

THISTLE



Millburn-
Short Hills
Historical Society

Vol. V, No. 3

May, 1981

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 20, 1981 - 8:00 p.m.
Millburn Public Library

"Local Ghosties" is to be the topic of our guest speaker, Elizabeth Pate, at the annual meeting of the Historical Society on May 20. Mrs. Pate is a lecturer, teacher, photographer and author who has an insatiable drive to chronicle the legends, architecture and decorative arts of her native state, New Jersey. Oral histories and legends of local landmarks are the source of Mrs. Pate's slide/lecture program devoted to the spooky side of history. Preceding the eerie tales there will be a short business meeting and election. There will also be an opportunity to view the historical photos of old Millburn and Short Hills recently mounted and framed under the direction of Trustee Owen Lampe.

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA - That's how long the outreach of our Historical Society seems to be. The Society has received orders for its publications, Beginnings, 1700-1800 and Sticks, Shingles and Stones, from such far-flung spots as Corvallis, Oregon; Charlottesville, Virginia and Galena, Illinois. An architectural student in Tucson, Arizona ordered a copy of Sticks at the same time that she sent us an article on Stewart Hartshorn from a 53-year old issue of Scientific American. The August 1928 edition of that magazine carried a two-page interview by Milton Wright in which Hartshorn spoke of the circumstances surrounding the invention of the roller shade which he patented in 1864, of his philosophy of inventing, and of his dream of building an ideal community. A serendipitous occurrence.

OUR HISTORIC DISTRICTS - After the Society's historic structures survey was completed in 1979, showing a large number of architecturally significant buildings in two areas of the Township - Short Hills Park and the Wyoming Area - , the Society decided to nominate them for inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Both districts were accepted by Trenton as worthy of placement on the State Register, and the nominations were then sent to Washington for review as National Register candidates. Late last year the Society was notified that the Short Hills Park District, one of the first planned suburban communities in the U.S., had been accepted for inclusion on the National Register, the federal government's list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Further information to support the Wyoming Area nomination was requested by the National Register office. To date that information has not been available. The Society may better estimate what is necessary for re-submission of the Wyoming Area nomination upon completion of new guidelines now being written in Washington. Call Liz Howe at 376-1568 if you have questions about the status of the Wyoming Area nomination.

SOCIAL NOTES - If you have ever read small town newspapers of the 19th century, you know that the social notes were almost as prominent as editorials and advertisements for farm machinery. In that vein, we present a few social notes of our own.

Several officers of the Society attended "A Victorian Luncheon with Currier & Ives" on March 26 at the headquarters of the New Jersey Historical Society. They especially enjoyed the home-made Victorian-style fare and the talk by Amy Hatrack on "Victorian Customs and Manners." Although Messrs. Currier and Ives were unable to attend, an exhibition of their country and sporting prints was previewed by the ladies. This exhibit will be on view through November in the Troast Gallery of the New Jersey Historical Society, 230 Broadway, Newark.

The Society will once again honor its Life Memembers at a party to be held on May 17th.

Mr. & Mrs. Carl Klemme invited all the members of the historic structures survey team and their patient spouses to a celebration at their home on April 12. The designation of Short Hills Park to the National Register of Historic Places was the cause for rejoicing.

A Sunday afternoon social for all the gentlemen and ladies of the Historical Society will be held in June at the Victorian home of Mr. & Mrs. Roger Riedel. Invitations will be forthcoming.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - In the past year 599 individuals have supported our Historical Society programs and events with a dues-paying membership. Memberships are renewable on the first of July, and we invite you to continue your participation and support in 1981-82. For your convenience, a membership/dues envelope is enclosed with this issue of the Thistle.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT - Chairman Jane Riedel and her committee members, Judy Adams and Ann Klemme, have completed a slate of officers and trustees whose names will be presented and voted upon at the annual meeting. At that time nominations from the floor will also be entertained. An asterisk is placed by the name of those persons to be voted on.

OFFICERS

President	Elizabeth Howe
*Vice-president	Roldah Cameron
Recording Secretary	Frances Sculli
*Corresponding Secretary	Celeste Penney
*Treasurer	Nancy Heide

TRUSTEES

Owen Lampe 1982	Jane Riedel 1983
Juli Towell 1982	*June Albaugh 1984
*Shirley Sarpi 1982	*Richard McDonald 1984
Howard Brahm 1983	*Catherine Stryker 1984
Natalie Furth 1983	
Elizabeth Christopherson	Past President, Ex-officio

The Historical Society Board would like to express its appreciation to retiring officers and trustees Malcolm Warnock, Janice Weisblat, Ashby Longwell, Richard Chapman, Barbara Cole Smith, and Ann Klemme for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the Society.

ARCHIVISTS UNITE - In an attempt to put our Society archives in proper order, an all day work session was held recently which got the project off to a good start. Our thanks to the many volunteers who showed up. Please call Fran Sculli at 376-3423 if you would like to help at the next work session on Tuesday, May 5. Experience is not necessary!

WILL BRADLEY

TURN BACK THE CLOCK FOR A DAY - A visit to Waterloo Village near Stanhope just north of Rte. 280 at Netcong is a pleasant excursion into the past. First a farming village, then a supplier of iron ore and gun barrels to the Continentals, Waterloo Village flourished between 1820 - 1860 when it became a main depot on the Morris Canal. Among the restored buildings open to visitors are an inn, residences, and the shops of cabinetmaker, blacksmith, weaver and candlemaker. You will want to see the herb garden, grist mill and general store, too. There are craft demonstrations and, on summer weekends, evening concerts. Bring a picnic lunch to eat on the banks of the canal, or take simple refreshment at the grill or tavern. Time stands still at Waterloo.

Open Tues. - Sun. 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. April through November
Closed Monday. Phone 347-0900
The schedule of the Music Festival may be found in Newark and New York City newspapers or call 347-4700

BOOKS - Are you aware that our Society has a small but significant collection of books, any one of which may be borrowed by calling Fran Land at 379-3376? At some future date we will distribute a complete list of the Society's books; until then, you may want to consider one of the following:

1. Will Bradley. Clarence Hornung, Editor. A collection of Bradley's posters, illustrations, typographic designs and decorations.
2. Victorian Houses: A Treasury of Lesser-Known Examples. Edmund V. Gillon, Jr. & Clay Lancaster. Photographs of and commentaries on 116 fine American examples of domestic architecture of the Victorian period.
3. The Vanishing Landscape. Eric Sloane. Numerous handsome sketches by the author attest to the beauty of the land in our grandparents' day, and many traces are still visible to the trained eye.
4. Needlepoint from America's Great Quilt Designs. Mary Kay Davis & Helen Giammattei. Inspired by old quilt designs, the authors have come up with some charming needlepoint patterns.
5. America in 1876: The Way We Were. Lally Weymouth. The Centennial year 1876, when there were 46 million of us in 38 states, was an eventful one. Read all about the year and the country.



"The Queen"
Drawing for a poster and illustration in
Bradley: His Book, June 1896

"The characteristic of Bradley's designs is their decorative quality: the pure, expressive line, dainty and solid, the nice balance of blacks and whites, the sense of arrangement."

WILL BRADLEY (1868-1962)

In the February Thistle Will Bradley's career before 1900 as an illustrator and graphics designer was outlined. Following the success of his Journal articles, Bradley spent the early years of the new century writing a novel and several children's books which he illustrated himself. He served as art editor for such popular magazines as Collier's, Good Housekeeping, Century, and Metropolitan, and he also designed numerous advertisements and promotional leaflets. In 1915, shortly after moving to Short Hills with his wife and three children, Bradley was persuaded by William Randolph Hearst to come work full-time for him. This meant a hectic pace of designing new formats for Hearst publications and supervising the art production of many motion pictures.

It was in Short Hills that Bradley put to use the expertise demonstrated in the earlier Journal articles, for both the houses he designed here are outstanding examples of the Craftsman philosophy of art, architecture and the good life. The movement originated in England and quickly found a following in this country. Reflecting disaffection with machine-age artificiality and excessive ornament, the Craftsman School advocated simplicity and utility. The individual was exhorted to participate in the design and creation of houses, furniture, decoration, gardens, etc. and thus take an active part in creating a harmonious environment. Natural materials such as wood and tile were recommended because they were easy to maintain and warm in feeling, and old materials were "recycled" whenever possible. The Craftsman School is enjoying a renaissance as "return-to-nature," "do-it-yourself," preservation and conservation have become increasingly popular with Americans.

Much of the information the Society has about the Bradley houses comes from an engaging letter from his daughter, Mrs. Fern Bradley Dufner, received in 1978. She said that when the Bradleys were looking for land in Short Hills, the realtor advised against the plot at 370 Hobart Avenue because its excessive slopes would require expensive grading.

"But my father saw possibilities for a sunken garden of roses, my mother's favorite flower, and a house which could be entered in front at the second story level and in the rear at the first story. Instead of leveling the ground into a conventional lot, he would design his house to conform with the irregular land. This would harmonize with the Short Hills roads which wound up and around and followed the contour of the hills."

Even though Bradley was the highest-paid commercial artist in America before 1925, he and his sons did most of the work on the house, and his wife and daughter laid out the garden . . .

" . . . which became a showplace. A steady stream of automobiles came on Sunday afternoons and people poured in. The house built on the hillside became a model which was copied by developers and architects"

"Entertaining was all very informal. My father brought home friends from the Players Club in New York for long weekends. We had bridge parties, tea parties, dinner parties, and entertained . . . school friends and occasionally the garden club. Formal social activities in those days centered around fund-raising for various branches of the service. The garden was not of much use for entertaining because of mosquitoes, so bridge tables were set up in the living room and library. Tea, after-dinner coffee, and Sunday night supper were served around the open fire in the library."

After World War I, Bradley sold the house at 370 Hobart and built another at 263 Hobart. This one was essentially on one floor, and the garden was planted with easy-to-keep evergreens. Like the house at 370, it had waxed oak floors, open rafters, tiled entrances, and ivory-colored or pine woodwork. French brown casseroles and Dresden onion pattern china lent an air of informality. The Bradley hospitality continued in the new setting.

"At the beginning of the Christmas season Mama and Papa in galoshes and warm coats set forth with baskets to trim the yew and holly. The rugs were rolled up in the living room where a good fire burned on the hearth. There were pine cones and yards of red satin ribbon ready for the neighbors who were invited in to make a large wreath for their front door. Wire coat hangers were bent for the foundation of the wreaths. Hot cider was served and gingerbread men with raisin buttons . . .

"In summer the English lavender was harvested. Lavender ribbon was ready for the neighbors who came in with their thimbles, this time to make lavender sachets for their linen closets. This gathering was on the terrace at the back of the house. Tea, sandwiches, and cookies were served in the open."

(continued)

"The birds brought a flowering crabapple seed. The tree grew and grew - a pink cloud of blossoms in the springtime and in the fall a bountiful supply of crabapples. The ladies of the garden club were invited to bring baskets and harvest the fruit. It was a pretty sight to see them standing in a ring around the tree, each in her autumn-colored Davidow suit, while Papa clambered up in the branches and helped get the fruit that was out of reach. Tea and crabapple tarts were served outdoors."

Mrs. Dufner concluded her letter by saying: "I am glad you are interested in my father because he was such an unusually gifted man." In his works and words, as well as in his family life, Bradley manifested enormous talent, congeniality, and modesty. His belief in the old-fashioned virtues never stood in the way of his clear understanding of what was appropriate for his own time and what might make the future more attractive and liveable.

Frances Land

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Editor: Roldah Cameron 376-6518



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