

THISTLE



Millburn -
Short Hills
Historical Society

Vol. VIII, No. 1

October, 1983

"THE SUBURB BEAUTIFUL" - Sunday, October 9 2:00 p.m.

Our double-barrelled fall program begins with another of the Society's popular architectural walks led by noted architectural historian, Sandy Brown. This time Sandy will take us to new territory - the Brantwood section of Short Hills. Several homes on the walk were designed by well known architects from the area. Sandy will open your eyes to the architectural styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to be seen in Brantwood and point out as well the ecological and horticultural features that help to make it "the suburb beautiful."

Meet at the corner of West Road and Windemere Terrace at 2:00 pm and bring your friends.

"ROADS TO THE ISLES" - Join Bill Ochs and Larry Cole, two bagpipers with Broadway credentials, on a musical journey to Ireland, Scotland and England. The journey will take place at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 23 at the Millburn Public Library when the audience may participate in an imaginary Irish house party or a fox chase or a country dance. The instruments used by Bill and Larry have a special Gaelic flavor from the rousing Scottish highland bagpipes to organ-like Uilleann pipes to concertina, melodion and the mysterious tabor, a tiny three-holed flute.

Bill Ochs is one of the few Americans who has mastered the Irish Uilleann pipes, an instrument he studied in Ireland under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Larry Cole is the official piper to the St. Andrew's Society of New York and the New York branch of the Royal Scottish County Dance Society.

Since the program appeals to all ages, you can bring the entire family. Of course, there is no charge.

PROGRESS ON ARCHIVES PROJECT - The Society is pleased to join hands with the Millburn Public Library in creating an archives for Millburn Township history. The Library has generously donated space in an upstairs reading room, and Society volunteers will begin to catalogue and organize our materials and books.

Cabinets and special shelving have been purchased by the Society, and weekly work sessions will begin in mid-October. Anyone interested in learning Township history as they work with our many files should contact Fran Sculli 376-3423 or Fran Land 379-3376. Please join us.

Fran Sculli

ARCHIVES: WHAT'S IN A NAME? - The dictionary defines archives as
1. documents or records of a family, corporation, community or nation.
2. a place where public records or other historical documents are kept.

If you've ever been to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., you know that it takes a lot of space to store the memorabilia of even a young nation like our own. In keeping with the size of our town, we're starting small with one room at the Library for our archives, but you'd be surprised at the amount of "stuff" we already have. What will go into our archives? Among the materials we plan to catalogue and store are newspaper and magazine articles about Millburn-Short Hills and its residents, genealogical charts of local families, photographs, books relating to state and local history or architectural styles, old maps that show the development of the town, tapes of oral histories. And remember that Hartshorn roller shade we were given a year ago?

The latest additions to our archival collection were the gifts of William D. Wright, a former Township resident who now lives in Georgia. A 1935 issue of the weekly magazine The Oranges, Maplewood and Short Hills contains an article entitled "Paradise in Short Hills." Two books by Rena Cary Sheffield of Short Hills once belonged to the Wright family; they are a 1913 novel published by John Lane Co. of New York and a 1915 volume of poetry published locally. Sheffield used the Voston Press of Short Hills.

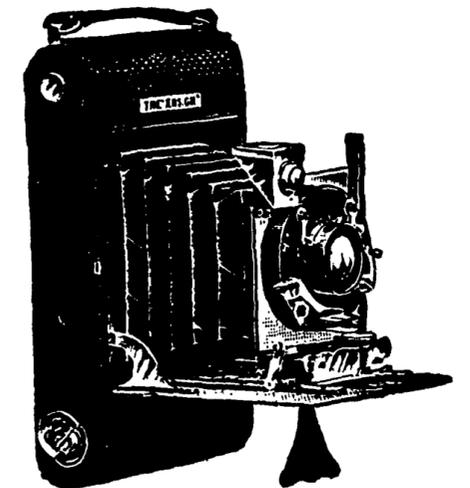
ARCHIVES - continued

Last but not least, Mr. Wright has given the Society a Revolutionary War cannon ball. The 12 lb. missile, which is probably British, was found in woods near the Short Hills elementary school by Mr. Wright and a friend when they were boys. The Society accepts with thanks these diverse additions to our archives, in the knowledge that they can now be safely stored and made available to members and researchers.

SOCIETY REPRESENTED AT WORKSHOP - Owen Lampe, the Society's specialist in photography, attended a three day workshop in August at the New Jersey Historical Society. Sponsored by our Society, he was one of the twenty-five participants to be selected by the Society of American Archivists to study the storage, restoration and collection of photographs.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEES - Officers, trustees and members of the Society have accepted assignments as chairmen of the following committees for 1983-84:

- Archives - Fran Land, Fran Sculli
- House Paint Colors - Dick McDonald
- Marketing - Kate Stryker
- Membership - Carol Webster
- Oral History - Margaret Coffey
- Program - Shirley Sarpi
- Publicity - Heather Richvalsky
- Slide Shows - Colleen McCullough
- Thistle Editor - Roldah Cameron
- Walking Tour - Charlanne Lamberto



LOOKING BACKWARD

History lovers are apt to wish that there were such a thing as a reverse time capsule so that they could go back in time. The desire to participate in a great historical event, to meet an admired ancestor or to view a town as it was in our grandparents' day is familiar to most of us. Until such a device is perfected, the past can only be captured through words, pictures and our imaginations. Utilizing some of each, go with your editor to Millburn at the turn of the century when the railroad station was located just north of the tracks where one of the junior high playing fields is today, quite near the spot where Brookside Drive angles off of Old Short Hills Road

I climbed down from the D.L.& W. train at the Millburn station and looked about, searching through the crowd for my brother. He had arrived the day before with his bicycle so that he might make some trial runs on the 25 mile course of the annual Decoration Day Bicycle Race. This year - 1901 - is the 16th running of the race and people come from all over the country to participate in the biggest sporting event of the year. The race starts in the neighboring town of Maplewood and goes back and forth between Millburn and Irvington. To celebrate the event the railroad station is decorated with American flags and red, white and blue bunting. Oh, it's exciting to be here!

What a relief to catch sight of Joe's smiling face. He greeted me and asked if I wanted to ride the trolley car to our hotel, but the day was a fine one so I opted for walking about the town to get the kinks out after the long train trip. We started south on Main Street in the direction of the center of town, passing the Millburn Electric Co. on the right and the Lighthipe paper mills on the left. Joe suggested we cross over to avoid McCoy's saloon which sounded as if it were already full of racing enthusiasts.

When we reached the intersection of Millburn Avenue and Main Street, I glanced up and down the pleasant, tree lined streets. There is a festive look to the town and some souvenir stands for the race were being set up near the band stand. The bike racks in front of Smith's Hotel on the northwest corner were full which didn't surprise me as that is the headquarters for the American Wheelmen. There are two general stores at the intersection and

both of them - McCullom's and Mundy's - seemed to be doing a brisk business.

Joe and I decided to continue down Main toward the church spire we could see over the trees. We found a grand wooden church called St. Stephen's with a shingled steeple and a parish house across Church Street. We walked almost to Willow Street to get some ice cream at Taylor's store which is across from a big paper mill with the funny name of Fandango Mills. Where do you suppose that name came from? While walking back to Millburn Center, we noticed a lot of ponds and marshes on the river side of the street that probably make for some good skating in winter.

At the center of town we turned west on Millburn Avenue as I was curious to see what lay in that direction. There was a meeting going on in the auditorium over Bunnell's butcher shop; it was a group of ladies who favor temperance. Some weekend to be promoting that! Washington School is a big red brick building - very modern - and right across the street is the town hall. Joe told me that the town hall used to be the Washington School, but about six years ago they moved it and remodelled it for the use of the town government and the volunteer fire department. Then they built the beautiful new school where the old one used to be. That shows you what a progressive town this is, though I could tell that from the telephone poles and the electric street lights. They have mostly flagstone sidewalks, too, instead of board ones.

The Baptist Church isn't new but it is pretty handsome with its tall steeple and fence all around it. Farther down the street we could see the Smith and Campbell mills; this town isn't called Millburn for nothing! At the gates of St. Stephen's Cemetery we turned around and came back past the Bodwell house and some greenhouses, where they were selling beautiful flowers, to Gentzel's grocery store on the corner of Spring Street. Seeing that food reminded us it was dinner time so we headed straight for the Vaux Hall Tavern in Millburn Center. The crowd in the bar there were taking sides as to who'll win the race tomorrow. Joe looked red-faced but didn't say anything. I know he hopes he'll do well enough so that next year there will be a group rooting for him. Our dinner in the dining room convinced us that it really is true that the Wittkops serve "the best fifty cent meal in the state."

COMMUTING TO SUMMIT - Using public transportation in our neck of the woods may have been fun once upon a time. It certainly appears that way in a photo that may be seen in the 1983 calendar of Brown-Fowler Realtors of Summit. Their custom is to publish a calendar highlighted with historic photographs of surrounding communities, so Owen Lampe selected for inclusion a picture from the Society archives dated December 18, 1905. It shows the conductor and passengers of a trolley car that ran between Millburn Center and Summit in the early years of this century.

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ARCHIVES - This rather ponderous sounding department of the Society is actually a rich source of local history. The tedious tasks of binding and filing papers, typing reference cards, etc. are balanced by an exciting phone call or letter requesting information about our town, its former inhabitants or special houses. That kind of genealogical or architectural inquiry inspires new research that adds to our knowledge and appreciation of the Township. Even more rewarding is personal contact with students or scholars who are doing research on related topics.

On two recent occasions graduate students have spent several days with members of the Society - Liz Howe, Ann Klemme, Fran Land - in order to research dissertations that will focus on Millburn-Short Hills. Mary Seis, a Ph.D. candidate in American studies and architectural history at the University of Michigan, plans to write a thesis on "the architect-designed houses of selected communities in the East and Mid-west between the years 1890 and 1920." Miss Seis will describe the architectural styles in each community she has selected, and how they were chosen by the clients and the architect working together. Cynthia Shaw, candidate for an M.A. in architectural history and historic preservation at the University of Virginia, is writing about the genesis of craftsman and picturesque style houses and the examples of them to be found here.

Working with these two delightful ladies makes the effort of keeping the Archives in order less prosaic and more than proves their value. When we receive copies of the publications of Misses Seis and Shaw, we will report further.

Frances Land

SALUTE TO EMMA HILL - Society member Miss Emma Hill, of Wyoming Avenue, was honored by the New Jersey Education Association on her 101st birthday in December. A plaque and citation were given by the NJEA to the centenarian who taught third grade at Wyoming School for 33 years, retiring from the Millburn school system in 1947. We suspect that many current Township residents are among her former students.

Miss Emma moved to Millburn in 1896 from her birthplace in Newark and graduated from Millburn High School in 1900. Eleven years later she began teaching at Wyoming School. In a 1976 interview with Alicia Roman of the Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society, Miss Emma related many of her memories of our town as it was in her youth. Would you believe sledding all the way down Old Short Hills Road from the Day Estate through Millburn Center unhampered by traffic on the road? Miss Emma did it!



THE NEWARK MUSEUM is a good place to visit. A recent show in celebration of Essex County's 300th anniversary, entitled "People and Places of Essex County," was mounted by Society officer Celeste Penney and included a painting by Worthington Whittredge called "View Near Millburn, N.J." Ongoing exhibits of interest to Society members are "Christmas at the Ballantine House" with a display of Victorian holiday gifts (through February) and "Century of Revivals: 19th Century American Furniture" (through July 5).

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Thistle Editor: Roldah Cameron 273-0943



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