of us who pass it daily realize that it was the old Comissionary Dept. Headquarters of Parson Caldwell of the "Give 'em Watts" fame, and mentioned in old New Jersey archives. There appears an advertisement by Parson Caldwell, Commisary General of the Continental Army, asking for "bids for supplies to be brought to my office in Vaux Hall by the Bridge." A painting of this original bridge now hangs in our Town Hall. It shows the bridge to be made of wood and located about where the Woolworth Store now stands. The stream probably had already been diverted as it was at about the time when the old mill was built.

General Green's report of the Battle of Springfield also carries this statement. "That Littell's Bridge over the Vaux Hall Road was held by Major Lee's dragoons." This Major Lee being "Light Horse Harry Lee" who said of Washington in his funeral oration the famous words, "First in War, First in Peace, and First in the hearts of his Countrymen."

Littell's Bridge was named for Capt. Eliakim Littell, a second cousin of Washington, who lived out on Hobart Hill (so named for Bishop Hobart who at one time sought to establish the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church on his farm property, but finally established in New York City). Capt. Littell is buried in Springfield Presbyterian Cemetery and his grandfather's will records that he left to his son "one hundred acres adjoining the Newark-Elizabeth line in The---Hills." Short Hills was then always called "The Short Hills." The one word in this old will had been obliterated by age.

Washington had a great many relatives, twenty or thirty in this section, which accounts for his many 'headquarters.' He 'found' himself, not having expense accounts paid for by the Government in those days, and so stayed with his people whenever possible. History records that he stayed with his cousin Capt. Littell in Short Hills often, and with other cousins in Springfield, at the old Richard's homestead. The Richards were related to him through the Amos Clark line, an original 'signer'. The present descendants have a famous old chair which he admired and found most comfortable.

The Washington Inn of Maplewood was owned by Mary Ball, one of his mother's people. Old Doctor Rosé, then the Episcopal rector, used to tease Miss Carrie Whittingham, sister of Wm. R. Whittingham, about living on "Squaw Hill on Vaux Hall Road." Her beautiful old home with its lovely gardens, and old boxwood trees, on Millburn Avenue at the corner of Wyoming Avenue, which is still standing, was the site of the Indian Woman's Campgrounds. To this the squaws were obliged to retreat after having prepared the evening meal for the braves in their camp further down the avenue at what is now our 'Four Corners'.

Mrs. Elizabeth Whittingham, upon the death of her husband, Walton C. Whittingham, brother of Wm. R. Whittingham, became one of the largest landowners in the village, inheriting a full half of what is now South Mountain Estates, and seventy-five percent of the land from Ridgewood Road to Main Street.

There was, however, a part of the South Mountain tract owned by a wise old Irishman named McCabe who realized the value of his property and refused to sell it to Mr. Whittingham.

Then came the Morris County Traction Company who wanted to get the right of way through Millburn. Mr. Whittingham refused to deal with them. Finally, after much stalling, he agreed to give the company a franchise for a fifty-foot road, provided the company would buy McCabe's land and turn it over to him. This was done and Mr. Whittingham then owned nearly ninety percent of the frontage from the Maplewood line to the center.

During the years, the widow had become land-poor and found herself beset with many and constantly rising taxes, because land-court entanglements as well.

Many times she urged her friend and advisor in real estate matters, Mr. Summers, to sell her property. Mr. Summers, whose dream was to save the land in the town center for a park, repeatedly urged her to refuse the offers from various villagers, both Italian and American, to purchase small lots on the avenue for prices ranging around \$100.00 per lot, to be used for small one-storey shops.

The site of the present park and land on the other side of Millburn Avenue, including the site of the old Vaux Hall Inn, recently torn down, was in chancery court for over forty years.

Upon her husband's death, the case Condit vs. Traphagen and Lighthype (Condit being Mr. Whittingham's grandfather from whom he inherited the land) seemed at a standstill. The widow claimed the agreement with Traphagen and Lighthype had been a mortgage and loan, while they claimed it had been a gift.

It was not settled until forty years after Mr. Whittingham's death when the old Condit homestead (later Vaux Hall Inn) was sold and its furnishings auctioned. Mrs. Whittingham purchased, at this auction, an old card table, just as a memento of the grandfather. It was a drop-leaf affair with a small drawer. In this drawer, among old dusty papers, was the agreement with Traphagen and Lighthype, stating that the land was "pledged for a loan."

Even then the litigation was not all settled, as Traphagen had already sold several frontage lots for small stores and had borrowed money from the bank on these holdings.

At about this time taxes took a big jump. Mrs. Whittingham was now being taxed for much of her property at front footage rates instead of on farm-land rates. She informed Mr. Summers that she must sell at any price; she could no longer hold out for the park dream. She sold the corner where the bank now stands, for \$5,000.00. Then, to her Irish seamstress, one Mrs. Splan, she sold the lot where the post office and Building & Loan now stand for \$500.00.

Mr. Summers, in a panic, endeavored to get the township to buy the remaining land. He enlisted the aid of Mr. W.W. Renwick of Short Hills who himself had a "visionary" program for mosquito control which he was urging the township committee to adopt. They succeeded in getting

both these projects on the town ballot, at their own cost. The whole park site was offered the town for \$16,000. Both projects were defeated.

Be it said here that the old Renwick mosquito control program, which was intended to meet the malaria-belt conditions existing here, was in later years adopted by the state, exactly as Mr. Renwick had planned it.

The Morris County Traction Company acquired further franchise rights, widening Main Street, pulling down the pond bank and straightening out the stream bed again. This brings us to the early conditions regarding flood control and here again our present town fathers could learn something from the oldsters, for their flood control program was wise and farsighted and might well meet our present problem.

Again Mr. Summers saw a chance for the park project to get new advertising and support. He joined immediately. The records show (Dec. 15, 1920) "Mr. Wm. E. Summers was appointed a committee of one to interview a landscape architect to make necessary drawings for the formation of a park on the east side of Main Street, south of Millburn Avenue, and report at the next director's meeting."

Mr. Summers consulted his friend Francis Howard, a specialist in New York. He reported "prospects very great." Even so it was hard for the average voter to see a gorgeous park on that public dump and eyesore of weeds and underbrush. The voters again turned down the park project and mosquito control. One of the arguments against the park at the time, made by one of the township's leading politicians, was "the probable cost of policing it."

Mr. W. Fellows Morgan offered two small lots he held, located where Tiger's Store and The National Grocery now stand, for an entrance to the park.

At a subsequent meeting of the board of trade, the president, Mr. Brian T. Philpot, announced that the sale had been consummated - through the Bunnell Brothers, by Mr. Wm. A. Kirk, a new lawyer come to town, for \$40,000 with a commission of five percent, to Mrs. John Taylor, who would donate this property for a park as a memorial to her husband.

Incidentally, Mrs. Taylor was charged \$24,000 more than the original price of \$16,000 and we do not find record of any commission gifts.

As soon as the park was assured and the future land values in Millburn were established, as this beautiful center park did establish them in 1924, the large meadow area of the Whittingham heirs from Maplewood to the center, suddenly became very valuable and desirable homesites.

The property, now South Mountain Estates, was immediately sold to the Stevens Bros. and developed as we see it now, a model village of three hundred or more delightful houses and gardens, adjoining the park on one side and enjoying the gorgeous view of Washington Rock from the other.

It has indeed been a tremendous monument to Mr. Taylor, thanks to the idealism of Mrs. Taylor, who led the way in making monuments not of stone, but of something living.

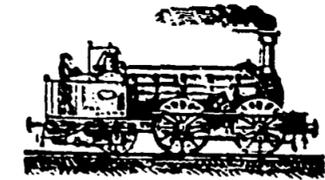
The park has made Millburn center a beauty spot; it has increased land valuations thereby. It has brought desirable people to this community; it has given a place for beauty lovers to enjoy; it has provided a citizenship opportunity for the young children to learn the rules of the game, which after all are the fundamental rules of life. It has met the problem of delinquency; it has provided a meeting place for township community gatherings and a place for organizations...to meet in its recreation shelter house. It has supplied play facilities for young and old, not to mention the paid positions it has created for trained Millburn play directors.

And as time goes on we know it will prove to be ever our greatest asset and a treasure spot for ever newer and finer uses.



Old House Resource Fair

Preservation New Jersey and The National Trust For Historic Preservation are co-sponsoring an "Old House Resource Fair" on Saturday, April 27th (8:30-5:30 pm) at The Hillside School, 54 Orange Rd, Montclair, NJ. Old-house owners may "Ask the Experts" questions about architectural design, roofing, finishes, landscaping, etc. Exhibitors will provide demonstrations and information about products and services for the old house. PNJ will sell a special selection of books on home restoration, preservation and architectural history (no credit cards). For information, call PNJ at (908)442-1100.



Great Progress Has Been Made...

However we still need your contributions to complete the job of restoring our new facility. Exterior doors need to be replaced at the train station, windows need repair and security screens. Display cases, book cases, tables and chairs, as well as other equipment is needed to make this a functioning museum, one that serves Millburn Township.

- ⊖ All contributions will be acknowledged in our upcoming commemorative journal
- ⊖ All contributions are cumulative
- ⊖ All contributions are fully tax-deductible
- ⊖ All contributions are greatly appreciated
- ⊖ **Donations of \$500 and up will be recognized on a permanent plaque at the museum**

If you can help us complete the restoration and make a lasting contribution to the town, please send contributions to (and checks payable to): **The Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society, PO Box 243, Short Hills, NJ 07078**

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