

Participating in Community Traditions

The Historical Society, along with many other community organizations, decorated a tree based on a children's book for the Historic Odessa Foundation's annual Storybook Tree exhibition. This year, we chose Marguerite de Angeli's 1940 children's book "Thee, Hannah!" Catch a glimpse of pre-Civil War Quaker life as Hannah and her family go to Meeting and market, host a gathering of Friends, and enjoy ice skating and other pastimes. Nine-year-old Hannah finds it hard to wear a plain bonnet that pinches her ears and a plain dress with no lace! Will Hannah ever understand the value of plain dress and learn to be content as a Friend? The story beautifully honors the work of the Underground Railroad and the freedom seekers and abolitionists in Philadelphia who would have been intimately connected with abolitionists in Middletown and southern Delaware. A big thank you to Ja'lyn Hicks, Phyllis Waecker, and Alison Matsen for decorating the tree! Enjoy the gallery of photos on page 3!



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Membership

A reminder to our friends and current members.

Please consider becoming a member of the Historical Society. As a member, you gain access to our Research room and support the mission of the Society to collect, preserve, educate, and encourage the development of Middletown's history in order to foster historic awareness and pride in our community.

Dues are \$10 Single and \$20 Family.

*Note the New Year will run from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

If you have any changes to your e-mail address or phone number or home address, please let us know via e-mail at mhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Checks can be made out to the Middletown Historical Society and sent to P.O. Box 567
Middletown, DE 19709



Decorating our Storybook Tree



From the Desk of the President

The holidays are always a time to gather with friends and family from near and far to celebrate old traditions and make new ones. Many of Middletown's historic homes have seen holiday celebrations for many years. The Society welcomes our members, friends, and the public to learn more about these places and the people who lived here in Middletown through our collections and research files. The Museum and Research Room are open on the first Friday and third Saturday of the month.

As part of sharing Middletown's history with a wider audience, our summer intern in 2023, Pamela Ahern, created a wonderful online exhibition on Middletown's Jewish families. You can see that [here](#).

We welcomed the public to our Christmas Open House in conjunction with the Christmas Parade at the beginning of December. One community member was surprised that Middletown has a museum and was so pleased to visit us! We look forward to welcoming the public to our first program of the new year on January 16th, which will be a dance practice for our upcoming event, the Birthday Ball, on February 10th.

In the New Year, we look forward to welcoming an intern, opening new exhibitions, and implementing new programs! Be sure to visit our [website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates.

The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing!

On February 10th we again welcome dancers and lovers of history to Middletown's Annual Birthday Ball! All guests are invited to enjoy an evening of dance and merriment a la the 1860s. Dancing will be instructed by Linda Harting. Tickets are \$15 for students and seniors and \$20 for adults. On the day of, they will be \$25 at the door. Tickets can be purchased by making a check out to the Middletown Historical Society and mailing it to 202 N. Broad St, Middletown, DE 19709. The event will be held at the MOT Jean Birch Senior Center, 300 S. Scott St. Middletown, DE. We look forward to seeing you there!





What's New at the Museum!

It's been a busy fall! The Society has participated in several programs that keep us in the public eye year to year. Each October we are happy to host our Halloween open house in conjunction with the Trick or Treat on Main Street event. We interacted with over 200 people and welcomed more than 50 guests into the Academy. A big thanks to the many volunteers who helped decorate and welcome our many guests! We also opened the museum for the annual Christmas Open House during and after the Middletown Christmas Parade. We had a hot chocolate stand outside and gave away more than 50 cups of hot chocolate and welcomed some families into the building itself. Volunteers have been hard at work photographing, cataloging, and organizing the collections. The cataloging group meets most Thursdays. If you're interested in volunteering with them, please email Abby Harting at abbyharting@gmail.com.



From Our Collections

By Alison Matsen

Carol Widing was the wife of Jon Widing, rector of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Middletown in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They lived in the Episcopal manse on East Cochran Street. The family experienced heartaches with both their children, a son with Down's Syndrome, and a daughter who died very young. Carol was very active with the Middletown branch of AAUW, being the program chairman, and also devoted much time to the church, including making these darling clothespin Christmas tree ornaments to sell at the church's annual bazaar.

The group includes a Pied Piper, Wonder Woman, and even a Middletown High School Cavalier! These were bought at the bazaar by Alison and David Matsen, who are donating them to the Middletown Historical Society.

What's Cooking!

During the holidays many Middletown residents have enjoyed making the occasional treat. From the traditional Thanksgiving Turkey to Mississippi Mudslides and everything in between, Middletonians have enjoyed a diverse number of sweets. As new families move into the area from many corners of the globe, that list will only continue to grow.

In 1919 the New Century Club released a cookbook cataloging many recipes from Middletown's cooks and bakers. During quarantine, the Society ran a YouTube series called "Cooking away the Blues" and released several recipes there. You can view that cooking "show" [here](#).

To brighten your holidays we offer this group of recipes from the New Century Club's "Reliable Recipes" book. See the photo below!

Candied Popcorn

1 tablespoon butter, 3 tablespoons water, 1 teacup pulverized sugar. Boil until ready to candy, then add 3 quarts nicely popped corn. Stir briskly till candy is evenly distributed over corn. Remove from fire, stirring until it has cooled a little and you have each gram separate and crystallized with sugar. Nuts may be prepared in the same way.
—Helen V. Shallcross.

Butter Scotch

2 cups sugar
4 tablespoons vinegar
Cook until brittle.

1 cup water
1 tablespoon butter

—Mrs. Clarence Scott.

Grandmother's Caramels

2 scant cups sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cake chocolate
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter

1 cup molasses
1 cup cream

Cook until brittle when tried in water. Remove from fire add nuts and vanilla, and turn in buttered pan. Cut in squares when cold.



Up Coming Programs

Friday, January 5th, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours! Free

Tuesday, January 16th, 7:30 pm, at the Historical Society: Learn dances from the 1860s that Middltonians would have learned! Free

Saturday, January 20th, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours. Free

Friday, February 2nd, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours. Free

Saturday, February 10th, 6 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.

Saturday, February 17th, 1-4 pm: Middletown Historical Society Museum open hours. Free



*Happy Holidays
from the
Historical Society!*

Contact Us

(302) 378-7466

mhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Open first Friday and third

Saturday from 1-4 pm

Or by appointment call

Alison Matsen at 302-740-5544

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Like us on [Facebook](#)

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