



Notes from the Academy

WINTER 2021 | VOL. 3 NO. 4

Upcoming Programs!

December 21st: Monthly Public Program

Celebrate the holidays with a visit to the Historic Odessa Foundation. Enjoy the classic story of “Little Women” from 1868 brought alive at the Wilson Warner House. The story is set during the American Civil War. At 3 pm and 7:30 pm, meet at the Bank building, corner of Main and Second Streets in Odessa. \$5 per person. Please RSVP to Alison Matsen at 378-8265 or 740-5544. Each tour is limited to 10 visitors.



January 18th, 7:30 pm: Monthly Public Program

Come out to the Academy for an evening of show and tell about the Historical Society's collections! There are items that the Society has been busy cataloging and caring for that add to our knowledge of Middletown and its history! Also, as the Society prepares its collection development plan, share with us your ideas to direct our collecting in the future.

February 15th, 7:30 pm: Monthly Public Program

Bethesda Methodist Church is celebrating its 200th anniversary! Come and hear about its history from local church members. The Society will have a group of objects related to the history of the church for show and tell.

February details TBD: Annual Anniversary Ball

Get out your dance shoes and top hat and join us by celebrating Middletown's official birthday! More information will be forthcoming, so stay tuned!

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Volunteer Opportunities at the Society

Did you know that the Society depends on volunteers to do most of the work? From researching and designing exhibitions to assisting with collections there are lots of different ways to get involved! Right now the Society is in the middle of a big push to catalog the organization's collections. We meet on Thursdays from 7-9 pm at the Academy and work with the collections by cataloging, photographing, and inputting the information into the museum's collection database. If this or a different volunteer opportunity might interest you, please reach out to Abby Harting at Abbyharting@gmail.com

Thanks again to our amazing volunteers for all the work that they do!





The Middletown Transcript,
November 25th, 1922



Valeria Lemus
1st Place

Violet Sullivan
3rd Place, tie

Caroline Miller
3rd place, tie

Rebecca Hartwick
2nd place, tie

Niya Simpson
2nd place, tie

Research Paper Awards

By Alison Matsen

The Society recently awarded a total of \$2800 to five local students, grades 7 to 11, for doing original research on the families for whom Middletown streets are named, and the history of the street itself. Pictured here are Valeria Lemus (Acadia Parkway) grade 8, first prize, Violet Sullivan (Peterson Road) grade 7 and Caroline Miller (Crawford Street), grade 9, tied for third prize, and Rebecca Hartwick (Cox Street) grade 11 and Niya Simpson (Walker Alley) grade 8, tied for second prize.

Nine other students won monetary awards in the Honorable Mention category. They were Sabrina Ayad (Green Street), Chenxi Jin and Tyler Ginn (Anderson Street), Carter Bailey (Crawford Street), Om Patel (Cox Street), Silvana Garzon-Quintero and (Lockwood Street), Emily Lopez-Tovar (Walker Alley), Tenaya Cruickshank and Ananya Mamidipalli (Scott Street), and Siva Aditya Inabathini (Acadia Parkway).

The Society was glad to see participation from a broad range of students, grades 6 to 11, and from many local schools, including Alfred G. Waters Middle School, Everett Meredith Middle School, Louis L. Redding Middle School, and Odessa High School.

Excerpts from Research Papers

Excerpts from student research papers, with editorial changes:

(We encourage you to come in to the Middletown Historical Society to read the entire papers; make an appointment with Alison Matsen at 302-740-5544)

LOCKWOOD STREET

Richard LOCKWOOD was born on April 14, 1788, in Camden, Kent County, DE. His mother died when he was 3. His father remarried twice. Richard got married to Mary Rothwell Wilson, granddaughter of Thomas Rothwell, on October 28th, 1817 in Old Drawyers Presbyterian Church (n. of Odessa) by Reverend Thomas Read. They eventually had 10 children. He had served as a private in the War of 1812 and was stationed at Ft. Casimir, New Castle County, DE. He was a recognized marksman. He became a prominent merchant and landowner. He purchased the store at the southeast corner of Broad and Main Streets in 1837 but may have been working from that location at an earlier date. The deed of 1837 mentions a brick dwelling, kitchen, smokehouse, stables, granary, store and tavern lot. This place is now Broadway Diner on Main Street.

GREEN STREET

Dr. Sewell Cuthbert GREEN was a direct descendant of Thomas Green, the second proprietary governor of Maryland. Dr. Green graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a medical degree. His name is listed in the general catalogue of medical graduates under the year 1824. His subject of the essay was Hydrocephalus Acutus. He came to Middletown from just north of Smyrna in 1827. He married Natalie Boden in 1837 at St. Anne's and had three children, William, Randolph, and Natalie. He owned a large farm in the southeast quadrant of Middletown, and the old tannery on the northeast side of town. Dr. Green was a Board member of the Middletown Academy in the 1830's. (now used as the Middletown Historical Society) He was very active with the affairs of St. Anne's vestry, and was buried at Old St. Anne's in 1843. Richard Green, who served for years as an athletic director and teacher at Middletown High School, and who died in July of 2021, was a direct descendant.

Excerpts from Research Papers Continued

PETERSON ROAD

Hundreds of years ago, the area where we now live was nothing but wilderness.

Middletown was completely unsettled before the 17th century, except for the Lenni-Lenape Native Americans. Rich, uncultivated land stretched on for miles, without the many residential areas and commercialization we see in Middletown today.

The settlement of Middletown began when a Swede named Adam PETERSON took out a warrant for the land in 1678. He called his tract of land "Middletowne". The area had this name because it was located at a crossroads about halfway between Appoquinimink Creek (near present-day Odessa) and Bohemia Landing in Maryland.

Adam Peterson had three children, Andrew, Adam, and Hermania. Andrew eventually became a member of the Assembly and a justice of the peace. A descendant, Dr. Jacob Peterson, lived during the 18th century in a large house on North Broad Street, where the Mexican grocery store is today.

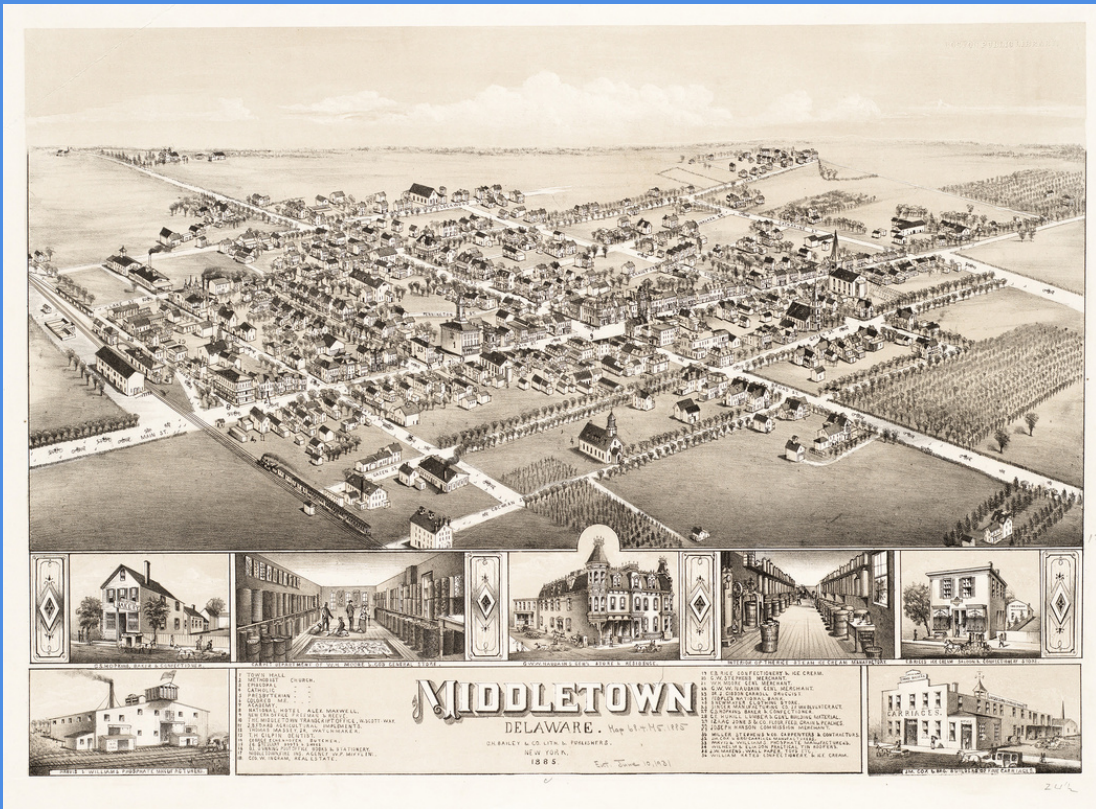
Account of Payments received by Edward Gibbs in the County of Newcastle by virtue of a Commission from Sam^l Jennings Treasurer General under the Hon^{ble} William Penn Esq Proprietor of Pennsylvania and Territories in the following Years as they have been collected out of the P^r Edwards own Receipts viz

Aunc ^l Dom. 1690.		wheat	A Dom. 1692	
	Bush	Per Bush		
Benjamin Gumbly	9	2	Paid him for Mary m th Carty	15: -
Henry Everfon	2	-	the dand of Mary Smith	2: 2
Geo. Robeson	2	-	John Garretson	36: -
Am ^l Barber	12	2	Francis Land	6: -
Agred in 1690.	26	-	Christian Paulson	4: -
Dom. 1691.			Adam Peterson	7: - ←
Marryfield	6	-	Edw ^d Braning	3: 2
Equet	6	-	Rich ^d Cantwell	50: -
Woolen	28	-	Peter Hansen	9: -
Wheat	7	-	Henry Everfon	2: -

Here is a tax bill for Adam Peterson from 1692

Excerpts from Research Papers Continued

ANDERSON STREET (the street one block north of Main Street, pictured below)
On September 24th, 1705, there were 26 men that pledged nearly 50 pounds sterling towards the support of a minister of the St. Anne's Church (of England) just south of Middletown, Delaware. One of them was an ANDERSON. So that means that the name Anderson was around in the Middletown, Delaware, area for 300 years!.....Charles E. Anderson was born in Delaware about 1825. In the 1850 census, he was living in Middletown with his two children and owned real estate valued at \$600. Later he owned \$4,000 personal estate and \$5,000 real estate. He was a harness maker. As of the 1870's he was the town tax assessor. The Middletown Transcript noted in 1877 that his wife won a prize for her fruit tarts. Their daughter Bessie was a well-known local teacher. His harness shop on Anderson Street was eventually sold to Adam Reed.



From the Desk of the President

As we've just come through Thanksgiving and are looking to the end of year holidays, I wanted to express my thanks. I'm thankful for the welcome that Middletown has given me and my family. When I arrived almost 40 years ago (this coming April) I was so blessed to be welcomed into the close knit community that made up Middletown. One of my earliest interactions was when I went to get the electricity set up for our home and the secretary that greeted me at the Academy (then Town Hall) commented that "Oh, you're Linda Harting! You're the new pastor's wife and you're getting your degree in Nursing from the University of Delaware!" The community welcomed in this young city girl with a graciousness that had me fall in love with my adopted home town and eventually led to my service with the Historical Society.

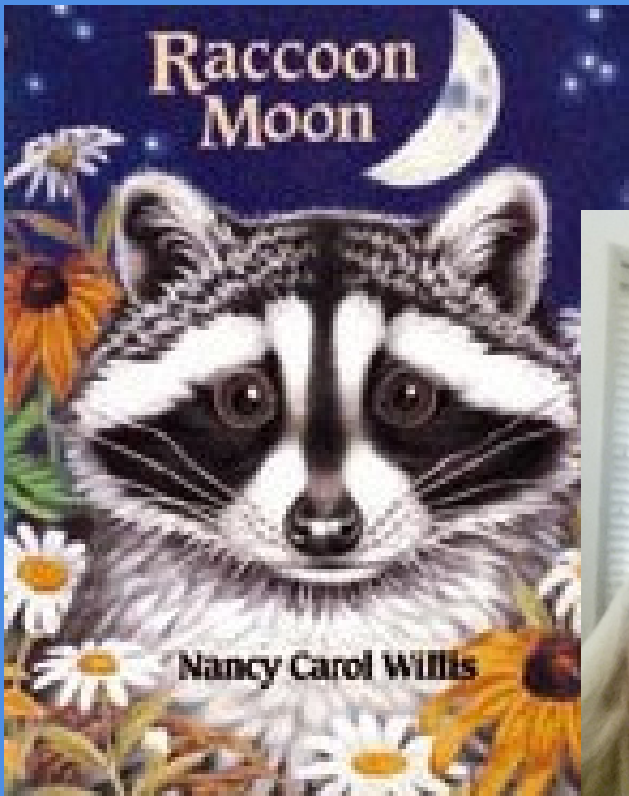
I am thankful for the commitment and passion of our fellow community organizations like Our Daily Bread. Our Daily Bread works out of the building behind the Academy making free dinners available to families in Middletown and the surrounding region. For Thanksgiving they passed out Thanksgiving baskets to the local community and the Society, through the leadership of Linda Biggs, was able to supply one. You'll see a picture of the provisions below. I'm thankful for the support of our local community. Working with the Town and Middletown Main Street, Inc. we're opening 2 new spaces on the first floor—an orientation exhibition about the history and work of the Society and a space for research on the first floor which will help make our research resources more accessible. We hope to have these spaces open to the public very soon! I'm thankful for the volunteers who have worked hard to clean out these spaces as we work towards opening these areas to our membership and the public. We wish you all the best this holiday season and hope there are moments for thankfulness throughout!



Highlighting a Local Middletown Artist

This year the Society is again participating in the Christmas Tree decorating at the Historic Odessa Foundation. Like many local organizations and groups, the Society has selected a book to theme our tree. This year's selection is "Raccoon Moon" by Nancy Carol Willis. Ms. Willis is a local Middletown artist who wrote and illustrated "Raccoon Moon". The story follows three young raccoons, Rusty, Rudy, and Spice, through their first year of life. The book looks at the little baby raccoons as they spend time with their mama, and learn what they can and cannot eat, where it's safe for them to be, and what predators might be out to get them. Throughout the book, the lunar cycle is referenced. Ms. Willis is located in Middletown and more of her work can be seen here: <http://www.nancycarolwillis.com/pages/writings.php>

For the tree, we decorated with many different natural items and ornaments like pinecones and dried flowers. Linda Biggs and Dale Wyatt lent raccoons and moons for the tree, while Phyllis Waecker, Alison Matsen, and Linda Harting lent other natural-style ornaments. A big thank you to Linda Biggs, Phyllis Waecker, and Linda Harting for helping with the decorating itself!



Welcoming Visitors to the Academy

The Society has been participating in the different events that Middletown Main Street has been putting on. They have been a wonderful way to start welcoming guests back to the Academy. We had a table on the street in front of the Academy for Trick or Treat on Main for Halloween. We interacted with about 55 adults, and had about 45 visitors in the museum that evening!

On Saturday, December 4th, we again set up a table on the street to offer hot cocoa before and after the annual Christmas Parade. We handed out about 75 cups of cocoa and welcomed around 30 visitors into the museum.

We look forward to participating in these programs in the future. A big thanks to Linda Biggs, Phyllis Waecker, Becca Hartwick, Linda Harting, and Drew Harting for their help with these program!





*Happy Holidays
from the
Historical Society!*

Contact Us!

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Middletown Historical Society

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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.