

Historical Society Launches Web Site

*B*oot up your computer. Click on www.middlesexhistory.org. The Middlesex County Historical Society's Web site is live and well!

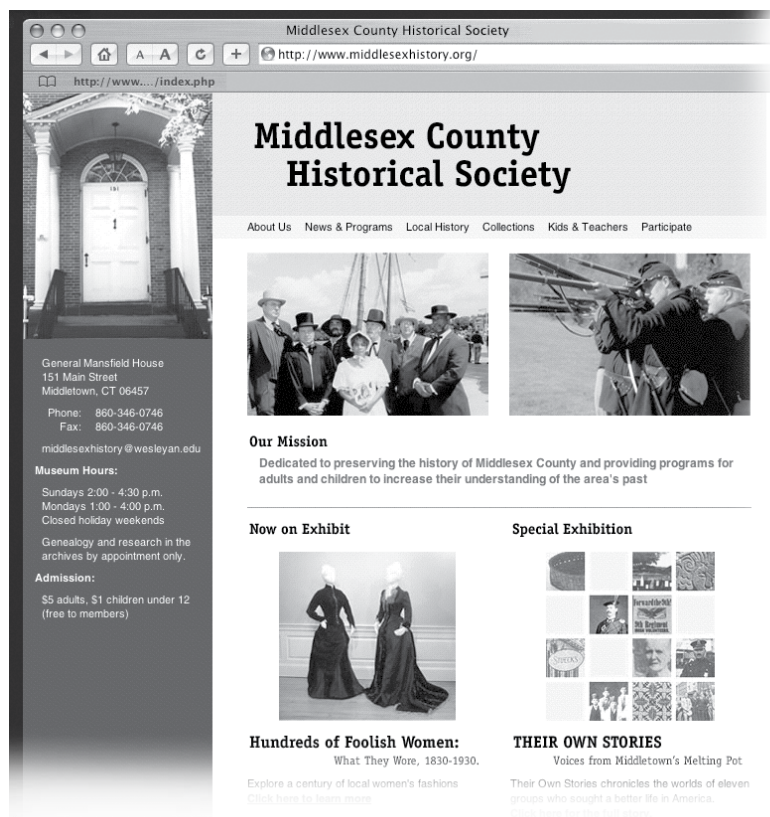
The just-launched Internet site is chockfull of information about upcoming events, exhibits, local history and Historical Society resources. The site is laid out in six sections—About Us, News & Programs, Local History, Collections, Kids & Teachers and Participate—with each section boasting five to ten individual pages. Visitors can learn about future walking tours, how General Mansfield died—even what's for sale in the museum gift shop.

The centerpiece of the new Web site is *Their Own Stories: Voices from Middletown's Melting Pot*, a virtual tour of the acclaimed museum exhibit that graced our galleries from 2001-2003. On this special microsite, viewers can click through 350 years of our community's history as told through the stories of families representing nearly a dozen different ethnic groups that made Greater Middletown their home. The *Their Own Stories* site was made possible through a generous grant from the Middlesex County Community Foundation.

"With our new Web site, we can reach people all over the globe," said Marnie Goodman, president of Historical Society, who spearheaded the development of the site. "Whether people want information about our city's past or simply the starting time of our next walking tour, they can find it quickly and easily with a click of the mouse."

Marnie said the virtual tour of *Their Own Stories*, which sits prominently on the Web site's home page, is a model for the kind of information that will be available on the site in the future. "Through 21st century technology, we can make the stories, images and artifacts of our past readily accessible for years to come. We can extend the life of our exhibits long beyond the one or two years they are typically on display in the General Mansfield House museum."

Future exhibits, the Middletown Heritage Trail, and genealogical information are just some of the ideas being explored to add to the Web site in the next few years.



"The great characteristic of online technology is that a Web site is infinitely expandable," said Marnie. "Unlike a hard copy catalogue or book, we can add sections and update information without significant expense. And best of all, people can access the information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

In the next few months, the Historical Society plans to add online payment capability to its Web site. Soon, people will be able to renew their membership, purchase items from the gift shop or make donations online with a credit card.

"We're very excited about the world of possibilities our new Web site offers. By focusing on the future, we can spotlight the past," she said. "We are grateful to Wesleyan University for its help in making our Web site a reality."

What's Inside:

Noted Author to Speak on Major Taylor Jailhouse Records Join Collection
Membership Rollcall New Scandal Tour Historic Scenes for Sale

SOCIETY NEWS

Dear Gentle Reader,

You may have noticed that the *Historical Observer* has a brand-new look. We have talented graphic designer Dave Wolfram to thank for its fresh, crisp face-lift. Dave takes hold of the design reins from the deft hands of recently retired board member Jorgen Hansen, who had brought his inimical touch to these pages from the 1992 to 2004. Jorgen relocated to Kansas last year.

Dave brings plenty of talent and experience to his new role. For more than a decade, he has been our chief graphic designer, creating bold and inviting looks to everything from our stationery and brochures to posters and invitations. Perhaps Dave's greatest gift to the Historical Society was the top-flight job he did designing the placards for the Middletown Heritage Trail. A big thank you to Dave for taking on another design task.

As we went to press, Middletown's third graders were busy dotting "i's" and crossing "t's" on their essays for the 2005 William E. Sheedy Memorial History Contest before the April 14 deadline. Each year, city students are invited to research the life of an ancestor and report their findings in an essay, video or format of their choosing. In 2004, we judged 118 wonderful portraits of beloved grandparents, quirky aunts and uncles, and accomplished forebears from a more distant past. The Historical Society will host a reception on Wednesday, June 1 to honor all 2005 participants and present \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds to the winners. Members are invited to attend.

During her long life, Marge Schultz, along with her late husband Arthur, was a tireless supporter of the Historical Society, volunteering countless hours as a docent, archivist, gardener and so much more. Marge, who died last year, has ensured that her support for our organization will continue. Her estate bequeathed a generous donation to our endowment fund.

The lifeblood of any organization is its members, and we are happy to report that more than 30 individuals and families joined the Historical Society during the 2004-2005 membership year. A lovely, laughter-filled reception was held in their honor last November. New members who could not attend the autumn soiree are welcome



to stop by General Mansfield House during museum hours to pick up your complimentary General Mansfield House mug. Welcome new members! Elsewhere in this edition of *The Historical Observer*, gentle reader, you can find a listing of our current membership rolls.



Would you like to receive notices of events and other Historical Society news via email? We would love to put you on our email list. Go to our new Web site—

www.middlesexhistory.org—click on **Participate!** to shoot us your online address.



Now that spring is finally here, we can stop worrying about snow. But despite all the white stuff this past winter, we never had to fret about General Mansfield House's sidewalks. That's because Scott Bishel was always there with shovel and salt in hand to keep our walkways clear. A big "hats off" to Scott for his dedication and hard work.



Applause too for the crew who once again staged a successful Antique & Classic Car Show last October. The 19th annual vintage auto love-fest netted more than \$3000 to fuel our activities. Thanks to: Jerry Augustine, Marc Augustine, Rich Bergen, Pete Bozzo, Wally Haas, John Kuzminski, Bill Miller, Oran Mills, Mark Olerud, Jack Pieper, Bernie Prue, Seb Sbalcio, and Debby Shapiro and the late Ed Yuska. For 2005, we have two new members: Bill George and Ray Beauregard. *Welcome!*

In Memorium

It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of longtime friend Ed Yuska, who died this winter. Ed was an indefatigable volunteer, who served on the Car Show Committee for more than 10 years. A car buff, Ed was in his element working on the show, whether it was selling ads, computerizing the list of exhibitors, or arriving 6:30 a.m. on show day to set up. Last fall, his great joy was seeing a 1964 Dodge 440 series sedan owned by his son Jim and grandson Blake as the featured car. Despite his declining health, Ed was able to spend the entire day at the Car Show. We will miss him very much.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On Exhibit: <i>Hundreds of Foolish Women</i> <i>Women's Clothing 1830-1930</i>	Sundays	2:00 – 4:30 pm
	Mondays	1:00 – 4:00 pm
Annual Meeting	Wednesday, April 20	7:30 pm
Lecture: Major Taylor		
Andrew Ritchie, biographer and lecturer at Le Montfort University, England		
First Baptist Church, 93 Main Street Reception to follow at General Mansfield House		
SCANDAL! Walking Tour	Thursday, May 20	6:00 pm
Reception: Sheedy History Contest participants	Wednesday, June 1	6:00 pm
20 th Annual Antique & Classic Car Show at Pat Kidney Field, Middletown	Sunday, October 2	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
Graveyard Walking Tour	Sunday, October 30	2:00 pm
Middlefield Cemetery, Rte. 157		

*Note: All events will be held at General Mansfield House unless otherwise noted.

Historian to Speak on Middletown's 19th-Century Lance Armstrong at Annual Meeting

Nearly 100 years before Lance Armstrong dominated the sport of bicycle racing, and 50 years before Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball, an African American named Marshall W. (Major) Taylor was the world's champion bicycle racer. In 1899, Taylor became only the second African American to win a world championship in any sport. His extraordinary story of skill, perseverance, and determination in the face of the numerous obstacles presented by his race was virtually forgotten until the publication of his biography, *Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicyclist*, by Andrew Ritchie in 1988.

As interest in Major Taylor has grown in the past decade, fascinating facts about his life have emerged that are of special interest to the greater Middletown community. Major Taylor was not only a giant of the sports world he was once a resident of our fair city. Not long ago, Historical Society intern Jesse Nasta discovered that a century ago Taylor lived on Court Street for about 18 months.

On April 20, members of the community can obtain a rare glimpse into the life and times of Major Taylor when biographer Andrew Ritchie gives the Arthur M. Schultz Memorial Lecture at the Historical Society's annual meeting. Co-sponsored by Liberty Bank and the history department at Wesleyan University, Ritchie's talk will explore not only Major Taylor's life but the history, development and social implications of cycling.

"Whether you're interested in local history, sports, race relations, or cycling, Ritchie's talk will be a fascinating one," said Bill Ryczek, the Historical Society's first vice president and chair of the program committee.

"We are indeed fortunate to be able to bring Andrew Ritchie to Middletown"

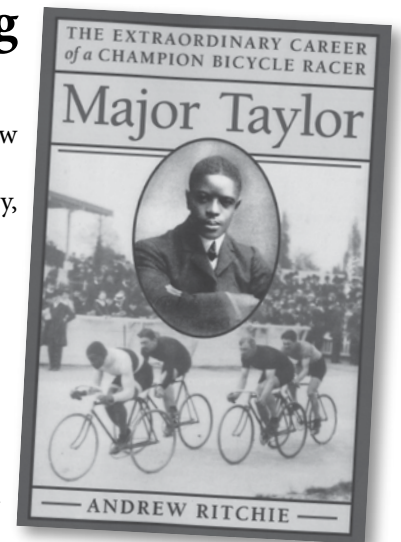
A resident of Berkeley, California, Ritchie is currently a Research Fellow attached to De Montfort University, Leicester, England and the author of *King of the Road: An Illustrated History of Cycling*, in addition to his biography of Major Taylor.

His history of competitive cycling, *Bicycle Racing: Sport, Technology and Modernity, 1867-1903* will be published shortly by Taylor and Francis.

Ritchie practices what he preaches, and is a cycling enthusiast who is planning a tour of either Morocco or Algeria for the coming year.

The annual meeting agenda will include the presentation and approval of the 2003 operating budget, short reports from the Treasurer and President, and approval the chair of the nominating committee whose mission is to compose a slate of board officers and directors to serve a new two-year term starting in April 2006.

The 2005 annual meeting and lecture be held Wednesday, April 20th at 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 93 Main Street, Middletown. Refreshments will be served immediately following at General Mansfield House, just a few steps away. Admission is free.



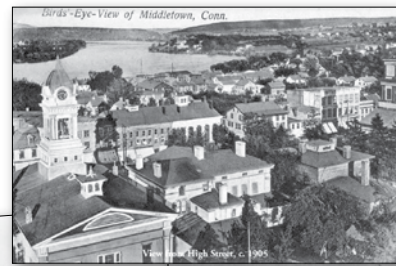
Historic Scenes for Sale

*F*ire the decorator. Cancel the art consultant. We can help you spruce up your home or office. Charming scenes of vintage Middletown are now available for framing.

Picture a bird's-eye view of downtown and the Connecticut River from 1905. Or Main Street's brick storefronts with their colorful awnings from 1912. Or an 1899 scene of our busy commercial boulevard when horse-drawn carts were the norm. Portraits like these can grace your walls, capturing the appeal of a bygone era.

The Historical Society is offering for sale a dozen different views of the city from a century ago. The reproductions are culled from our extensive collection of vintage colored postcards and photographs. They are available in a variety of sizes, ranging from 8"x 10" to 30" x 40". Price varies from \$30 to \$170, depending on size.

Already these delightful conversation starters are in great demand. The Inn at Middletown's restaurant, Tavern at the Armory, purchased more 30 historic scenes from our



archives to evoke the days when horses outnumbered cars. To give its retail space a local feel, the McDonald's restaurant on South Main Street also showcases our historic pictures in its establishment.

To purchase your very own historic reproductions, please call the Historical Society at 860-346-0746 or stop by during museum hours. The scenes make a terrific gift.

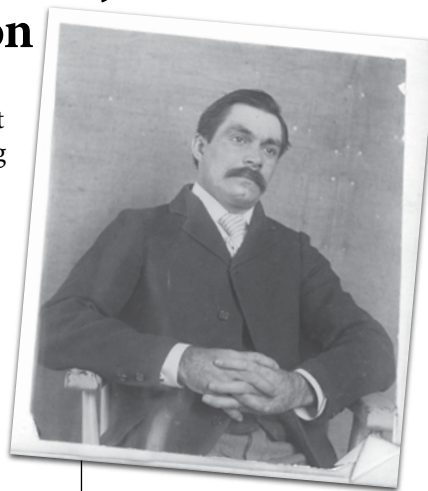
Illuminating Jailhouse Records Join Historical Society Collection

*T*he mustached gentleman gazing pensively out from the photograph hardly seems like the murdering type. He sits, hands folded, wearing a striped cravat, looking for all the world as if he is watching a tennis match.

But the photograph, dated 1899, is that of a convicted murderer named Joseph Hough. Hough's image, and those of other local criminals, stare out from the pages of a book that the Historical Society recently purchased at auction. The leather-edged volume and four others contain the records of the men and women committed to Middlesex County's jail in Haddam in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Authorities noted the inmates' ages, physical descriptions (including scars and tattoos, which were common), crimes and sentences.

"The Haddam jail records paint an unusually detailed picture of Middlesex County's fringe population—mainly the very poor—between 1892 and 1917," said Historical Society Director Di Longley. "We are extremely pleased to have acquired these important documents for our collection."

The jailhouse records record the breadth of criminal activity of a century ago, from the case of 22-year-old Lulu Smith, convicted in 1895 of being a "night walker"—the



Victorians' oh-so-subtle term for "prostitute" to Gilbert Stancliff, the 16-year-old son of a well-to-do Portland family, arrested for burglary. Di notes that the pages chronicle the misdeeds of countless other locals, convicted of assault, drunkenness, bastardy, arson, incest, and more.

The same auction also yielded the historical society court records from Middletown dating from the late 1700s and early 1800s, and five military pension applications.

"The military pension applications are particularly poignant," said Di. "Here are touching stories of Revolutionary War veterans who by the 1820s had become aged and impoverished. Edward Foster, aged 60, described his situation thus: 'I am badly ruptured...my wife is aged and infirm...I live in a hut on the town's land.'"

Like the jail records, the pension papers reveal a part of our community seldom preserved for posterity. They give us an extraordinary look into the lives of the very poor nearly two centuries ago.

Psst...

Scandalous Walking Tour Set for May 19

*L*ive, local and very, very late-breaking. The Historical Society's latest dish of murder, mayhem and malfeasance will be served with a sneer at the 4th annual SCANDAL! walking tour on Thursday, May 19, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Director Di Longley promises lots of tasty tittle-tattle in her repast of the past, as she leads eager listeners on a one-hour stroll through the city's downtown. At various sites along the way, you will hear the shocking truth about our not-so-pure-Puritan and venal Victorian forebears.

"Corruption, infidelity, greed; they are part of the human condition," says Di, "and were as likely to occur 200 years ago as today. The great fun of the SCANDAL! tour is recognizing that people who lived in earlier eras were subject to the same weaknesses and misjudgment as folks are today."

Di swears to tell all. Take the case of Samuel Cunningham, his wife Hannah and their son Archibald. Squabbling at home was not enough for these three. To make their contentious points, they placed advertisements against each other in the *Middlesex Gazette*.

Or consider this political hot potato from 1776. The eldest son of patriot Benjamin Franklin, William, is arrested as a Tory and placed on parole in a fine home in Middletown. Though he is on his honor as a to behave, young Franklin conspires with other, shall we say, closet Tories, and eventually Middletown's city fathers arrange for him to be deported to Granby's dirt-floor jail.

You'll also get the not-so-sweet lowdown on public confessions, murderous love affairs, and the struggle some local citizens had adhering to the burgeoning temperance movement.

The one-hour walk on the historic side begins Thursday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m. in front of General Mansfield House. Tickets are \$8 for members; \$10 for non-members. Refreshments will be served afterwards.



2004 in Pictures



1.

2.

4.

3.

1. Happy Birthday, Middlesex Hospital! Nearly 100 people listened to Di Longley's fascinating talk on how medicine was practiced in days gone by in House Calls, a special walking tour sponsored by Middlesex Hospital last September as part of its yearlong 100th anniversary celebration. Afterwards, participants enjoyed a lovely reception in General Mansfield House's garden.

2. At a reception on June 2, the 13 winners of the 2004 William E. Sheedy Memorial History Contest take a bow before beaming family members and friends. The 2004 contest attracted 118 budding third-grade historians who wrote essays about the life of one of their ancestors. The 2004 winners were: Taylor Brenchak, William Shugrue, Jonah Allen, Jonathan Mazzotta, Joseph Mazzotta, Shane Phenicie, Amber Sekoll, William Chambliss Woods, Samuel Yount, Dylan George, Siena Biales, Zach Lanza and Christina D'Amico

3. Opening night for *Hundreds of Foolish Women: What They Wore 1830-1930* spurred many party-goers to play dress up. More than 100 members and friends enjoyed wine, hors d'oeuvres and the beautiful clothes on display from our collection. The exhibit will be on display throughout 2005.

4. Last October, the 19th Annual Antique & Class Car Show attracted more than a thousand car enthusiasts eager to ogle cream-puffs of yesteryear. Some 230 vintage wheels vied for best in class. The Historical Society raised more than \$3000.

The Middlesex County Historical Society's Membership Rolls

April 2004 – March 2005

New Members

Jennifer Alexander & Mark Masselli
 Gene, Deborah & Brandon Arnold
 Penny Apter
 David Bauer
 Penelope Bianchi
 Marge & Richard DeBold
 Patricia Farrell & Peter Sipples
 Robert & Charlotte Fralick
 Grace Greco
 Sallie Hayden & Jeff Bianco
 Beverly Hoffman
 William Howard
 Patricia Hubbard
 David & Lynda Larson
 Marc & Judith Levin
 Steve & Thea Ling
 Audrey Livingston
 Andrea Malon
 Frank Marsilli
 Ron & Lois McCutcheon
 Bud & Gail McDowell
 Jennifer & William Pinch
 Gail & David Porteus
 Michael & Nancy Rogalsky
 Amy & Doug Roper
 Tom & Maryann Serra
 Catherine Smythe
 Brian Stewart
 Arthur & Susan Taylor
 Jerry Wensinger
 Ted & Mary Xenelis

Patrons

Phil & Marie Cacciola
 Michael & Liz Cubeta
 Robert Cumming
 Bruce Fraser
 Laurie & Peter Frenzel
 Barbara & Richard Gibbons
 Dona Goodman
 Marnie Goodman & Gordon Hard
 Welles & Lillian Guilmartin
 Jeffrey Makala
 Laura A Martino
 Jack & Diana McCain
 Larry & Patty McHugh
 Margaret Merrill
 Thad & Anne Nowakowski
 PCI Medical, Inc.
 Bruce Perry
 Gertrude & Joseph Rumberger
 Ronald Schatz
 Deborah Shapiro
 Catherine Branch Stebbins
 Arthur E. Webster

Life Members

Nancy Bauer
 Mrs. Wm. Fredrick Briggs
 George & Camille Camp
 Mrs. J.M. Flag
 Kathie Green
 Maria Holzberg
 Loretta Ingersoll
 Mrs. William Fisher Jarvis
 The Magee Company
 Scott Shapiro
 Ralph & Jean Shaw
 Bernice Stierlen
 Donald Taylor
 James Webber
 Barbara & Nelson Wetmore
 Eleanor Wootten

Members

Alexandra Adelstein
 Susan, John & Stephan Allison
 Dr. & Mrs. Mehadin Arafeh
 Gerald Augustine
 Marc Augustine
 John Bacon
 Mr. & Mrs. Arlington Bailey
 Barbara Bartoli
 Alice Bauer
 Michael & Kathleen Beal
 Phyllis & Warren Bengtson
 Douglas Bennet
 Bergan Architectural Woodwork
 Edith & Marvin Betts
 Mr. & Mrs. John Bickford
 Arthur Bishel
 Scott Bishel
 Pete Bozzo
 Barbara Brainard
 Joan Brennan
 Morton & Kathryn Briggs
 Dolly Buckley
 Lois Bukowiec
 Kirsten Carlson & Anthony
 Kriwokuski
 Anne & Gabe Choquette
 Harvey Clew
 John Cloud
 W. Brewster Cocknell
 Katherine Coley
 Jack & Joyce Conklin
 Edward & Joy Coolidge
 Richard Cotter
 Christina Crosby & Janet Jakobsen
 Eldon Crowell
 Ellen D'Oench
 Janet Daniels
 Mary Jane Dapkus

Dorothy Davis
 Elizabeth Davis
 Trevor & Bobbie Davis
 Harry Dickerson
 Laurie & Rick Dickerson
 Sue & Dick Dickerson
 Arthur Director
 John Doolittle
 Sarah Downes
 Bob & Suzy Dutcher
 Charlene Engelsgaard
 Ted Esselstyn & Anne Bingham
 Barbara Fazzino
 Catherine Fiducia
 Helen Fields
 Trish Finnegan
 William Foye
 Patricia & Robert Frederick
 Robert Fricker & Charlotte Rea
 Ruth German
 Peter Gill
 Michael Giuliano
 Estelle Goodman
 Wallace Haas
 Donald Hahn
 John & Robin Hall
 Erik Hanson
 Henry Hanson
 Dorian Hill
 William Howe
 Charles Jarzabek
 Susanne Javorski
 Agnes Johnson
 Elizabeth Johnson
 Joyce & Robert Kirkpatrick
 Marcy & Ronald Klattenberg
 Emily & Edward Krieger
 Jim Lamoureux
 Colleen Lawson
 Edith Lee
 Richard Lee
 Michael Levy
 Gay Little
 Mary Livingston
 Ann Loffredo
 Eric Lowry
 Sonya Madoff
 Elizabeth Malloy
 Geoffrey & Loretta Marion
 Carol Matregrano
 Bill & Janet Maune
 Bonee & Walsh May
 John Maynard
 Mayor's Office
 Carl & Joan Mazzotta
 Edward McMillan
 Marcia & Arthur Meyers
 Marilyn Mills

Ruth Montgomery
 Betsy & David Morgan
 Alain & Rosemary Munkittrick
 Lucille Neville
 Henry Otte
 John & Diane Otterbein
 Jack Pieper
 James Pritchard
 Bernard Prue
 David and Linda Rame
 Bruce Ricker
 Elizabeth Rocco
 Edmund Rubacha
 Daniel Ryan
 Frank & Katherine Ryczek
 William & Susan Ryczek
 Eleanor Sanstrom
 Sebastian Sbalcio
 Karl & Wendy Scheibe
 Paul Schilling
 Katherine Schoonover
 Muriel Schulman
 Dorothea Schwarzkopf
 Carol & Stephen Shapiro
 James & Nancy Shapiro
 John Shaw
 Rosemary Shea
 Sharon & William Sheedy
 Cynthia Sheehan
 Richard & Elizabeth Silocka
 Janet & James Silver
 Peter Simmons
 Dan Sizer
 Richard & Iris Slotkin
 Carolee Sommers
 John Spaeth
 Barbara Stenberg
 Valerie Stubaus
 Richard Tomc
 Jessie Trotta
 Irene E. Tuccitto
 Arthur & Joan Upgren
 William & Kris Vasilou
 Donna Vickers
 Mamie Vickers
 Edbert & Elizabeth Wall
 Gary & Kim Wallster
 Barbara Warner
 Elizabeth Warner
 Susan & William Wasch
 Martin & Mildred Weiner
 Barbara & Steven Weiss
 Lizabeth Whittaker
 Elma Wiacek
 Lois Wilcox
 Eva Williams
 Cindy & David Wolfram
 Peter Zaidel

Historic Preservation Discussions Underway

Concerned about the future of preserving historic structures in Middletown, a group of concerned local citizens is holding a series of forums to discuss effective ways to ensure the safeguarding of the city's architectural heritage. Chaired by former Historical Society president Liz Warner, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the Hubbard Room at Russell Library. All are welcome to attend.

"Our aim is to brainstorm potential approaches to historic preservation in the community that will be both effective and appropriate for the issues we face today," said Liz.

"Back in the early days of preservation, the enemy was so obvious. It was the bulldozer leveling entire blocks or well-known buildings and landmarks in downtown. These days, the threats are more insidious may appear as a building here and a building there—many of them outside the immediate downtown area—or it may be the loss of buildings through neglect and poor maintenance. Today, we require a broader strategy that will harness our community's political, intellectual, and financial resources and the commitment of those who care about Middletown," she said.

She noted that a number of historic structures are at risk of being lost, including the Wetmore House on Washington Street, the Powers-Sage House on Washington Terrace, and buildings on the north side of Ferry Street.

The good news, she said, is that a lot of committed, energetic people are concerned about the potential loss of the city's architectural past. At the first forum held in March, more than 30 people braved a snowstorm to discuss new approaches to local preservation.

For more information, contact Liz at EW06457@aol.com.

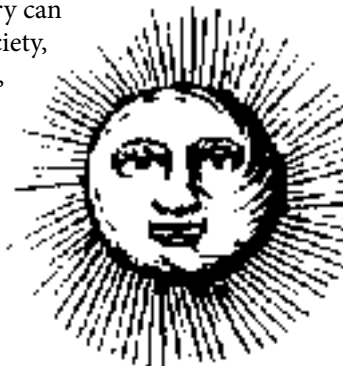


Time for Renewal

The snow has finally melted. The equinox has been celebrated. Dare we say it, spring has sprung. While we all enjoy these days of renewal, let us not forget the most important renewal of all. That's right: Your annual membership to the Middlesex County Historical Society.

We have mailed the renewal notices. Now it is your turn to send them back. Your membership dollars enable the Historical Society to preserve our community's past, mount thought-provoking exhibits and present entertaining programs that show history can be fun. The more you give to the Historical Society, the more the Historical Society can give to you, your family and your descendants.

Please give generously and give today.



Please consider becoming a supporter of the Capital Campaign today.

The General's Commanders	\$1,000 and up
Benefactor	\$500-\$999
Patron	\$250-499
Contributor	\$100-249
Donor	\$50-99
Friend	up to \$49

YES. I want to ensure A Future for Our Past and preserve Mansfield House for future generations. Please list my name as:

Please make checks payable to the Middlesex County Historical Society and send to Mansfield House, 151 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457
Donations are tax deductible.



Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Membership Levels

_____ Student \$15	_____ Business \$50
_____ Individual \$25	_____ Patron \$100
_____ Family \$35	_____ Life \$500

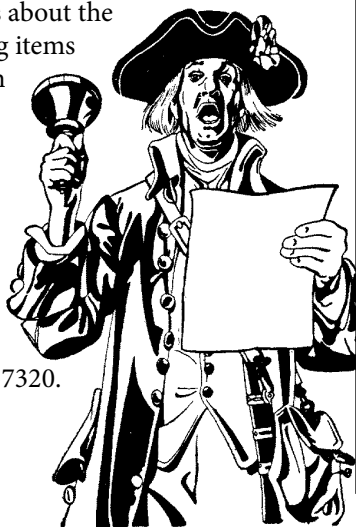
Please detach and sent to: The Middlesex County Historical Society and send to Mansfield House, 151 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457

Calling All Docents ...

Do you like people? History? What better way to marry your passions than to volunteer as a docent at General Mansfield House. We are looking for a few fine folks to donate a couple of hours a month or a few times a year to keep our galleries open for visitors.

Duties include greeting visitors from near and far, answering questions about the Historical Society and selling items from our gift shop. Museum hours are 2:00–4:30 p.m. on Sundays and 1:00–4:00 p.m. on Mondays. You provide the hours and we provide the training.

For more information about docenting, contact Di Longley at 860-346-0746 or Marilyn Mills at 860-347-7320.



Captain Clay Sails Back into Middletown!

A few years back the Historical Society received a generous gift from the Church of the Holy Trinity: an oil portrait of Stephen Clay. A ship captain and merchant in Middletown in the late 18th century, Captain Clay lived on Sumner Street. His portrait, dating from about 1790, shows a distinguished gentleman standing at a window through which is glimpsed a three-masted ship under full sail and a lowering sky.

Clay had been a warden of the Church of the Holy Trinity—back when it was known as Christ Church—and his portrait hung in the church's library for many years. Over time it had become somewhat soiled and chipped in places. We were pleased to send the portrait off to conservator Gay Myers at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum in New London, and it recently returned in stunning condition. Today Captain Clay's portrait hangs over the mantel in the Mansfield House, a proud reference to Middletown's maritime past.

Our warmest thanks go to the Church of the Holy Trinity for passing on this historical treasure to us.

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MIDDLETOWN, CT
PERMIT NO. 35

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
151 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457
(860) 346-0746
www.middlesexhistory.org

