



Notes from the Academy

WINTER 2022 | VOL. 4 NO. 4

From the Desk of the President

Happy holidays from the Middletown Historical Society! It's been a year filled with the return of our flagship event, The Olde Tyme Peach Festival, as well as the Birthday Ball and the installation of a new exhibition! Smaller rotating exhibitions in our new mini-rotating exhibition cases are in place throughout the museum. Public programs on the third Tuesday now meet in person and virtually on Facebook Live stream. In 2023 we look forward to a robust schedule of exhibitions and programs.

After almost three years of visits by appointment only, we are excited to announce that we are bringing back regular hours! The Museum will be open the first Friday and the third Saturday of each month from **1 pm-4 pm**. We still recommend making an appointment to use the research room to better accommodate research requests. Call Alison at 302-740-5544 to make an appointment. To that end, we are so pleased to announce the opening of our new research space! This new space is accessible to all our guests on the first floor next to our introductory exhibition. We look forward to seeing you on-site in the New Year.



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Vintage Christmas Cards



Upcoming Programs and Open Hours

January 6th, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours! Come visit our new exhibition: Teens on the Town: Middletown in the 1920s. Free

January 17th, 7:30 pm, at the Historical Society: Maryanna Taylor Vaupel presenting about Augustine Herman and mapping the Chesapeake Bay. Free

January 21st, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours. Free

February 3rd, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours. Free

February 11th, 6:30 pm at the MOT Jean Birch Senior Center: The Annual Middletown Birthday Ball! Tickets are \$15 for students and seniors and \$20 for pre-purchased tickets. Tickets are \$25 at the door. Checks should be made out to Middletown Historical Society and be mailed to: Linda Harting at 202 N. Broad St. Middletown, DE, 19709. Please include your email address and your name will be added to the attendee list.

February 18th, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours. Free

Planning for the Future

As we start to plan for the next three years, we're seeking the opinions of our members and friends to help guide the Society's next steps. Please take the 7 minutes to fill out the below survey, and share it with your friends who have an interest in the Society.

<https://forms.gle/h9Ztxkr89YnmEeE18>

Decorated for the Holidays

In preparation for the festive season, Linda Biggs, Phyllis Waecker, and Drew Harting helped decorate the Academy building! No room is without its touch of holiday ornaments. Be sure to visit during our regular open hours in January to see our lovely decorations.



Shutters Painted

On October 13 and 14, bright sunny fall days, 13 friends of the Middletown Historical Society gathered on the front lawn of the museum to paint the shutters of the Academy Building. Special thanks go to Kevin Shatz of the Volunteer Brewing Company for recruiting 9 volunteers to help with the work. Kevin has made volunteer community improvement projects one of the unique aspects of Volunteer Brewing. He was able to recruit the following painters: Lynda Hrycak, Rob and Sandy Pitney, Victorio Taylor, Roger and Ryiee McCall, Michele Andersen, Kevin Shatz, and Chris Beronid. Also David and Alison Matsen were joined by family members Laura Moyer, Jacob Moyer, and Elizabeth Ainslie. Two other workers have offered to help with the remainder of the painting, Mary Alice Aguilar and Michele Andersen.

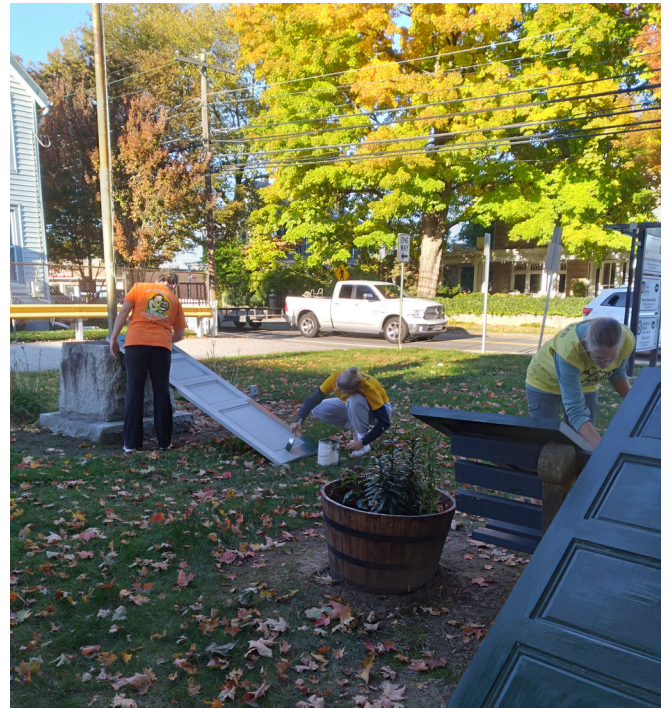
About half of the painting work has now been completed. When the shutters are fully painted and hung, it will have been over 100 years since the Academy had shutters, which will return it to its original appearance. Early graduation pictures of classes in front of the main doorway show shutters, but about 1910 they were removed; subsequent postcards and pictures do not show them. No records indicate why they were removed or how they were disposed of.

David Matsen determined the layout, dimensions, and details of the original shutters from old postcards and photos in the museum collection, and entered into a contract with Timberlane Shutters of Montgomeryville, Pennsylvania to make new shutters using western red cedar lumber. Financing of the project was made possible by a grant from the Delaware Preservation Fund and funds of the society.



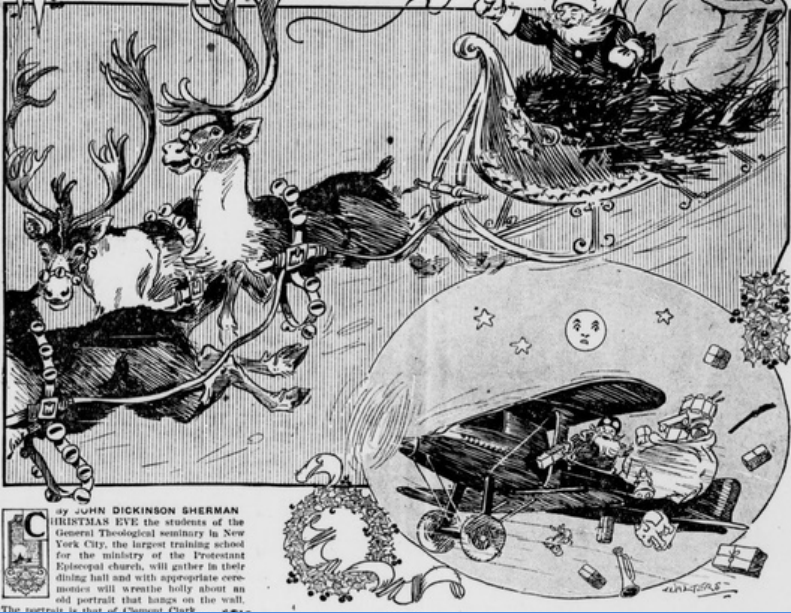
Academy Building,
Early 20th Century

Shutters Painting Gallery



Christmas Past from the Middletown Transcript, December 16th, 1922

"Twas the Night before Christmas"



A VISIT FROM ST. NICHOLAS

By CLEMENT C. MOORE

'T WAS the night before Christmas, when all through the house
 Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
 The stockings were hung by the chimney with care
 In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
 The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
 While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads.
 And mama in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
 Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—
 When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
 I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter.
 Away to the window I flew like a flash,
 Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
 The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
 Gave a luster of midday to objects below;
 When what to my wondering eyes should appear
 But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
 With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
 I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
 More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
 And he whistled and shouted, and called them by name:
 "Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
 On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blitzen!
 To the top of the porch to the top of the wall!
 Now dash away, dash away, dash away all!"
 As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
 When they meet an obstacle, mount to the sky,
 So up to the housetop the coursers they flew,
 With the sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas, too.
 And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof
 The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
 As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
 Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
 He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
 And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
 A bundle of toys he had slung on his back,
 And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
 His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples, how merry!
 His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
 His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
 And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow.
 The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
 And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath.
 He had a broad face and a little round belly
 That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
 He was chubby and plump—a right jolly old elf;
 And I laughed, when I saw him, in spite of myself.
 A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
 He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
 And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
 And laying his finger aside of his nose,
 And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
 He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
 And away they all flew like the down of a thistle;
 But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
 "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

A MODERN KRISS KRINGLE

By HAROLD BARNES

Kriss Kringle laughs with a merry glee;
 "I'll fool the children this year," says he;
 "They think I am coming with deer and sleigh,
 And jingle of bells, in the same old way."
 "But I'll do it," he says, with a knowing wink,
 As he opens his hangar—and what do you think?
 There stands in its shed like a waiting train
 The finest brand of an aeroplane.
 Shining and gleaming and new and spick—
 Just made to order for Old St. Nick.

Transcriptions from Christmas Past from the Middletown Transcript, December 16th, 1922



'Twas the night before Christmas
By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
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With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
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More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, DASHER! now, DANCER! now, PRANCER and VIXEN!
On, COMET! on CUPID! on, DONNER and BLITZEN!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
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Twas the Night Before Christmas Continued

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His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
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HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD-
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A Modern Kriss Kringle

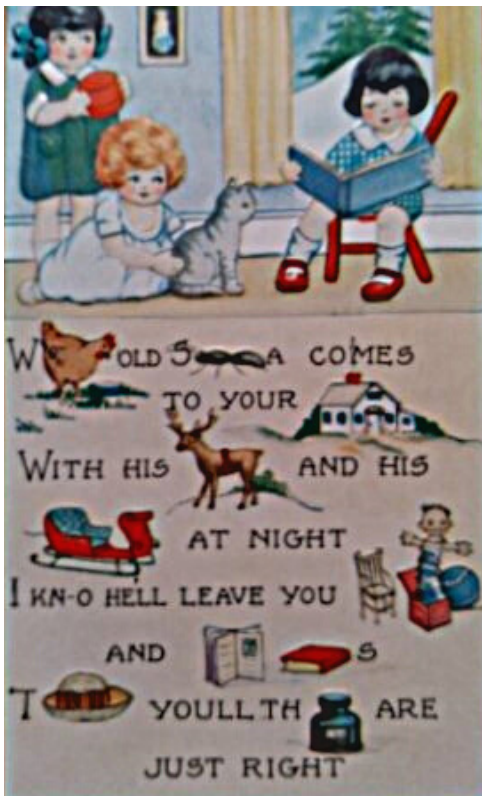
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The finest brand of an aeroplane.
Shining and gleaming and new and spick--
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Christmas Cards Sent in Middletown



Enjoy these
Christmas cards
sent in Middletown
by the Brockson
family.





*Happy Holidays
from the
Historical Society!*

Contact Us

(302) 378-7466

mhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

**Open first Friday and third
Saturday from 1-4 pm**

By appointment call Alison Matsen
at 302-740-5544

Physical Address:

216 N. Broad St.

Middletown, DE 19709

Mailing Address:

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Middletown, DE 19709

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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.