

THISTLE



Millburn~
Short Hills
Historical Society

Vol. VIII, No. 3

May, 1984

"TOWARDS A MORE BEAUTIFUL MILLBURN"

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, June 11, 1984 7:45 p.m.
Millburn Public Library

Because one of our roles as a historical society is to help preserve and enhance the unique character of our community, our annual meeting this year will focus on down town Millburn's business districts. You are invited to attend this informative seminar co-sponsored by the Millburn-Short Hills Chamber of Commerce.

"Keeping Up Appearances", a National Trust slide presentation, will explain how to assess the resources unique to a downtown area and suggest ways to take advantage of them through preservation or renovation of property. Featured speakers will be Jon Brody MAI, a local real estate appraiser and consultant, and Kenneth Arlein CPA, who will discuss accounting aspects and investment tax credits related to rehabilitation and depreciation of business establishments. A question and answer period will follow.

A short business meeting and election for Historical Society members will precede the program of the joint meeting, so please be prompt in gathering at the Library by 7:45.

A THANK YOU FROM SOCIETY PRESIDENT, ELIZABETH HOWE

Dear Friends,

I'd like to thank all the Board Members and the many members of the Society who have been so helpful in the past four years. Your enthusiasm for our many different projects has been very gratifying.

I have learned so much from all of you who have contributed your knowledge of local history and architecture. Those intrepid souls who have crawled through moldy basements, searched out gravestones, and poured through dusty books deserve thanks as do those who have written newsletters, collected documents and photos, organized programs, kept our books and membership lists, and sold our publications. Nor do I forget those of you who have formed an appreciative audience at our programs.

My very best wishes to Margaret Coffey and her Board.

Liz Howe



Promenading at the Jersey Shore.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL - In the past year 429 individuals have supported our Historical Society programs and events with a dues paying membership. Since memberships are renewable on the first of July, we have enclosed a membership/dues envelope with this issue of the Thistle. We invite and encourage you to continue your participation and support in 1984-85. Suggestions for programs and projects are welcomed by your Board.

SOCIETY ELECTIONS - The Nominating Committee, composed of Charlanne Lamberto, chairman; Shirley Sarpi and June Albaugh, will present a slate of officers and trustees for election at the annual meeting on June 11. (*Asterisk denotes officers and trustees to be voted on.)

OFFICERS

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

TRUSTEES

- Roldah Cameron 1985
- George Clare 1985
- Charlanne Lamberto 1985
- *Carol Charles 1986
- Colleen McCullough 1986
- Bernadette Wagner 1986
- *Jim Coles 1987
- *Catherine Stryker 1987
- *Carol Webster 1987

Elizabeth Howe Past President, Ex-officio

ADVISORY

Howard Brahm, Ann Klemme

Our heartfelt thanks to retiring Board members Liz Howe, June Albaugh and Richard McDonald. Liz, in particular, has made tremendous contributions to the work of our Society in her two terms as president.

IS IT A MUSIC HALL OR A CASINO?

One of the first buildings erected in Short-Hills was the Music-hall, as it was called, whose picturesque style of architecture and prominent situation near the railroad have never failed to attract attention from passers-by. There was not, at the time of its erection, and there is not now, another building of the same character on the line of the railroad from Orange to Morristown. It has been the centre of social life in Short-Hills and one of the causes of the prosperous growth of the village. On its stage we have often had glimpses of

"A land where virtue in distress
Owes much to uncles in disguise;
Where jolly sailors freely bless
Their limbs, their timbers and their eyes;
And where the villain does confess
Conveniently before he dies."

And we have seen its auditorium filled by as brilliant a company of men and women as is to be seen anywhere, interested in some work of charity and benevolence, or intent to "chase the glowing hours with flying feet." Without this trysting-place social life in Short-Hills would probably lapse into that comatose condition which characterizes some neighboring villages.

The owner of this building has recently assented to a change in its name from the Music-hall to the Casino. This change has been heartily approved by some of the residents of Short-Hills, and heartily disapproved by others. We have been asked to protest against the new name by some of the latter who have buttonholed us as follows:

"Can you tell me why our Music-hall is now called a Casino?"

"A Casino is a club house, where drinks are sold. The ladies will be after you with a sharp stick if you don't protest against it."

"If Mr. Hartshorn wants a new name for it, let him call it the Short-Hills Hall."

The building was called by a wrong name at its outset. It never was a music-hall, because music was not taught in it; because it was not constructed especially for musical entertainments; because it was not used as a drinking saloon where music is employed

to attract customers. Any one of these purposes, and nothing else, entitles a building to be called by that name, Webster's Dictionary of the English Language gives the following definitions of a music-hall:

1. A hall constructed or used for musical entertainment.
2. A drinking saloon where vocal and instrumental music is a special attraction.

The later definition represents the Music-hall of the present day; a place where music is heard and drinks are sold at the same time. In England Music-halls are called "Disorderly houses" by Act of Parliament. At his moment the cry of philanthropists in London is, "Reform the Music-hall."

To drop this odorous name from our public building ought not to offend refined taste. What name shall take its place? Some one says call it a hall, the Short-Hills Hall. But this name carries no special meaning with it; it may be applied to any kind of apartment used for public purposes; like the loft over McCullom's store in Millburn which, for years, was called Washington Hall - a place where political elections were held.

Casino, on the other hand, has a special meaning which makes the name appropriate to such a handsome public building as ours is. The name has been applied to summer club houses; but if we turn to Webster's Dictionary we shall find the following to be the true definition of a Casino:

1. A small public house.
2. A building used for social meetings, having rooms for public amusements.

These definitions are an exact description of the Short-Hills Casino; a small public house; a building used for social meetings; a building having rooms for public amusements. The name is appropriate even in that narrower sense in which, according to Stormonth's Dictionary, it is used in England: "A saloon for dancing." No authority associates the name with a building devoted to vulgar purposes; none with a place where intoxicating drinks are sold.

(Reprinted from the December 1889 issue
of The News Item of Short Hills)

DELAWARE AND RARITAN CANAL

THE Delaware and Raritan Canal
is now open for vessels drawing five and a half feet of water.
Trenton, April 16th, 1943.—T&W.

CELEBRATING A NEW JERSEY CANAL

On a summer day in 1834 a military band and a crowd of dignitaries, including the governor, were on hand to celebrate the opening of the Delaware & Raritan Canal to commercial traffic

The 60 mile long inland waterway between Trenton and New Brunswick was part of a major trade route linking Philadelphia and New York. The canal, along with the Camden & Perth Amboy Railroad which was built simultaneously, contributed heavily to the development of the western and central parts of our state.

A steady stream of sloops, schooners and barges loaded with Pennsylvania anthracite and other cargo traveled the canal for almost a century. Some years the tonnage exceeded that of the Erie Canal, but beginning in the 1870's, the canal gradually lost its preeminence to the railroads. It operated at a loss after 1892 and in 1933 the D & R was closed to commercial traffic. A year later it was bought by the State and a section of it became the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park. Now used primarily for recreational and ecological purposes, the canal also provides 70 million gallons of water a day to homes and businesses in central New Jersey. It has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1973.

To mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the canal, Gov. Thomas Kean will lead a procession by float from Rock Raven to Stockton on June 24. Other State agencies and municipalities plan commemorative events in honor of the D & R's sesquicentennial. An exhibition, "The Delaware and Raritan Canal: A Retrospective," will open in the State Museum in Trenton on June 16 and will be shown through the fall. The exhibition will focus on the technology of the canal's construction and maintenance, industrial development along its length, and its use as a recreational area long before it became a State park. June 16 is also the date of "A 150th Anniversary Symposium" at the State Museum Auditorium in Trenton. For information about these events and many others in celebration of the canal, call the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission at (609) 292-8594.

Or just pick a beautiful summer day to drive to the western part of our state and explore this historic, peaceful area. Canoeing and fishing are permitted along the canal's entire length.

SUMMER READING - The Millburn Public Library will cooperate with the Society this summer by displaying some books we think might brighten your idle hours. Among the titles:

Washington: The Indispensable Man by James T. Flexner. This book, on which the recent TV miniseries about our first President was based, received a Pulitzer Prize citation.

Parallel Lives. In this witty, perceptive look at five Victorian couples (the Carlyles, Ruskins, Dickens, Mills and Eliots), Phyllis Rose re-examines the assumptions and attitudes that all of us bring to marriage.

The Valley of the Horses. The second in the Earth's Children series by Jean Auel carries on the story of Ayla, the rebellious heroine of the prehistoric Clan of the Cave Bear.

Winston Churchill by William Manchester. Even if you have read other biographies of this 20th century hero, this one will add insight and dimension to your understanding of a colossus.

The Fall of a Doll's House by Jane Davison tells of three generations of American women and the houses they lived in - located right next door in Summit, N.J.! Familiar territory seen with a discerning eye.

Death Comes to the Archbishop and My Antonia. Willa Cather brings the people and scenery of the American West to vivid life in these two timeless tales of pioneer days.

The Victorian Seaside Cookbook was inspired by the menus of the fabulous hotels on the Jersey shore between 1860-1901. Anne Bishop and Doris Simpson have gathered a collection of hearty recipes authentic to the period and embellished them with delightful drawings from the archives of the New Jersey Historical Society.

The March of Folly - Tireless historian Barbara Tuchman enumerates some landmark governmental blunders beginning with the fall of Troy, including the British loss of North America in the 18th century, and concluding with the war in Viet Nam.

And don't forget that Big Brother is watching, so you'd better re-read George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four!

CALENDAR

- May 6-June 3 - Questover, a Designer Showcase at 1060 Central Ave., Plainfield for the benefit of Muhlenberg Hospital. Thirty rooms in this 1893 shingle-style house are newly decorated by prominent N.J. designers. Admission \$7.50
- June 3 - MSHHS annual Wine and Cheese Party. Watch your mail for details of time and place.
- June 11 - MSHHS Annual Meeting and joint meeting with Chamber of Commerce will include National Trust slide show on "Keeping Up Appearances." Millburn Library. 7:45 pm
- June 16 - "The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A 150th Anniversary Symposium." Conference on the canal age in America and role of canals in N.J. past and future. State Museum, Trenton.
- June 24 - Special events to celebrate D & R Canal Sesquicentennial at Stockton, Griggstown and Blackwell's Mills.

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