

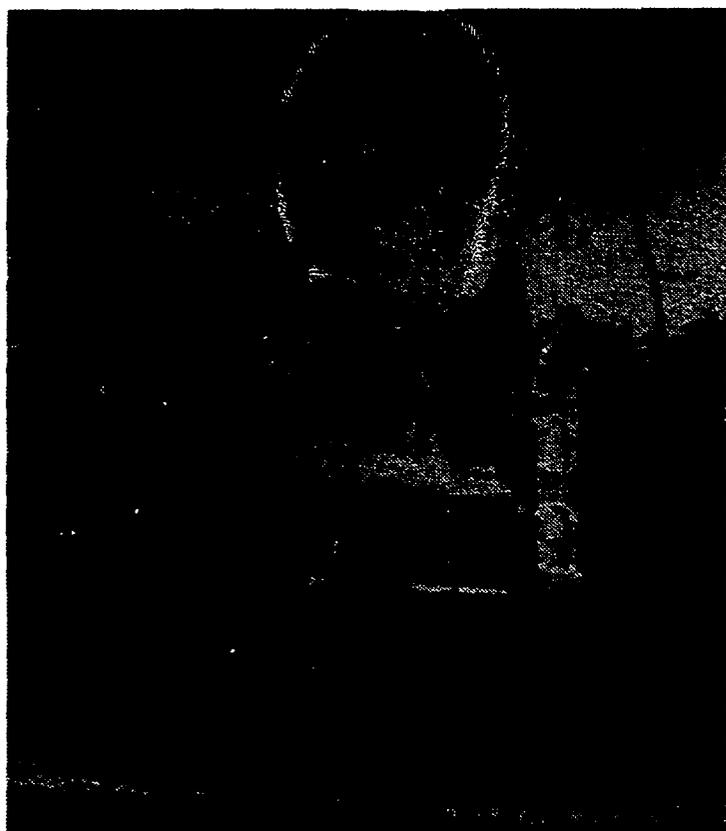
Thistle



Vol. XXVII

December 1999

Opening the Time Capsule



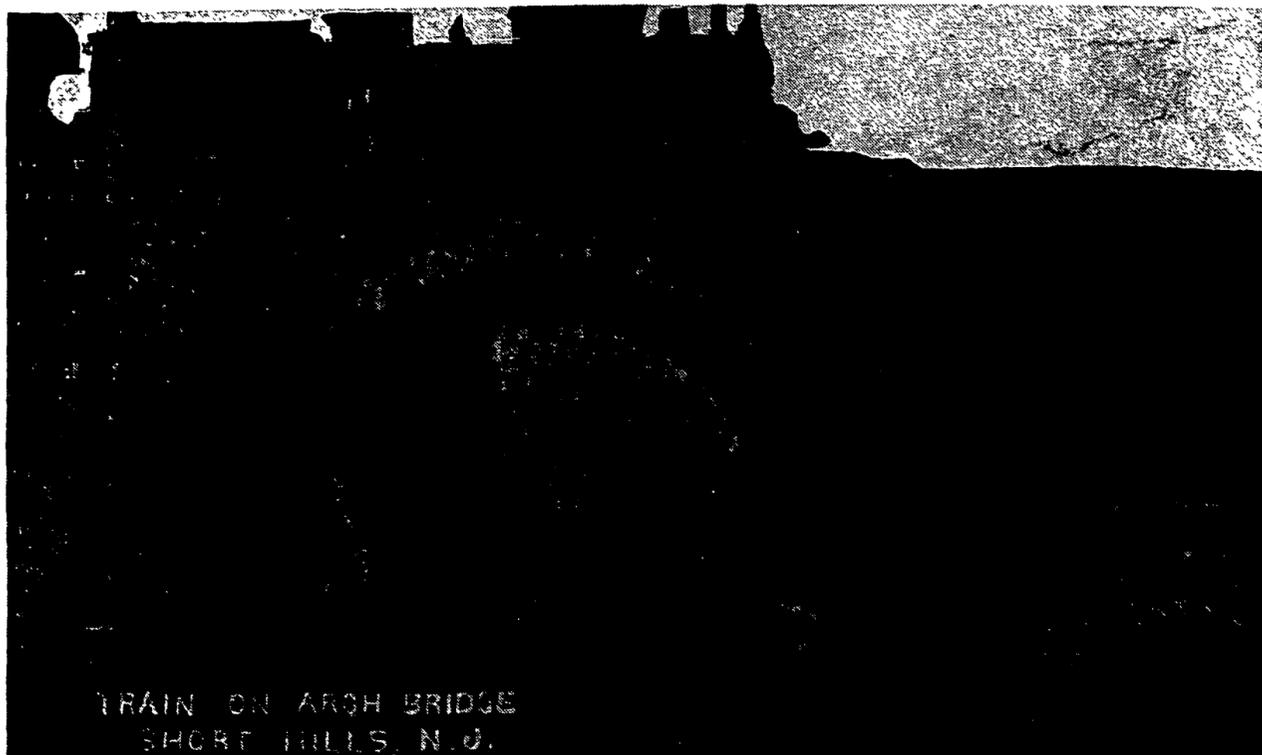
Owen Lampe carefully carried the large, dirty, old, black box from the Millburn library, where it had just been discovered in a closet. Library director Bill Swinson called him to tell him of the discovery, which had been in the closet for a number of years, and Owen immediately retrieved it for the historical society. For an enchanting couple of hours, we gathered around to look at the contents: deeds for the “Canoe Brook Swamp” area, some as old as 1749 (“in the Reign of King George the second”), never-before-seen pictures of Short Hills and Millburn, primarily of “new” homes in Short Hills Park, a history of the Millburn fire department and a brief one of the Wyoming area (see page 5), 1880s editions of the Short Hills News Item, and many more artifacts of our town’s history.

Shortly after the founding of the historical society, John Pritchard, then the township clerk, gave Owen a copy of a letter detailing all these artifacts left at the library after the 1957 Millburn Centennial celebration. Unknown to Owen, they had been left there and forgotten, until just now rediscovered.

The contents of the ancient treasure chest are being preserved and recorded, but will be on display at the museum for the month of January, beginning with

Sun, Jan. 2, 000, from 2-4 pm. Please visit the museum and help us identify the many homes featured in the 1800s photos, such as the one above. Do you recognize this house? It is the red and white "castle" at 37 Highland Avenue, as it was originally built.

Wish You Were Here



At the end of January (tentative date), the historical society will be pleased to present the first of the annual Fredrickson Lectures for the new year, a series of lectures generously underwritten by the Fredrickson Foundation. Please join us at the train station for this first fascinating lecture introducing the historical society's postcard collection. Town historian and former society president Owen Lampe will talk about the post cards as they are projected on the screen.

Many of the post cards are 'real photos' and reveal never-before-seen views of homes and streets in the township. Some cards were reproduced in the 1957 centennial book about Millburn and some will be in the society's newest book about Millburn and Short Hills.

Seating is limited for this lecture, so please call early to make a reservation for what is sure to be a popular event. Please call and leave a message on the answering machine at (973)564-9519. Future lecture topics will include history (NJ and local), genealogy, antiques, etc.

Recent Acquisitions

The society is very grateful to continue to receive donations of artifacts from generous residents and/or members. We are happy to be able to preserve, share and use for reference, these relics of Millburn-Short Hills history.

Our sincerest thanks to the following people for enriching the lives of all residents by their donations of these items since our last newsletter:

- From Gail Engelschjon of (E)Sales, numerous items of Millburn memorabilia, including a 1975 calendar, 1965 Millburnaires record, 1962 MHS yearbook, early Papermill Playhouse programs, 20 Woman's Club bulletins, laundry bag from Mayflower Laundry, A History of Canoe Brook Country Club 1901-1965 hardcover book, and much more
- From Peter Vrahnos, early photos of 1956 A&P fire, of Millburn Coal & Oil truck, 1940s view of Millburn Ave, early interior of store at 339 Millburn Ave, and post cards of Millburn and Springfield
- From Suzanne Geissler Bowles, Two Millburn photos: Millburn Rotary ca. 1961 and 1956 Millburn Centennial Parade
- From Margaret Hornecker, courtesy of Emma Baer, 1937 Millburn Police Dept souvenir ball program, 1967 retirement program for Wm Stoeckle, felt patch from White Oak Ridge chapel youth group, attendance pins for WOR Sunday School
- From Betty Barnard, courtesy of Emma Baer, 1919 map of St. Stephen's cemetery
- From Jack Bausmith, scans of early photos and post cards of Millburn scenes
- From Tom Collins, photo of 1913 Hobart Ave School class and 1915 graduating class of the Short Hills Grammar School
- From James Horn, two historical books: A Glance Back in Time, Private Yankee Doodle
- From Robert M Reed, American Chap Book by Will

- Bradley, early tools
- From Judy Mullins, courtesy of Gail Engelschjon, early photo of "Robin Hood Cottage" at One Nottingham Rd, SH
- From Bernice Luxemburg, aluminum kettle, lidded Dutch oven



- From Bill Caveney, a copy of the deed to the green opposite the museum
- From the estate of Estelle Urquhart, courtesy of Clarence Bair, 1956 Centennial Parade memorabilia, centennial book, Buncher's Hardware yardstick, "The Development of a Community" booklet, and

- "The Telephone - Old and New - In and About Millburn" booklet
- From Dave Siegfried, 1968 MHS Millwheel, hardcover book The Spire on Parsonage Hill
- From Hank Cook, ca. 1880s brown linen young girl's wrapper (casual dress)
- From Robin Reed, Millburn Woman's Club Five Year History
- From Lynne Ranieri, early Millburn Fire Dept badge, From the Roots Up-a Short Hills Garden Club book
- From Owen Lampe, numerous pieces of early ephemera, including a 1958 picture of the former Taylor Park building
- From Ray Ryan, 1966 and 1967 MHS yearbooks
- From Millburn library, large box of photos and deeds from earliest days of Short Hills and turn-of-the-century Millburn
- From Nancy Wyckoff, pictures and postcards which had been collected for many years by Sydney Wyckoff, who was born in Millburn

PLEASE...if your gift was not acknowledged here, contact us at 564-9519.

Once Upon a Time in Wyoming

Among the items in the lost box of treasures, which was found in the library, was a black ledger book with pencilled notes on the earliest days of the Wyoming district. These reminiscences were apparently written by a daughter of one of the early settlers in the area, Mr. James Pirsson. We have transcribed the entire history below:

"Beginning of Wyoming as a Settlement

Land purchased from Ed. Hand and Thos. R. Reeve. An auction held and a band and lots sold at the time of the boom (*Note from editor: "boom" may refer to dynamiting prior to building?*)

The village was laid out in 1872. The land was purchased and boomed by Mr. James Williamson and Mr. James W. Pirsson. There were five houses erected in one of which Mr. Williamson lived. And also his son's family spent their summers with him. His son's name was J. Iurean Aymar Williamson (*Note from editor: "Iurean Aymar" is unclear and may be an incorrect interpretation.*)

The land company did not know what to name the young town. One day a lady who had come to look at property said to Mr. Williamson "Oh! How beautiful! It is a miniature Wyoming", referring no doubt to the famous beautiful Wyoming Valley. So the name Wyoming was adopted.

Mr. Pirsson built a house and lived in it with his family all year around about 1873.

There were wooden sidewalks.

The first lighting was by oil lamps.

There was no town water supply. Wells were used.

Mr. Jas. Pirsson's house had a large copper-lined tank in the attic. Water from the roof, which was slate, ran into the tank and from there into two large brick-lined cisterns in the yard at the back of the house. The water from the cisterns was pumped in the house by a pump in the kitchen and provided water for a toilet on the second floor and a bath room with tub and basin. It was the first house among the early ones to have a bath room, tub toilet and basin with running water.

The drinking water in this house was obtained from a spring across

Wyoming Ave in a piece of woodland on the southwest corner of Wyoming Ave and Cedar St. The spring is still in existence but has been filled in. It still runs underground, crossing Wyoming Ave and keeping lawns damp and green on the east side of Wyoming Ave.

The daughters of Mr. Jas. Pirsson still live in the aforementioned house and well remember going over to the spring to fill a pitcher with the water for drinking purposes. Mrs. Pirsson, Mr. Jas. Pirsson's widow obtained permit No. 1 when the Summit City Water was installed. I do not remember the year that was done, but Summit Water Co could supply that date.

A triangle of land at the junction of Wyoming Ave and the R.R. track was given to the citizens of Wyoming and held in trust by the townspeople. Mr. J.I.A. Williamson was one of the trustees. Mr. Benj. Dearing presented an Am. Flag to the town, a pole was erected in the triangle and Mr. D. raised and dropped the flag every day as long as he lived here.

There was no public school in Wyoming until about 1894 or 5.

Miss Isabella Brown, living on Wyoming Ave in one of the original five houses, had conducted a school in So. Orange for some years, known as the So. Orange Academy. The building which is now turned into apts. is still standing on Academy St, So. Orange.

Miss Brown gave up her school in So. Orange and opened classes in her home about 1891 and conducted them for several years. She was a very fine teacher.

Kate Barnes, niece of Mr. Wm. Emerson, had a private school between the R.R. and Millburn Ave in a little building.

The first little school house in Wyoming was built about ____. Miss Belle Cox was the first teacher. The building, still standing, was on Cypress St (Ed. note: The house is at 119 Cypress St.). It has been made over into a very attractive home and is now occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Isenberg, the noted cellist and his family.

The first church building in Wyoming was begun in 1873 and the plans were presented to the church by my father, Mr. James Pirsson, who was a very well-known architect in New York City, having a number of famous and very fine buildings to his credit in that city. There is no mention of this fact in either of the booklets about the Wyoming Church and I feel that it should be known.

A very interesting cultural activity was carried on in Wyoming for about 20 years, called the Wyoming Literary, Musical and Social Society. A complete novel was written, each chapter of which was written by a different member. It was a most amusing and clever story. There was almost always music, a paper or a skit and a test of some kind

with a prize. Much talent and wit was called into being and the meetings were very entertaining. It was rather remarkable that a society of that nature should be active for 20 years.

The original station in Wyoming, of Delaware, Lackawanna and Western RR, was a private station built by the land company and taken over by the RR. Mr. Badger was the first ticket agent.

A quaint figure in the early days of Wyoming was an old man, with a silvery head of hair, who peddled vegetables. He was very kind to us children and let us ride on the step at the back of his cart and often gave us fruit. The minute his cart and horse came in sight, all the children ran to meet it, crying "Daddy Perrine! Daddy Perrine!"

Another vegetable vendor was a colored man, John Jenkins. He lived in Millburn and had a large family of little Jenkins', all named for boys and girls in Wyoming. He always handed his customers a written list of his wares and I remember 'spinach' was spelled 'spinge'. On Sundays he was the minister of the colored church.

In the early days there were no houses beyond Cedar St, except two little houses on what is now called Myrtle Ave and about where the Wyoming School building is now. Myrtle Ave was nothing more than a lane and ended where the two houses stood. The fields were full of wild flowers in those days. The rare "painted cup" grew abundantly. In a swampy part of the lots on the east side of Wyoming Ave, between Pine St and Elm, I found a lovely specimen of White Fringed Orchis and on the next block, in a similar situation, found Pink Sabbatia and Milk Wort neither of which I have found elsewhere in the town. Right beside the sidewalk paving stones on Wyoming Ave, I found a little plant called "rattle box" (a sensitive plant) and Purple Gerardia, all of which are gone now.

Many times I have heard the mating notes of the woodcock and experienced the thrill of hearing that, one of the rarest and most interesting phases of bird life, both on Wyoming Ave and in the fields above Myrtle Ave, where the Wyoming School stands. After the school house was built and Wyoming Ave was so thickly built up, the birds have gone further back in the country and along White Oak Ridge Road can be heard now."



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PAST PRESIDENT,

EX OFFICIO

Valerie Bleier



The historical society is saddened to learn of the recent deaths of two valued friends and members of the society.

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the families of

Emma Baer

and

Andrew Borzner,

both of whom gave a great deal of their time and talents to our community through their kind efforts on behalf of the society.

Wanted!

The historical society is looking for the following pictures or items for our archives, to house permanently or to copy. If you have any of these, to loan or donate, please call and leave a message at 973-564-9519.

Fandango Mill - interior and exterior
Mayflower Laundry - interior and exterior
Lighthipe Quarry in operation
Old gas stations in town
Former nurseries (Harth's, South Mountain Nurseries, Brecks, etc)
Chubb buildings across from the Mall at Short Hills
Original Commonwealth Water Company buildings
Gas tank (in Maplewood) on golf course and operator's house and control building

The Arch restaurant
The Brook
Bayberry Inn
Alderney Little House

Stores on Ridgewood Road at the Maplewood line
Stores on Millburn Avenue at Wyoming Avenue (such as South Mountain Sweet Shop, which later became Christophers)
Tiger Hardware
Campbell's Drug Store and Meeting Hall
Other early stores in Millburn center
A&P, where Marsh is today
Open air Short Hills Mall pictures

Trolleys on Millburn Avenue
Stop & Go signal at "four corners" in the 1920s

Train wreck in August 1941
Millburn freight yard in operation
Coal chute in Short Hills in operation
Foot bridge over the railroad on Myrtle Street
Past flood pictures, including Floyd
Past fires

Pillared house where the entry to the Commons is today
Any Colonial-era or Victorian-era houses which have been greatly altered (before or after)
Veteran's housing on lower Millburn Avenue
The Alley house on Parsonage Hill Road
The Tichenor house on Taylor Street
Interior and exterior of Joseph P Day estate buildings
Street scenes in South Mountain estates 1920s through 1940s

Old family photos-weddings, local outings, old cars, etc
Mrs. Chalif's dance classes
Early family picnics or outings in South Mountain Reservation

Original plans from noted architects, such as Bernhardt Mueller, Albro and Lindeberg, Marcel Villaneuva, etc
Old deeds
College theses about Millburn or Short Hills

The Book We've Been Waiting For!

The book we've all been waiting for, *Images of America: Millburn-Short Hills*, has been specially printed in a **limited edition hardcover** version for our society members and friends. Only 500 copies of the hardcover edition are available now - the softcover edition is due in March.

If you would like to assure that you have a copy of this popular hardcover edition, before it is sold out, please return the form below, with a check or money order payable to the Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society, as soon as possible.

The book has been printed in England and was originally due here in mid-November. We hope to have taken delivery on the book by the time you receive this newsletter - and in time for your gift-giving at the holiday season.

The book can be shipped to you for an additional \$4.95 per book or they can be picked up at the museum.

If you have any questions, please leave a message at 973-564-9519.

Please send this form to: The Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society
 PO Box 243
 Short Hills, NJ 07078

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

Phone (day) _____

No. of books _____ @ \$25.00 each Subtotal: _____

6% NJ sales tax (\$1.50 per book): _____

Shipping (\$4.95 per book): _____

Total due: _____

PLEASE NOTE: The limited edition hardcover book is SOLD OUT. Delivery of the softcover edition is expected in May 2000

Dues Renewals

If you have not yet renewed your membership in the historical society, please send your check to, and made payable to, the **Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society, PO Box 243, Short Hills, NJ 07078** with the form below.

If you aren't sure if your dues need to be renewed, check your mailing label on this Thistle and note the (approximate) date when we last received your last dues renewal.

Dues Renewal Form

Name _____

Address _____
 (City/State/Zip)

Phone _____

Annual Dues	Museum Restoration
_____ \$15 (Individual)	_____ \$50 (Donor)
_____ \$25 (Family)	_____ \$100 (Sponsor)
_____ \$50 (Patron)	_____ \$250 (Patron)
_____ \$50 (Business)	_____ \$500 (Benefactor)
_____ \$150 (Life)	_____ \$ (Other)



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