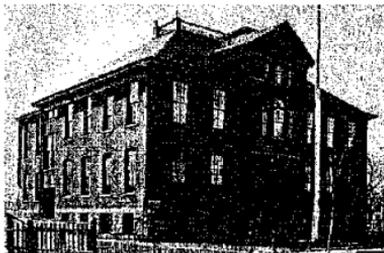


## The Brook Was the Culprit

by Morris (Mike) Donner

**E**arly in 2002, Millburn resident Lou Weinberg stopped in the historical society's museum and requested a copy of a photo of the 1914 graduating class of the Washington School, standing on the steps of their school at what is now Schoolhouse Plaza on Millburn Avenue. He sent the photo to Mike Donner, his son-in-law's uncle, who went to that school many decades ago, and Mike replied with the following delightful recollections:



Washington School.

**T**hanks for the picture of the Millburn elementary school ... I remember it well, even though it is nine decades ago. I did not know any of the names or photos of the 1914 graduating class. Those kids were six years older than I and, at that age bracket, six years is a good piece of time. I am responding to your suggestion of presenting an account of my personal history relative to the Millburn school.

The farm was a partnership between my dad and my Uncle Louis and was known as the Donner and Jacobs farm. It was located in Springfield, on Seven Bridge Road, which is now Springfield Avenue. We kids soon discovered that the thoroughfare was incorrectly named, since what was called

bridges were really *cuberts* – and there were eight of them!

The immigrant elders had been convinced that a farm was an ideal place to raise chickens and children. However, it was a dairy farm – and, besides, there were horses, chickens, ducks, and a dog.

There were apple trees, a peach tree with stout branches that supported us kids when we ate cherries and finger-squirted the pits at each other. A small vineyard gave us sweet grapes. The out-house boasted three holes. A brook meandered through the farm and at one spot

*(continued on page 5)*

## Recent Acquisitions

The society is very grateful to receive local artifacts and memorabilia 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.

Please contact us and tell us if we neglected to include your donation information here. We need the information for our records in addition to making sure we don't forget to thank you! Our sincerest thanks to the following people for enriching the lives of all residents by their donations:

- From Ann Klemme, a copy of the centennial edition of The Item and the Passaic River Basin News
- From Arnold Koch, loan of his mother's (Jean Von der Laucken's) 1920s photo album, for scanning
- From Anonymous, a menu from Mario's restaurant, 1913 & 1914 bound volumes of American Homes and Gardens, numerous early architectural magazines featuring local homes, bound volume of 1921 Architectural Record with article on the building of Millburn's town hall.
- From Naneen Levine, South Mountain School library memorabilia
- From the estate of Almeda Palmer, courtesy of Gail Engelschjon, local cookbooks and a 1946 "MHS class of 1946" gin bottle (empty!)
- From Harry Heide, a 1952 Millburn High School yearbook
- From Lana Gerhart, two scrapbooks of MHS class of '52 memorabilia
- From Margaret Howarth, Women's Club bulletins and memorabilia
- From Gail Engelschjon, a 1987 Paper Mill Playhouse calendar
- From Dorothy Marshall, courtesy of Owen Lampe, numerous photos and ephemera, including MHS photos from 1908-13, a 1946 trade book for the Millburn area, Board of Trade photos, etc
- From Emily Ridgway, numerous editions of the "Beechcroft Gossip" newsletter, a 1946 Item article, copies of 1934 area maps.

(continued on next page)





This photo was scanned from a tintype that was among the Ellis family memorabilia that was found at the Gallitelli's Orchard St. site. It seems to have been taken at the intersection of Millburn and Main, at what is presently the site of Starbucks.

The sign behind the horse advertises stove polish.

## Honoring Our Ancestors

Society members and guests are invited to the next lecture in the historical society's Fredrickson Foundation lecture series on Thursday, September 12, at the Millburn library from 7:30 (promptly) to 9:00 p.m.

Author and genealogist Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak (yes, that is her real name) will talk about the hobby that has exploded because of the Internet – genealogy – and our 21<sup>st</sup> century spin on ancestor worship. For her latest book, *Honoring Our Ancestors*, Smolenyak collected hundred of examples of how this search for answers affects us today, as in:

*9/11: Roots and Wings* – Richard Deuel, whose sister Cindy was killed on 9/11, had her buried with ancestors whose unmarked gravesite she had recently discovered. Her tombstone includes both the Twin Towers

and the family tree she had so avidly researched in her brief 28 years.



(Author and lecturer Megan Smolenyak)

*(The Brook Was the Culprit, continued from pg. 1)*

was deep and wide and passed near some trees and was our swimmin' hole. Some angel that loved kids caused a stout branch to grow over the brook, to serve as a springboard.

The house was huge ... five bedrooms and a big attic where we kids played when the weather was bad. In the big kitchen a door led to the full cellar. Years later, when I read Edgar Allen Poe's story of "The Black Cat", where an enraged man killed his wife and buried and cemented her into a wall, I pictured the exact spot. Poe could have had a picnic, in writing his stories, with all the available space in that cellar.

It's 1912, I am five years old and ready for school. Mom found a pair of britches without knee holes, polished my shoes and combed my hair and found a tie, all to make some school lucky to acquire such a fine student. Then she took me to the Millburn school on Millburn Avenue. The school refused to accept me, 'cause, it said, "You live on Seven Bridge Road and that's in Springfield. Therefore, you belong in the Springfield school."

Here's the picture: To get to the farm you proceed on Seven Bridge Road to our post box, and turn right onto a dirt road that leads to our farm house. However, after several hundred feet, you cross a brook and suddenly you are in Millburn. *The brook is the culprit!* It's the dividing line 'twixt Springfield and Millburn and the dividing line 'twixt Union County and Essex County.

So, Mom trekked me to the Springfield school and the principal studied the situation and declared that even though the address was Springfield, the home is actually in Millburn and if Millburn won't accept me, try

Maplewood. So, Mom dragged me to Maplewood and that school would have no part of me either. You can imagine the anguish and mental trauma of an unwanted child ... possibly a future man of letters?

Years later Mom told me the matter was referred to the freeholders of both counties and there it was decided that for the purpose of education, the student should attend the school in the town wherein his home was situated. I know it's expensive to school a child and I wondered "Were they fighting to get me or not to get me?"

I did not attend kindergarten. In grade one, I remember, I was so infatuated by a story of a bunny rabbit that I went into the library, looking for a book on bunnies - and how could I remember this monumental event?

The second grade ... ah, the second grade teacher! I was in love with pretty Miss Bushnell (*Ed. Note: Could the dearly-beloved teacher have been a Miss Bonnell, because of the Bonnells who lived in the area?*). This was my first love affair; I was six and she was thirtyish. I knew she liked me, 'cause she let me sit in the front row, even though I was big -- and she always smiled at me and allowed me to clean the blackboard.

The fifth grade teacher was Miss Treadway. There were only five grades and for the next grades I had to attend Short Hills School.

On school days we arose early, breakfasted quickly, then ran across our back fields, then through the Bonnell nursery (where we had probably gotten permission to cross), to reach Main Street and continue to Millburn Avenue. Some days the weather was very bad and we trudged through rain or snow, then had to

dry our clothes on the school radiators. Later we were given trolley tickets to use on the Main Street trolley that would take us to Millburn Avenue, near the school.

Some days we kids would walk to Springfield center where, at the juncture of Union Avenue and Main Street, stood a big church. Next to it was a general store where we were able to buy black licorice sticks. Across the street, on Union Avenue, was the huge estate of Dr. Norris. Now, how did I remember that name of eighty years ago?

In 1918 a fire broke out in one of the barns. It was past midnight and the entire area was lit up like daylight. The isolated farm suddenly filled with perhaps a hundred people and I wondered how they got there so quickly. Someone said the cause was probably spontaneous combustion in a hay loft. The barns and stables were completely destroyed. There was a problem with the horses, who knew they were safest in their stables, so they had to be blindfolded and led out of their safe harbor.

The fire was a catastrophe. It was the end of the farm, the end of my wonderful life on the farm, but it left me with a basketful of memories.

For more information on the history of Millburn and Short Hills, you can read Marian Meisner's remarkable History of Millburn Township online at the Millburn library's Web site at:

<http://www.millburn.lib.nj.us/index.htm>

Just click on "View the eBook"

## Want to Help?

The historical society always has large and small projects with which they could use help – for an hour, an afternoon, or longer. If you would like to spend a little time poking through the archives in the museum, while working on a project, here are just a few projects that might interest you:

- Encapsulating old photos in mylar
- Interviewing a long-time resident
- Identifying houses in early photos
- Transcribing taped oral histories
- Encapsulating early maps in mylar
- Researching and writing an article for the Thistle
- Indexing (skimming and noting articles of local interest) early Suburban Life magazines
- Planning and executing small exhibitions

The museum is generally open on Tuesdays from 5:30-7:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30 p.m. and the first Sunday of the month from 2:00-4:00 p.m. If you would like to help with any of the projects listed above, please call the museum at 973-564-9519 and leave a brief message if the museum is not open.

# Moving to the Country

*[The following (partial) interview is copied from an oral history interview with Dr. Irving Alper, dentist, of 14 Rawley Pl, Millburn, conducted by society member Jenks Schachter in 1982.]*

*Jenks:* If you will, give me some background of how you came here, why you came and so on.

*Dr. A.:* We arrived in Millburn in the early summer of 1930. It was right after the big crash of '29. We had lived in Hoboken. I was born in Hoboken in 1922 and lived there 'til 1930. During those years my father was the partner in a dry goods store and when the big crash came and the store could no longer maintain two families (the Alpers' and the partner's), his partner bought him out and my father went to an agent and asked if he could find him a business so that he could buy it with what he had received for his buy-out of the business. The agent came to him one day and said, "Mr. Alper, I have a nice stationery store for you in a community called Millburn, N.J." Papa went to Millburn and saw that it was a good business, a nice community and, of course, it had to pass Mama's approval because she was going to bring their family of three children and she had to see that the community had all the things that she felt were necessary – the school system, a pleasant place to live, a Jewish community center so that her children could get a proper Jewish education. In fact, Millburn had all of these. So, Mama came and she liked it, too, and they negotiated with the two owners, who at that time were Weinstein and Millman. The deal was made and Papa came to Millburn first, to be followed by Mama and the three of us – my sister, Ruthi, my brother, Carl, and myself.

*Jenks:* How old were you at the time?

*Dr. A.:* I was eight. Carl was ten and Ruth was just about five and a half. I was going into the fourth grade. I remember we were moved from Hoboken by a company that still exists in Millburn – the Rimback Storage people.

My grandfather was living with us. He was like the man who came to dinner. He came one week, had a stroke, was rendered ill, and stayed with us for twelve years. Part of the first year was in Hoboken and then he moved with us to Millburn. My grandfather (we called him "Zadeh"), he and I came to Millburn in the moving van. There was room for four people and the two movers and my grandfather and I.

We moved into the apartment just above what is now Ira Schwartz's camera store. At that time it was Dave's Market – Dave Fern, I think – and is well-known. His name is still known to many residents of Millburn. He started ... well, he didn't really start ... that was his second store, actually. He was in a few stores down, but most of his business career prior to the large supermarket was at that establishment.

We lived above the store and the store that my father bought then became Alper's Stationery Store and it is still in existence. It is now the Millburn Stationers.

*Jenks:* Known as Schnipper's to this day.

*Dr. A.:* Yes, known as Schnipper's. My father sold that store to the Schnipperses and from that point on the name Schnipper's sort of stuck. The store is twice as large now than it was when my

father owned it. You can see, if you look at the front, there were two windows of almost identical size and what they did was take two small stores and make one large one.

*Jenks:* You were speaking of your arrival by truck.

*Dr. A.:* Yes. I must say my arrival in Millburn was a great disappointment to me because my mother had told me that we were going to move out into the country. And I had a certain idea of what the country was all about. To me the country meant cows and farms and barns and silos. That was the picture I had of Sullivan County, up in the Catskills. That was country to me. When we arrived in Millburn, right across from the present camera store was the Millburn Cinema, or the Millburn Theater as it was called in those days. At that time the marquee would flash off and on ... you know, the way they used to in the movies. Here I was ... we had moved to this very busy-looking place and across the street was the busy movie. I asked the man why he stopped. He said, "Well, my boy, this is your new home." I looked out and *didn't see anything that resembled the country.* I felt betrayed and saddened by it all. I did find out later, after I wandered off the two main streets, that it was, in fact, quite undeveloped -- and especially in the area of the reservation it was really quite like the country.

And then, of course, like kids everywhere, I looked around for a playmate. I had to leave behind -- and like all eight year olds, was deeply saddened to leave behind -- my home, playmates, and that's what I had to do when we left: Just up the block, in the building that Martin and Rose Becker had their House of Materials, there was a paint shop, which was owned by Louis Silbersher and his wife Rose, and I met their son Marvin, who became a

lifelong friend of mine. A few days after that I met Charles Turner, one of the children of Sam and Esther Turner and little I got to know the kids in the neighborhood -- and we did meet a few friends.

Of course, the big treat for Carl, Ruth, and myself was Taylor Park. A good deal of that first summer was spent in Taylor Park. The pond was dredged and it was fairly deep in some areas. There was a nice sandy beach at one end, with a diving board. In front of the recreation building they had a lifeguard.

*Jenks:* They had youth facilities.

*Dr. A.:* Oh, yes. It was a beautiful beach ... well cared for. There were lifeguards on duty and they gave swimming lessons. In fact, you had to have a little tag that said "Millburn" on it to entitle you to swim there (*Editor's note: Does anyone still have one of those tags -- that they might like to donate to the society's archives?*). The water was quite clean in those days, so it was a great place for us. You know, the summer was practically upon us when we moved and a week or two after we got here it got pretty hot. It was a welcome place to splash around in the summer months. And there were little paddle tennis courts, which is now the area where they play basketball -- right adjacent to the recreation building. (Paddle tennis) was a great game for the Depression, because all you had to bring along with you was a little ball or a tennis ball. The park supplied you with the paddles, so it was fine for our budgets.

*(to be continued in the next Thistle)*

## The Romance and Tragedy of a Widely Known Business Man of New York (Third Part)

*In the prior two editions of the Thistle, William Ingraham Russell's life in Short Hills in the 1880s was introduced through his book "The Romance and Tragedy of a Widely Known Business Man of New York", in which he recalls his prosperous business ventures, followed by darker days, when he felt his Short Hills friends abandoned him. At the point at which part one ended, the Russells had purchased "Sunnyside", the house which they had been renting, at 39 Knollwood Road. As his business and family thrived, Mr. Russell began to consider building a larger home in Short Hills. Part two chronicled the move from "Sunnyside" into "Redstone" and a frank look at some of the Russells' Short Hills friends and neighbors. Part three of Russell's story will carry the reader through to the imminent collapse of his business.*



In chapters 27-31 Russell carefully prepares the reader for the revelations that will follow, wherein he reveals why he felt he was betrayed by his once-close friends when his fortunes were eroded. Russell begins:

"The spring of 1890 brought with it two great sorrows. Following closely on the death of my beloved mother came the death at "Sunnyside" of Frank Slater. The latter was

unexpected in its suddenness and a terrible shock to all his friends. I had become so deeply attached to Frank that he seemed like a dear brother and my grief was most profound.

The day after his death, Mr. Pell, Mrs. Slater's father, asked me to represent the family in the settlement of the business affairs. There was no will and there were many complications.

Mr. Pell, entirely without reason I thought, had not the fullest confidence in Frank's partner, Mr. Wood. He did not believe he would be any too liberal to the estate in the settlement of the firm's affairs. It was in compliance with Mr. Pell's earnest request that I took charge and my doing so was not entirely acceptable to Mr. Wood.

Although I regret the test of my reader's patience, it is essential to my defense in certain matters to be related in later chapters, that the complications and settlement of the estate should be set forth. In reading these pages I beg that the footnote on page 102 be remembered. (Ed. Note: The passage to which Russell refers is: "Under ordinary conditions the author would never think of advertising to the world the good that he has done. Before the conclusion of this narrative there will be much that is far removed from the ordinary. Errors to atone for, misunderstandings to explain, false innuendoes, and charges to indignantly deny and disprove. It is the narrative of a life and the good in that life is certainly a part of it. In later chapters, when certain matters are set forth, my readers will be good enough to bear this in mind.)

The business of Wood and Slater for several years had been acquiring and holding of certain corporate properties, some of which the firm managed. With the exception of one property, a recent acquisition, the interest of each partner was defined by the individual holdings of stock. In the one property referred to the interest was equal but the stock had not been issued.

At the time of Mr. Slater's death he had a joint liability on the firm account in certain notes which had been discounted at the firm's bank, and also in a loan made to the firm by the Standard Oil Company. His individual liabilities were nearly seventy-five thousand dollars. Only a few of these need be specified.

For several years he had profitable business relations with me and carried an account in our office, drawing on it at his convenience. At the

time of his death this account was overdrawn twelve thousand dollars. In addition, our name was on his paper, falling due after his death, to the extent of eighty-seven hundred dollars. Another liability was a note for forty-seven hundred dollars discounted by a Pennsylvania banker, a personal friend. There was also an agreement to refund to a friend under certain conditions ten thousand dollars which he had invested in a manufacturing plant in Connecticut which Mr. Slater was backing.

The assets consisted almost entirely of the interest in the corporate properties which the firm had acquired and stock in the Connecticut concern. There was also a library which realized, when sold at auction, about five thousand dollars.

The real estate was in Mrs. Slater's name and belonged to her.

In the most valuable properties of the firm Wood & Slater owned but two-thirds interest, the remaining third being held by the original owner, a Mr. Mallison.

This gentleman, possessed of considerable means, was a creditor of the estate to the amount of about sixteen thousand dollars. I found that he was disposed to buy the estate's interest in these properties and finally sold it to him for one hundred thousand dollars. An additional consideration was the securing through him an investment of half the amount, for a period of ten years at a guaranteed return of ten per cent per annum.

The Connecticut investment looked to me most unpromising. With extensive advertising it might be made a profitable business but there was no money for this; on the other hand, additional capital was needed at once to keep the concern alive. The note held by the Pennsylvania banker had been issued for the benefit of this business and must be paid. Unless new capital was found to keep the concern going, the ten thousand dollars guaranteed by Mr. Slater must be refunded at once. In other words, if the business was abandoned, the estate would be immediately depleted to the extent of fourteen thousand seven hundred dollars.

A meeting was held at my office at which were present all parties interested and also Mr. Wood.

After a general discussion, in which Mr. Wood took part and expressed great confidence in the future success of the business, the gentleman who had invested the ten thousand dollars made a proposition that if Mr. Slater's friends would go in, for every dollar they subscribed, he would subscribe two. If

they would not do this, then he would call upon the estate to return him the ten thousand dollars.

Taking Mr. Wood aside, I said, "Charley, personally I don't like the investment, but to save the estate, if you will join me, I will make it." His reply was, "Walter, I can not. If I could I would, for I believe it is a good thing, but I can not go into any outside investment at present."

My decision as to the course was made before I had spoken to him, but I thought I would offer him a chance to share that commitment with me, after telling him my poor opinion of it.

My heart was heavy with sorrow for the loss of my friend and for his family I felt the deepest sympathy. I believed then, as I believe to-day, that what I did was no more than he would have done for my loved ones under similar circumstances.

In that Connecticut concern I invested in all about eight thousand dollars, which proved, as I thought very probably it would, practically a total loss. I waived my claim for twelve thousand dollars on that overdrawn account and I personally paid those notes for eighty-seven hundred dollars, one in June and the other in August following the death of my friend.

The only remaining asset to be disposed of was the recently acquired property for which stock had not been issued.

Mr. Wood was personally managing this, and he represented to me that it was in bad shape and that if anything was to be made out of it, it would be by his efforts and he did not want an estate for a partner.

He proposed to offset the estate's interest against the liability on the firm note held by the bank. I am not sure what that amounted to and have not the data at hand to ascertain, but I think it was under five thousand dollars.

This property is now of great value and has, I believe, made Mr. Wood, who still owns it, a rich man.

At the time I thought his proposition a fair one, though in later years, Mr. Mallison, a good judge of the value of such properties, told me that he "never thought Wood treated Mrs. Slater just right in that matter."

When I made the sale to Mallison it left Wood a minority stockholder, which position he did not fancy. He tried to sell out to Mallison. These men had a mutual dislike for each other

and Wood after repeated efforts found they could not agree on terms.

Then he asked me to make the sale for him. He was prepared to take and expected to get less than the estate had received. Technically it was worth less, for the buyer already had control. I succeeded in making the sale at the same price, one hundred thousand dollars.

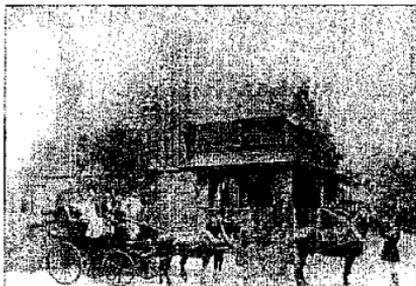
On my way home that day I stopped at Wood's house to tell him what I had done. He was not at home and I saw his wife. I told her of the sale and asked her to tell her husband. She exclaimed, "Oh, Walter! What a friend you've been." That was in 1890. This is 1904."

In chapter 28, titled "New Faces", Russell describes a family vacation during which time he met Ned Branford, "a man of about thirty years of age, good looking, genial and clever" and a "manufacturing jeweler." In the course of their developing friendship, Mr. Branford related that he had a benefactor who wrote checks for him whenever he needed capital. He said he had an opportunity to buy a lot of precious stones for five thousand dollars, but had to turn it down because his benefactor was out of town. Russell told him, "Ned, I do not want to put any money in a sinking fund for a long pull, as I may have use for all my capital in my own business; but any time you want five thousand dollars for thirty days, I will be glad to let you have it." Russell adds, "He wanted it very soon. In a few days I loaned him five thousand dollars, and after that, until September 1893, there was no time he did not owe me five thousand to fifteen thousand dollars."

Russell precedes that story with the tale of how they met:

"A snap of the whip, horses prancing, and with the notes of the horn waking the echoes in the hills, we drove out from "Redstone" just after luncheon and commenced the first stage of our sixty-mile drive to Normandie-by-the-Sea, where we were to spend the rest of the summer. (Ed. note: *The Normandie was apparently a popular hotel in Seabright N.J.*)

This was on a Friday, about the middle of July, 1890. On the drag my wife sat beside me on the box-seat; behind us were the six children and maid, and in the rumber, my two men. It was a very jolly party as we went bowling along over the finest roads in the State, and we minded not the gentle rain falling steadily. All were dry in mackintoshes and under the leather aprons, and passing through one village after another we were of the opinion that there is nothing quite so inspiring as driving through the country



William Russell saw very few of his jet-black horses. This always flew off into his head when they were to be washed. A group poses in an open carriage for a picture before a Sunday drive.

*(This photo is from the historical society's newest book, Arcadia Publishing's Images of America: Millburn-Short Hills, written by Owen Lampe. Pictured here are the horses of which William Russell wrote and of which he was so proud. We presume this carriage might be his "heavy T-cart", of which he was also proud. They are seen here posing before the Russells' house, Redstone. This book is available from the society for \$20)*

behind four spirited horses in any kind of weather. Just at half-past five we crossed the bridge over the Raritan and drove into New Brunswick, where we were to stop over night.

After a good night's rest and an eight o'clock breakfast we were off again.

The rain had ceased and the day was bright and beautiful, with no dust to mar the pleasure of our drive. On through Old Bridge and Mattawan to Keyport, where we stopped for luncheon then away on the last stage of the delightful journey. Stopping at one of the toll-gates to water the horses the woman in charge looked up at the merry lot of children, and then turning to my wife asked, "Are those children *all* yours?" With a laugh I said "guilty," and away we went. The hands of the clock on the dashboard were at six as we drove up to the hotel, sharp on time."

Russell then describes his acquaintance with Ned Branford and their ensuing social engagements with the Branfords. He concludes the chapter:

"The birthdays and wedding anniversaries of all were duly celebrated, and gifts interchanged at Christmas between both parents and children. It was indeed a happy, joyous circle of friends.

My business affairs continued to prosper, and for my second year, as an importer and dealer, my books showed a profit of sixty-eight thousand dollars."

Chapter 29 of Russell's book introduces the slow distancing of the Russells from the social life at "Knollwood":

"As memory carries me back to 1891, it seems as if it would be impossible to crowd into a period of twelve months more social pleasures and jolly good times than we had in that year.

In the social life at Knollwood we had ceased to be active. We kept up and enjoyed our intimate friendship, now of more than ten years' duration, with our immediate neighbors' but the personnel of the Park had changed in recent years and with many of the new residents we were not congenial, though on pleasant terms with all.

There was a good deal of dining, card parties and entertainments at the Casino, in which we participated, but it was with our New York friends that most of our social life was passed. The circle there had been enlarged by the addition of many pleasant people, although the close intimacy still rested where it had started, with, however, the addition of Mr. and Mrs. William Viedler.

Mr. Viedler, a multi-millionaire at that time, has since largely increased his fortune and is now the controlling interest in a prominent trust of comparatively recent formation. They had been Brooklynites but bought a fine house on Fifth Avenue. We first met them on the occasion of a dinner given in their home by Mr. and Mrs. Curtice, to welcome them to New York. (*Ed. note: Mr. Viedler was also Ned Bransford's 'benefactor who wrote checks for him whenever he needed capital'.*)

So much of the Russell's social life revolved around New York that he wrote: "Early in the fall we decided to try a winter in New York. The 'San Remo,' at Seventy-fourth Street and Central Park, West, had just been completed, and I rented three connecting apartments, which gave us parlor, library, dining-room, five bedrooms, and three baths, all outside rooms. I also rented in Sixty-seventh Street a stable, and on the first of October we took possession.

We were more than pleased with the life in the town and I commenced negotiations with Dore Lyon for the purchase of a handsome house he owned at

West End Avenue and Seventy-fifth Street. Just as the trade was about to be closed my eldest daughter was attacked with typhoid. She became very ill, and this so alarmed us we concluded to return to "Redstone" in the spring and remain there.

When the holidays drew near the invalid was convalescent, and we opened "Redstone" for a house party. When we returned to New York, it was with a feeling of regret.

Business had been good throughout the year. My profits were nearly eighty thousand dollars."

With little inking at the time of what lay ahead for him in 'the panic of ninety-three', Russell writes in chapter 31: "It was the afternoon of a day in the first week of January 1893, I sat in an easy chair in front of the open fire in my private office deep in thought. In my hand was the balance-sheet for 1892, showing a profit of over seventy thousand dollars. I was considering both sides of a momentous question. It was whether or not to retire from business.

I had for years looked forward with delightful anticipation to the time when I could do this. I wanted to travel extensively. In my library were many books of travel, all of which had been read with great interest. I had an eager longing to see for myself all parts of the civilized world; not in haste, but at my own leisure. I wanted to devote years to a journey that should cover the globe.

My affairs were in excellent shape. Within a period of sixty days I could liquidate my business and retire with about three hundred thousand dollars. I had my home, complete in its appointments; my library; my stable, with all that it could contribute to our pleasure and comfort; my health, and I was but forty-two years of age. That was one side, now for the other. The largest income that I could expect with my capital securely invested would be fifteen thousand dollars. My balance sheet showed that in 1892 I had drawn forty-four thousand. I considered where my expenditures could be cut down. There was a long list of pensioners, relatives, and friends, who for years had been receiving regularly from me a monthly cheque on which they depended for their comfort. Could that be cut off? Surely not.

There was a still longer list of people, many of whom I knew but slightly, who from time to time called on me for help, always as loans, but rarely returned.

I kept no record of such things and never requested repayment. Could that item be cut out? No, for when a man appealed to me for assistance, I knew not how to refuse him. He always received it.

There were all the charities, St. John's Guild, Fresh-Air Funds, hospitals, home for crippled children, and the personal charities of my wife amongst the poor – could these be dropped? Again, no.

Then I looked at home. The education of our children – my older son was at Harvard with a liberal allowance; my eldest daughter at Miss Dana's expensive school in Morristown; the rest of the children taught at home by a visiting governess; the girls taking music lessons – nothing could be done here. The education item was bound to increase materially as the children grew older.

Then I thought of the monthly bills from Altman, Arnold, Constable & Co., Lord & Taylor, and others. How about those? Oh, no; I loved to see my wife in her beautiful gowns and as the girls developed into young ladies those bills would grow.

There seemed nothing left but entertainment of our friends. A large expense, but essential to our pleasure and position in society.

I carried a very large life insurance, but did not for a moment think of reducing that.

Then my thoughts carried me farther. Suppose I could get my expenses down to my income, how about the people we were helping in another way, whose income would be seriously affected by my retiring?

There was one of our friends at Knollwood. He was employed on a moderate salary, and when his wife inherited nine hundred dollars he brought it to me and asked me to make some money for him. Now, as a result, he was living in a house he had bought for eleven thousand dollars and to cancel the mortgage of a few thousand he relied upon me. There were those three old gentlemen in Connecticut whose income from their investment with us was allowing them to pass in comfort their declining years. Could I cut this off? No; and there were many others.

It was clear to my mind that my labor was not yet at an end. I must still keep at the helm, but I made a resolution that on my fiftieth birthday I would retire."

*The story of the Russells' stay in Short Hills will continue in the next edition of the Thistle, when the Russells decide to leave Knollwood and their beloved 'Redstone'. Redstone, which is no longer standing, was at Wells Lane and Knollwood Road. It succumbed to fire in 1934.*

## HISTORIC HALLOWEEN

During the month  
of October  
the society will have on exhibit

### VINTAGE HALLOWEEN ITEMS AND COSTUMES



If you have any Halloween-related items or photos, preferably from from approximately the 1950s or earlier, with ties to Millburn or Short Hills, and that you would be willing to let us scan (we can bring the scanner to you), please call us at the museum at 973-379-5032

Please come on Tuesdays 5:30-7:30,  
Wednesdays 3:30-5:30,  
or the first Sunday of the month 2-4  
to see  
vintage costumes from local estates,  
decorations, photos, etc.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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2002-2004

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## Local History Through The Internet

In order to keep abreast of society-sponsored events and exhibitions, you can find information at the society's community Web site at:

<http://community.nj.com/cc/millburn-shhistsoc>

You can also e-mail the society at:

[MSHHS2002@cs.com](mailto:MSHHS2002@cs.com)

If you have questions or are just curious about the history of Millburn and Short Hills, did you know that Marian Meisner's exhaustive study on the subject is now online at the Millburn library's Web site? To read the book, go to:

<http://www.millburn.lib.nj.us/>

then click on:

"View the eBook!"

at the bottom of that page. This online service is a tremendous resource for students or residents with questions about the history of the town.

# 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, you will find the renewal date on your mailing label on this Thistle, or you can call the museum at 973-564-9519 and leave a message and we will look it up for you when we are next there. Don't forget to leave your telephone number or e-mail address if you call.

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## DUES RENEWAL FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Annual Dues  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 (Individual)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 (Family)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 (Patron)

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$200 (Life)

Add'l Contribution/Museum Restoration  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 (Donor)

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$250 (Patron)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 (Benefactor)

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