



Notes from the Academy

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From the Desk of the President

Daffodils and other bulbs push through the soil to delight us with their exuberant blooms. We too have pushed through these times and are delighted to participate more fully in refreshing activities. That was the general tenor felt at the Annual Incorporation Day Ball held on the actual anniversary of incorporation, February 12th. The dancefloor rang with chatter and laughter as beginners and seasoned dancers reveled in the evening.

What an exhilarating time celebrating our town's birthday! We hope to keep the energy going with the Olde Tyme Peach Festival this year after a two-year hiatus. More information on how you may participate follows.

As a reminder, we are here for you, to foster awareness and pride in your community. Public programs on the third Tuesday of most months, working together on volunteer projects, probing the *Transcript* for relevant information are some of the activities available to you. Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or ideas you have at mhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



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Upcoming Program

Tuesday, April 19th

7:30 pm at the Historical Society

Ever wondered how Middletown grew in its early days from one house owned by the Petersons in 1678, to a small village in 1799? In 1855 the town grew a lot with the laying of the train tracks west of town. Professor Bruce Bendler will be showing us new research he has done on this topic. All are welcome; plenty of parking in back of the Academy at 216 N. Broad St.



Volunteer for the Peach Festival

The peach trees are blossoming now, so it's time to be thinking of the Olde Tyme Peach Festival on the third Saturday in August. After two years of cancellations due to Covid, we're planning to have a great day on August 20, 2022. As usual we will be relying on volunteers to help out by taking a two-hour shift sometime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you can help (a lot of jobs to choose from), please call or text Alison Matsen at 302-740-5544.

In January we welcomed a new volunteer, Kathy Connor from Bayberry South, who has been working on transcribing items written in cursive, such as postcards, letters, etc. Because lots of students aren't learning cursive in school now, we want future museum visitors to know what they're looking at. If you can read cursive and want to devote a few hours a month to this project, please call Alison. (see above)

We're also looking for someone who wants to work with a 19th century handwritten ledger.



Middletown's Birthday Ball

In February we again welcomed dancers and lovers of history to Middletown's annual birthday ball! The dancers were attired elegantly in their dresses and suits and the enjoyment of the evening was entirely unblemished. Of great excitement was the fact that more than half of the dancers had never attended a ball before! The event was held at the Jean Birch Senior Center. Many thanks to Drew and Linda Harting for all their work in carrying off such a lovely evening. As we plan for the future, we look forward to continuing to host this program! Please enjoy a description of another ball held in Middletown from the *Middletown Transcript* on the following page.





MID-WINTER DANCE

Given in the Middletown Opera House Wednesday Evening

TWENTY-SIX COUPLES PRESENT

The mid-winter dance given by some of the young men of Middletown in the Opera House on Wednesday evening, was a delightful affair, about fifty guests being present. The trimmings of the room were beautiful, requiring much planning. In the center of the ceiling was a dome with lavender and white crepe paper, streamers carried from it to the sides of the room. In the dome were dozens of tiny electric lights.

A delicious supper was served about midnight after which dancing continued until about three o'clock. The First Infantry Orchestra of Wilmington, consisting of six pieces, furnished music.

A VALENTINE

A valentine token I send you,
A demure little half-blown rose,
And under the seal of its fragrance
A secret I have to disclose.

Long years ago, by a cradle,
Where a dreaming little one lay,
The fairies gathered and brought him
Such gifts as the fairies may,
He should be blithe and bonny
And gallant and good and gay.

But the wisest of all the fairies
Her wand held over his head.
"Love shall follow his footsteps
Wherever they lead," she said.
"Never a joy shall pass him
But love shall come in its stead."

Just then the unheeding baby
Stirred and awoke and cried.
The fairies silently vanished
Away from the cradle's side;
But the fairy gifts they left him
Abode and will ever abide.

They grew with the little one's growing,
And the child was good and gay .
And gallant and blithe and bonny,
But the last was the best, I say,
For never one knew him but loved him
And loves him still to this day.

That you were that fortunate baby,
Is the secret I had to disclose;
But, hark you, I pray you, and mark you,
'Tis told to you under the rose!

—ELIZABETH WALLING

Celebrating the Holidays in Middletown

Middletonians have long enjoyed any opportunity to celebrate. Stories abound in the Middletown Transcript and in the Society's collection of celebrations from dances, holidays, and honoring graduations.

Middletonians know how to kick up their heels and let their hair down. At the left from February 10th, 1917 the Transcript published a lovely poem about Valentines.

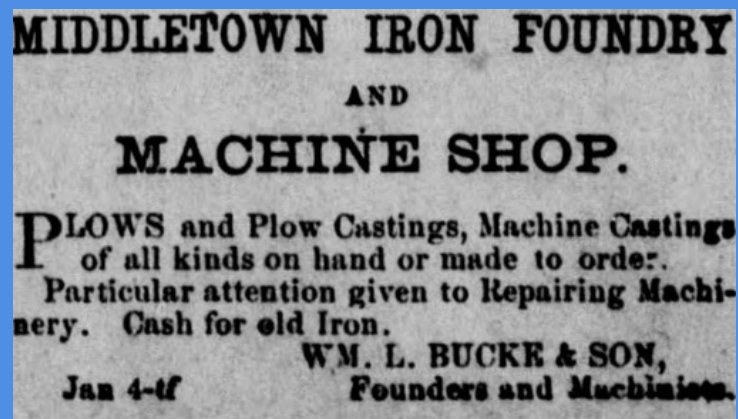
And St. Patrick's day is not to be outdone. Below are remarks on a St. Patrick's Day Party held by the Queen Esther Circle at Bethesda Church from the Transcript, March 28th, 1914. While there is truth to L.P Hartly's "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there", while things continue to change there is also a familiarity in the past.

A St. Patrick's Day

The March meeting of the Queen Esther Circle of Bethesda M. E. Church was held at the home of Miss Mary Richards on Main street, on Tuesday evening. The decorations and refreshments were appropriate to St. Patrick's Day, and progressive games were a feature of the evening's entertainment.

Objects from our Collection

The Middletown Society already has over 5,000 accessioned objects and archives in its collections. The collections committee has formulated guidelines for what we are looking to collect now. One of the areas we need to strengthen is items made or manufactured locally. Last year we added this manhole cover, pictured below, which was manufactured in Middletown by Wm. L. Bucke & Son to the collection. The advertisement is from the *Transcript* issue of May 23rd, 1874.



Another recent addition to our group of MOT cookbooks is from the Townsend Women's Club, c. 1980. There's no exact publishing date on it. If you have information about the publishing date of this cookbook, please let us know! Here's a page from it for you to try out your baking skills.

SWEET POTATO BISCUITS

Kathryn McDonald

3/4 c. mashed sweet potatoes	2/3 c. milk
4 Tbsp. melted butter	4 tsp. baking powder
1 1/4 c. flour	1 Tbsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. salt	

Mix flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Add rest of ingredients. Mix together. Roll out, cut, bake 15 minutes at 425°.

Contact Us!

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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.