

THISTLE



Millburn -
Short Hills
Historical Society

Vol. VII, No. 3

April, 1983

ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, May 17, 1983 - 8:00 p.m.
Millburn Public Library

The Society is very proud to have Drew University Professor Robert J. Bull as the speaker at its annual meeting. Dr. Bull, professor of church history and director of the University's Institute for Archaeological Research, will include slides to illustrate some of the discoveries at his excavations in Caesarea, a major Mediterranean port and provincial capital of Israel established in 22 B.C. by Herod the Great. Volunteer diggers from northern New Jersey have been important to Dr. Bull's on-site labors. The business of sifting through centuries of debris and dust is arduous at best: Dr. Bull brings these dusty experiences to life in a manner that can truly be labeled enthusiastic! Come join us on May 17 for an unusually interesting evening.

HISTORICAL PROGRAMS ON TV - Colleen McCullough, Society Board member, developed and narrated the first in a series of short historical programs about Millburn. These five-minute segments will be broadcast on cable television (PA 2). Hats off to Colleen for making our history come alive.

SOCIETY ELECTIONS - The Nominating Committee, composed of Shirley Sarpi, Howard Brahm, and Dianne Jozsa, will present a slate of officers and trustees for election at the annual meeting on May 17. (Asterisk denotes officers and trustees to be voted on.)

OFFICERS

President Elizabeth Howe
*Vice-president Shirley Sarpi
Recording Secretary Eileen Sullivan
*Corresponding Secretary Dianne Jozsa
*Treasurer Virginia Borzner

TRUSTEES

June Albaugh1984 *Charlaine Lamberto . . .1985
Richard McDonald . .1984 *Margaret Coffey1986
Catherine Stryker . .1984 *Colleen McCullough . . .1986
George Clare1985 *Bernadette Wagner . . .1986
*Roldah Cameron . . .1985
Elizabeth ChristophersonPast President, Ex-officio

ADVISORY

Ann Klemme and Howard Brahm

The contributions of retiring Board members are acknowledged with great appreciation: Howard Brahm, Nancy Heide, and Celeste Penney.

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ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE REPORT - Chairman Margaret Coffey reports that her committee has interviewed several Township residents in recent months: Roseanne Way, who has been living in Short Hills since 1924 and was a member of the first Girl Scout troop in the Township; Alice Caswell, a resident of Campbell Road since 1927 who remembers gypsies living in the Vauxhall Road area; Mrs. Kirk McFarlin, who has lived on Delwick Lane since 1926 and remembers meeting Stewart Hartshorn on her property before the house was built; and Mrs. Lillian Harmon, one of the founders of Far Brook School, then known as the Buxton School.

EARLY 20th CENTURY ARCHITECTURE IN MILLBURN

An Introduction

This ambitious title was provoked by the Lynne Lerner/Clem Labine TV program on 20th-century houses (see Calendar for dates). Obviously, the topic cannot be seriously discussed in this scant space but a few observations may complement the video coverage or inspire some reading on the subject so that we view the architectural diversity in our Township with a more educated eye.

The Society has documented the history of many 18th- and 19th-century structures, but most homes in the Township were built after 1900. It's not too early to start researching and appreciating why they are here and why they were designed as they are. Architecture is a wonderful indicator of the aspirations and attitudes of the people and the times that created it.

Hindsight shows us that at the turn of the century Millburn could have become divided into an affluent community alongside a factory town. Stewart Hartshorn was continuing to build homes in his "ideal park," and the still-flourishing mills were providing less-expensive housing for their workers. Economics and technology shortly combined to "tilt" Millburn into becoming the commuting town it is today. The mills found it cheaper to manufacture their goods elsewhere (the 1907 stock market panic was a contributing factor), and Millburn's picturesque terrain and convenient access to such financial centers as Newark and New York, made it a very desirable place to live. Thus began the development of a number of neighborhoods, carved out of farmsteads, woodlands, and mill properties, that comprise the Township as it is today.

In 1899 the Security Realty Company assembled a parcel of land bordered by the railroad, Morris Turnpike, and by Hartshorn properties and named it "Brantwood," after the colonial owners of two farms beside the Turnpike: Brant and Wood. The houses were apacious, often designed by fashionable architects in the eclectic style - that is, borrowing what the architects believed to be the best features of French, English, or Spanish styles. At

the same time, chatelaines of the manor were demanding the latest in labor-saving devices to free themselves for more activities outside of the home. A brash young man from the midwest, Frank Lloyd Wright was preaching a new vision of the American home: not a series of boxes built beside or atop one another but free-flowing spaces constructed of undisguised natural materials. American democracy was engendering a middle class that demanded a choice of house styles as well as efficiency and comfort. Popular magazines began publishing plans for house that would cost \$5,000 or less (Will Bradley, who lived on Hobart Avenue, drafted many for the Hearst publications). A contemporary critic observed "When the rich man demands good architecture, his neighbors will get it too." In other words, good taste would sift down and at last prevail in America. The verdict on the result in not unanimous.

Houses went up in other parts of the Township - William Hill, for example, carved Jefferson Avenue out of farmland. A phenomenal need for housing exploded after World War I here in Millburn as well as in the entire country. In rapid succession plans for Glenwood, South Mountain, Nottingham, Knollwood, and Woodfield were filed and houses in many styles were built and offered for sale. Glenwood included the mill pond for the Campbell Mill which had to be drained. Mr. Campbell's home is now the Chanticleer. Woodfield was a mini-copy of Llewelyn Park and the prospectus stated that no home could sell for less than \$25,000, a princely sum in the 1920s. South Mountain included part of the old Wittingham farm; "Boxwood", the homestead, stood where Lord & Taylor is today. Nottingham was primarily the work of local architect Bernard Muller. His English cottages are Township landmarks; some even have niches in the entrance foyer to accommodate sheep dogs. The Tudor style houses designed by Muller and others were also popular with Americans looking for their "Old World" roots. The restorations in Williamsburg and a major exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum in the late '20s created an interest in Colonial houses: Beechcroft and Crossgates contain many excellent examples of that style.

After World War II more neighborhoods were developed in Millburn. For a breezy look at 20th century architecture, borrow Homes of the Brave from the Millburn Library.

Frances Land

(Thanks to the Township Engineering Department for help in compiling this article.)

SUMMERTIME! - Not many members have responded to the Society's annual listing of books for leisure time reading, so perhaps suggestions for day tours on those lazy days are more appropriate. A trip to Waterloo Village, north of Netcong off Interstate 80, will net attractions for every age group. There are period houses, craft exhibitions, picnic grounds, space for kids to romp, and a General Store crammed with inexpensive goodies. Tours are available Tues. through Sun., 10-6 and a variety of evening concerts are offered during the summer months. Ph. 347-0900

An equally rewarding day-trip is a visit to the Sleepy Hollow Restorations near Tarrytown, N.Y. The major structures are Philipsburg Manor (1720-1750), Van Cortlandt Manor (1783-1814) and Sunnyside (1835-1859), former home of Washington Irving. All are open daily from 10-5. In nearby Tarrytown is Lyndhurst, a mansion designed by A.J. Davis and later owned by railroad magnate, Jay Gould. Lyndhurst is being restored so visitors can see a preservation project in situ. For information about Sleepy Hollow, phone 914-631-8200. Contact the Hudson River Valley Association at 914-592-3226 for information about Lyndhurst.

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CALENDAR

- Immediately - Cherry blossoms in Branch Brook Park, Newark. More than 2000 Oriental cherry trees in eleven varieties create a display larger than the more publicized one in Washington, D.C.
- April 28 - 7:30 p.m. "Twentieth Century Domestic Architecture" will be featured on cable Channel P.A.2 by producer Lynne Lerner and her guest, Clem Labine, editor of The Old House Journal. Slides of houses in the area will be used as illustrations.
- May 2 & 9 5:30 p.m.
- May 3 & 10 9:00 p.m.
- April 30 - "Open House in Fenwick's Colony" sponsored by the Salem County Historical Society. Somewhat far afield but a rare opportunity to tour over 30 homes, churches, gardens. Phone 609-935-5004 for directions. Tickets - \$7.50.

CALENDAR - continued

- May 2 - Architectural walking tour of Summit led by Sandy Brown. Meet at Lincoln School on Woodland Road at 2:00 p.m. Donation - \$2. Rain date - May 9.
- May 5 - A tour of five Summit homes, including that of Society members Ann and Dick Chapman, sponsored by the Women of Calvary Episcopal Church. Tickets \$6, box lunch \$5. Phone the Parish House at 277-1814 for information.
- May 17 - MSHHS Annual Meeting. Speaker: Dr. Robert J. Bull of Drew University of archaeological digs at Caesarea. Millburn Public Library, 8:00 p.m.
- June 4 - Chatham Historical Society house tour from 10-4. Tickets at Chatham Library and Cafe Beethoven.
- June - MSHHS Wine and Cheese Party for members. Invitations will be sent later.

Membership Chairman: Dianne Jozsa 376-4046

Guest Editors - Tiz Christopherson & Fran Land



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