

# THISTLE



Millburn -  
Short Hills  
Historical Society

Vol. V, No. 2

February, 1981

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Wednesday, February 11, 1981 - 8:00 pm  
Cora Hartshorn Arboretum

The program for our winter meeting will be a presentation of some of the Society's own slide shows which are regularly shown to school and civic groups. The history, architecture and gardens of Millburn-Short Hills will seem more lively and lovely after you see this collection of slides prepared and presented by our inimitable slide show team of Owen Lampe, Jane Riedel, and Juli Towell. 8:00 pm February 11th at the Arboretum.

ELECTION RETURNS - With the 1980 presidential contest fresh in our minds, local historians may be interested in the results of an earlier presidential election in our town. In November 1912 Millburn voters cast their ballots as follows:

Democratic candidate -	Wilson	265
Progressive candidate -	Roosevelt	189
Republican candidate -	Taft	188
Socialist candidate -	Debs	5
Prohibition candidate -	Chafin	5

As Millburn went, so went the nation!

**HAVE YOU SEEN** any historic sites lately? What better time than winter - when uncertain weather conditions discourage long trips - to see some of New Jersey's historic houses that are nearby. Here are three to consider:

1. Israel Crane House, 110 Orange Road, Montclair  
The house that Israel Crane built in 1796 was saved from demolition in 1965 by the Montclair Historical Society. Essentially Federal in style, an 1840's remodeling added fashionable Greek revival elements to the exterior of the house. Interior rooms are good examples of Early American, Colonial, Federal and Empire styles.  
Open: Sunday 2:00-5:00 p.m. or by appointment Ph. 744-1796

2. Boxwood Hall (Boudinot Mansion), 1073 E. Jersey St., Elizabeth  
A National Historic Landmark, Boxwood Hall was built in 1750 and is a typical Georgian house of the period tastefully furnished in Colonial and Federal pieces. Elias Boudinot, president of the Continental Congress in 1783, is said to have entertained George Washington here on his way to his first inauguration in New York.  
Open: Wed.-Fri. 9:00-12noon, 1:00-6:00 p.m.  
Saturday 10:00-12noon, 1:00-6:00 p.m.  
Sunday 1:00-6:00 p.m. Ph. 648-4540

If you go to Boxwood Hall on a Wednesday morning, less than a block away you can also see:

3. Belcher House, 1046 E. Jersey St., Elizabeth  
This two-story brick house dates from the late 17th century and was the home of three prominent citizens of New Jersey. With the exception of one room, the house is furnished in accordance with a 1757 inventory and many of the fireplaces, floor boards and panels are original.  
Open: Wednesday, 9:30-12noon, September through May

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**SUMMIT INVITATION** - Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society members are invited to attend the March 19 program of the Summit Historical Society at which Professor Paul Baker will speak on the life and work of Richard Morris Hunt, Architect. Slides will be shown of Hunt's designs which included "The Breakers" in Newport and the central portion of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The meeting will begin at 7:45 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield Avenue, Summit (opposite Suburban Hotel).

## WILL BRADLEY

"Bradley is a craftsman, in the best sense of this much-abused word; one who seeks to beautify the essentially utilitarian; one . . . of those who succeed in giving the charm and dignity of art to objects of common use."

The Book Buyer, May 1896

So a contemporary magazine described Will H. Bradley (1868-1962), an unusually gifted illustrator and graphics designer who later planned and built two houses for his family in Millburn: 370 Hobart Avenue (1914) and 263 Hobart Avenue (c. 1920). They exemplify Bradley's ability to use the skills he had developed as a typographer to create homes that afforded convenience and comfort together with remarkably good taste. With the recent renaissance of art nouveau - the style with which Bradley was most identified - his work is once again attracting attention. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has shown some of his prints in the new American Wing, sells Will Bradley postcards and books. And a Bradley Christmas card design of 1896 was reproduced for inclusion in the 1980 UNICEF card collection.

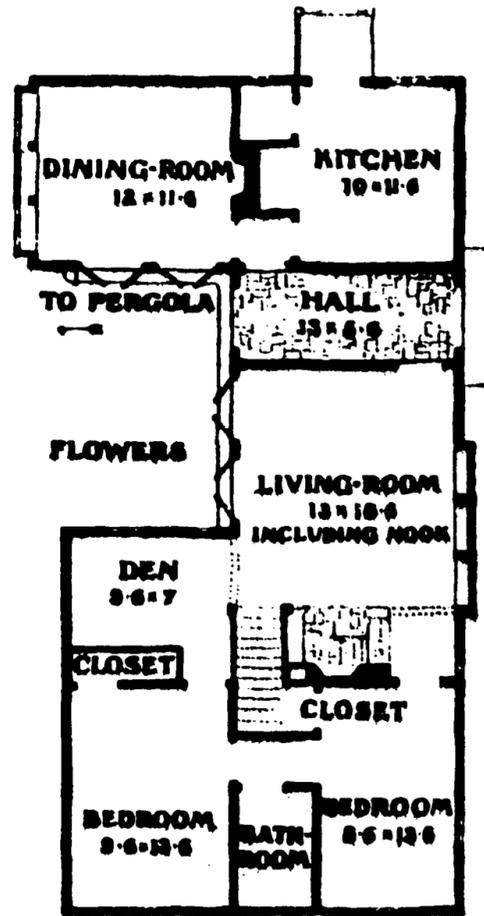
Bradley's father, a newspaper cartoonist, wanted his son to be an artist and encouraged the child's early efforts. But his death when Will was eight forced the family to leave Massachusetts and live with relatives in Michigan. Bradley became a printer's devil for a weekly newspaper and at fifteen went to work for Rand McNally in Chicago. His work there and some free-lance designing and illustrating quickly established him as an outstanding exponent of art nouveau, a school of drawing and decoration characterized by swirling lines, stylized plant forms, and geometric patterns. One of its earliest practitioners was the Englishman, Aubrey Beardsley; in America, Louis Tiffany's glass creations are perhaps the best-known examples of art nouveau.

A cover for Harper's Weekly in 1890 made Bradley internationally famous (he was called "the American Beardsley," although some thought he was much better) and several of his graphics were included in the

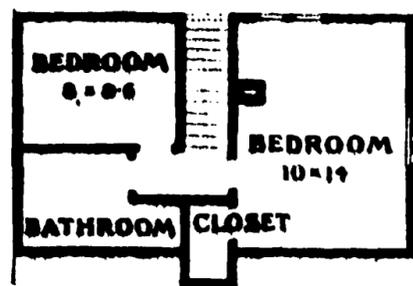
(Continued on page 6)

# A Quaint Little House With a Pergola for \$3000

By Will Bradley



Plan of the First Floor



The Rooms on the Second Floor  
are Placed Over the Bedrooms  
of the First Floor

I WANTED to plan a little house which could be built with no other assistance than what could be obtained from the local carpenter, who would find all necessary information in THE JOURNAL'S pictures.

A wide passage leads from the front to the back of the house, thence to the garden and the pergola. This gives a pleasing vista, and separates the kitchen and the dining-room from the living portion of the house. Thus the visitor is not ushered at once into the inner temple, and, if the family is in the pergola, he reaches that sanctuary more hospitably through the French windows.

The dominating color note as seen from the living-room being green, enlivened by the bright colors of the flowers, that room is kept subdued by stains of warm browns, the beams being darker than the intervening bays, and the rafters an intermediate shade.

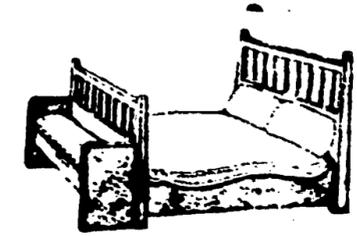
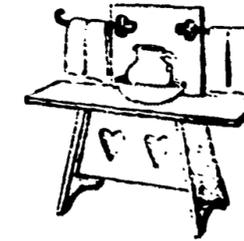
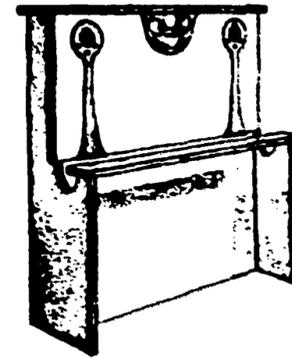
The hall is lighted with windows in the living-room wall, and is kept in green. The floor of the hall is tiled; or it may be bricked, or be even of boards. If of tile or brick it should drop below the other floors; if of boards it should be on a level.

The dining-room is no more than a sheltered nook of the garden. The pergola offers an inviting retreat in which to serve tea.

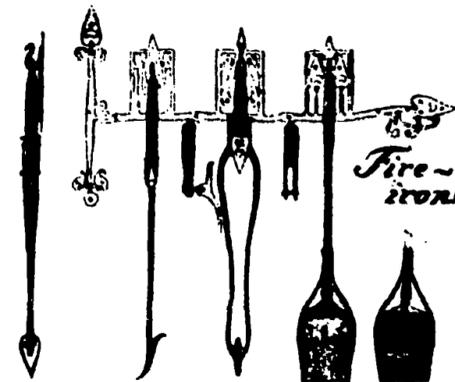
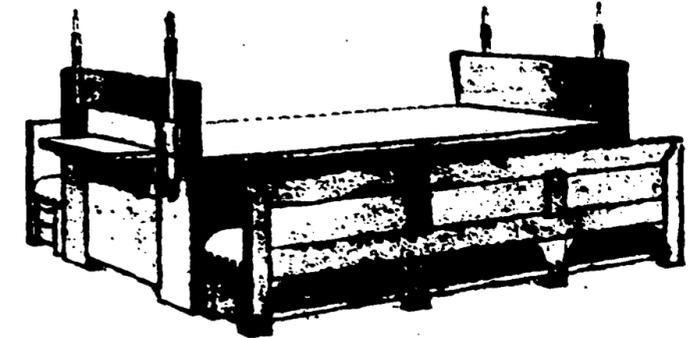
The two bedrooms on the ground floor have shutters which suggest security. The larger room on the second floor looks into the living-room, giving the feeling of a balcony.

The exterior walls should be stained a warm gray or light brown to make them harmonize with the tree-trunks. The roof is green that it may be lost in the leafage.

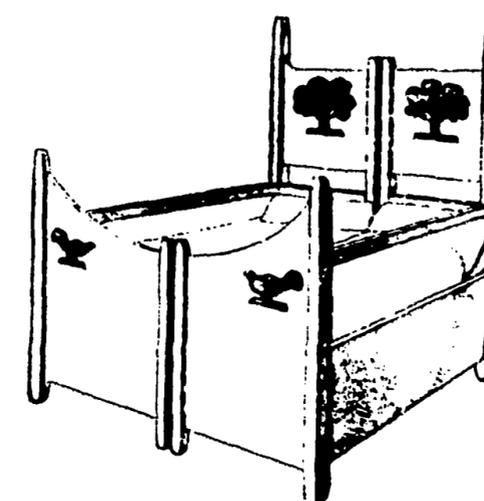
Although the house is small it is so planned that there is no waste space, and it would comfortably accommodate a family of average size.



Buffet



Fire-iron



Chicago Columbian Exhibition in 1893 --- possibly the most influential array of art and architecture yet assembled in this country. By 1895 Bradley was financially able to launch a magazine of his own, Bradley His Book, directed primarily to the paper and printing trades.

At the turn of the century, Edward Bok, head of the Curtis Publishing Company, decided to lift the level of American taste in architecture by publishing a series of house designs "from top to bottom" in his magazine, The Ladies Home Journal. Complete plans were made available to readers at \$5 a set. Several architects dismissed the idea of turning their talents to low-cost single-family housing: one who didn't was Frank Lloyd Wright who designed two Prairie houses for the series---one costing \$7000, the other slightly less. Another willing designer was Will Bradley. According to Robert Koch, writing in the magazine Art in America: "Bok had been attracted by Bradley's articles on design in Bradley His Book which had also included wallpaper and decorative accessories. Bradley designed his house for Bok and The Journal in eight large watercolor drawings and supplemented them with a variety of furnishings and plans. They appear today as a remarkable combination of the best of American-craftsmen-style interiors with a fluid pattern of art nouveau ornament that must have served as the basis for many of the homes that were built and furnished by both architects and builders in the United States in the decade after 1900."

The first house Bradley designed for The Journal consisted of 14 rooms on three floors, and he included detailed drawings of furniture, fabrics and decorative accessories. He later did less expensive houses for the magazine including "A Quaint Little House with a Pergola for \$3000" which he described as "a little house which could be built with no other assistance than what could be obtained from the local carpenter, who would find all necessary information in The Journal's pictures." Illustrations show the floor plan and furniture Bradley designed for this and other houses in The Journal series.

Frances Land

Next issue: Bradley houses and his family life in Millburn.

MAP STUDY GROUP - Interested in the Society's maps? We will be holding one or two informal sessions to give you an opportunity to study the maps and atlases the Society used for its architectural survey.

If you are interested in a meeting in March, call Eileen Paduano at 467-3857 with your preference for a day or evening meeting.

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PATS ON THE BACK - The Society has taken pleasure in the enthusiastic response to its latest publication, Sticks, Shingles and Stones.

A former resident, Betsy Currier Van Sant, wrote:

"I think it is a great publication and was thrilled to see two pictures of my childhood home, 137 Hobart Avenue."

John T. Cunningham, who advised the publication committee, wrote:

"Sticks, Shingles and Stones is splendid! . . . It serves as both a historical document and as a guide to a fascinating area."

Barbara Lewis Hayward of Chatham ordered two extra copies to give to her mother and brother . . .

" . . . who had lived at 60 Forest Drive for many years and enjoyed my copy so much."

Praise of the Society's earlier publications, The Little History and Beginnings, 1700-1800, has also been welcome. If your organization has an opportunity for us to sell our publications, please call Elizabeth Howe at 376-1568.

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OLD HOUSE EXCHANGE - Would those of you who own old houses be interested in an exchange of information concerning them? The Thistle would like to serve as a forum for questions and answers relating to the restoration, repair and improvement of old houses. For example, a reader might want to know where to find a piece of hardware suitable to a vintage house, and another reader might know just the right source as result of a previous but similar quest. Direct all questions and answers to Thistle editor, R. Cameron.

**HANDBOOK** - The Society wishes to express appreciation to Sally Lepow, Membership chairman, for her organizational efforts and typing skills which resulted in the new Society Handbook. Thanks also to Trustee Jane Riedel who designed the charming cover.

To keep your Handbook up-to-date, be sure to place in it the insert enclosed in this issue of the Thistle.

Editor: Roldah Cameron      376-6518



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