



# *Notes from the Academy*

JUNE 2021 | VOL. 3 NO. 2

## From the Desk of the President

Looking to the future, work continues on at the Society while restrictions are being lifted. Technology has taken an elevated place in our efforts obviously looking toward a time of being face to face and in person with our friends. See the last page for news about our first hybrid online and in-person board and staff meeting.

We are grateful for your continued interest in volunteering for the Society! Oral Histories, collection cataloging, and exhibition installation all afford unique occasions for volunteers to intersect in meaningful ways with the history of our town.

Currently, the priority for oral history interviews is those persons connected with the school on South Broad Street. Volunteers can interview, edit, or transcribe, participating in a single part or through the whole process.

Collections management is another piece of what transpires at the Historical Society. At present, cataloging sessions are filled with questions from the volunteers about objects or photos of people and places around town and all the special vocabulary used to describe those items. Looking toward future researchers, the piece is identified in a manner to be easily found in the collection.

Perhaps one of these activities piques your interest. Would you have several hours a month to join others in learning more about your town and serving our community by preserving its history? Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions!

# Highlights in this Issue

*From the Desk of the President*

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*Olde Tyme Peach Festival*

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*Hat from the Collection*

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*Collection Object Guessing Game!*

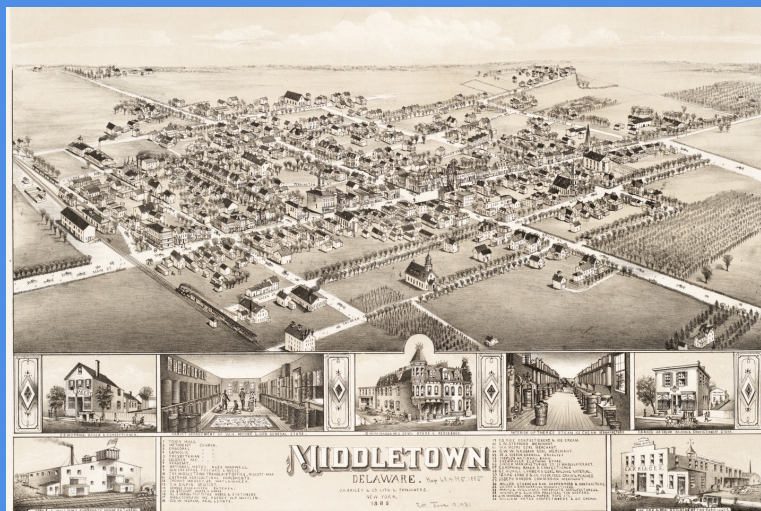
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*Original Poetry  
Middletown Transcript*

As of May 21st, 2021, the Governor of Delaware made some modifications to the State of Emergency, lifting only a few restrictions. For large gatherings, those have not been lifted. Due to this, we will be canceling Middletown Peach Festival for August 21, 2021.

Should anyone have any questions, please feel free to contact us by email at [Middletownpeachfestival@gmail.com](mailto:Middletownpeachfestival@gmail.com).

Thank you for your patience and understanding.



Map, Middletown, Delaware, 1885, MHS Collection

# Items from the Collection

By Alison Matsen, Museum Coordinator

Here's a recent addition to our collection, a straw hat, below, in very good condition, bought from the estate of Corbit Collins, a local farmer. This style was very popular for both men and women about 100 years ago, and was used especially in warm weather. The style is often referred to as a boater, skimmer or Sennit hat, sennit being the style of straw braid used to make the hat. On July 17th, 1917, Mullin's Big Home Store advertised hats made of sennit in the *Middletown Transcript* at right. Also, note the character on the right in this cartoon from the *Middletown Transcript* on August 7th, 1920, wears a similar style hat.



**Men's Suits 1-2 Price**  
**\$5 to \$15**  
Were \$10 to \$30. Clean-up sale of Single Suits, broken sizes and small lots; every size among them, 34 to 44 chest.

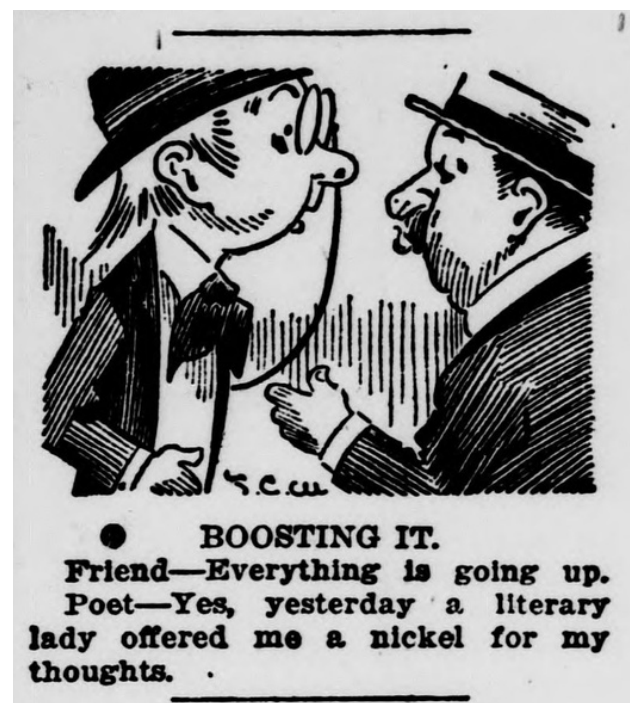
**Straw Hats 1-2 Price**  
**Now \$1 to \$2.50**  
Were \$2 to \$5. Finest Sennits, Splits, Mackinaws and Rough Braids; genuine Panamas, Leghorns and Bankoks; now \$3.50.

**Men's Trousers, \$2**  
Every size among them, 31 to 44 waist of single pairs, were \$2.50 to \$4.

BARGAINS IN SHOES  
BARGAINS IN SHIRTS  
BARGAINS IN THIN UNDERWEAR.

Everything in Thin Coats, Palm Beach Suits, Duck and Khaki Trousers, Auto Coats and Summer Clothes for Men and Boys.

**MULLIN'S BIG HOME STORE**





# Poetry in Middletown

From the *Middletown Transcript*, May 29th, 1878

Transcription on next page

## Original Poetry.

*Written for the Middletown Transcript.*

### Gentle Words.

A young rose in the summer time  
Is beautiful to me,  
And glorious the many stars  
That glimmer on the sea ;  
But gentle words and loving hearts,  
And hands to clasp my own,  
Are better than the brightest flowers  
Or stars that ever shone !

The sun may warm the grass to life,  
The dew the drooping flower,  
And eyes grow bright and watch the light  
Of autumn's opening hour,  
But words that breathe of tenderness,  
And smiles we know are true,  
Are warmer than the summer time,  
And brighter than the dew.

It is not much the world can give  
With all its subtle art,  
And gold or gems are not the things  
To satisfy the heart ;  
But oh ! if those who cluster round  
The altar and the hearth,  
Have gentle words and loving smiles,  
How beautiful is earth !      A. R. C.

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Can You Guess What it is?  
Go to the next page to find out!



## Can You Guess What it is?

### Find out here!

If you guessed that it is a bell pull, you're right! This is from the L. Naudain house just south of Middletown, which was torn down in the spring of 2019. Before the invention of electric door bells, people used mechanical ones. The white enamel handle was secured on the wall beside the front door, and the rest of it was hidden inside the wall, with the wire hook attached to another wire inside the house, attached to a small metal bell with a clapper. A visitor would pull the enamel handle toward himself to activate the mechanism. The Middletown Historical Society has many items in their architectural elements collection, to help document buildings now gone.



Door Bell Pull, 19th Century, MHS Collection



## Board Members meet in person

For the first time in over a year, the Board members and staff of the Middletown Historical Society were able to meet in a hybrid online and in-person meeting. We look forward to things getting back to normal in the coming year! Remember the museum and research room is open by appointment!



L-R in person:

Dale Wyatt, Linda Biggs, Linda Harting, Phyllis Waecker

L-R: On Computer:

MaryAlice Aguilar, Alison Matsen, Abby Harting

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Phyllis Waecker  
Dale Wyatt

The Middletown Historical Society collects, preserves, educates, and encourages the development of Middletown's history in order to foster historic awareness and pride in our community.