

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Middlebury Historical Society

Summer 2010

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Letter from the President



Ever wonder who our town's founding parents were? Or whether you're descended from them? We have just completed acquiring a scan of our town's 1807 original founding documents, archived at the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. Soon we will have them printed, mounted and available to view at our Historical Society building, thanks to a grant from the Naugatuck Savings Bank Foundation. In April we received a \$2,500 grant from this foundation to

Board meetings

Our Board of Directors meets once a month on the second Wednesday at 7 at our building. Our meetings are open to the public and you are welcome to join us. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us. We have many interesting and fun projects, both large and small. You will love the history of our town and its people.

President Bob Rafford
Vice President Agnes Lutes

We are proud to announce the additions of the following members to our board Sue Healy, Dr. Raymond Sullivan, Terry McAuliffe, and Zachary Marotte. .

improve our exhibits; we have been getting increased visits from Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, school classes and individuals, so improving and expanding our exhibits is a priority. In the future we may set our sights on more grants to complete the process of making our building into an outstanding museum of Middlebury history. Recently we welcomed Terry McAuliffe, Sue Healy, and Ray Sullivan, M.D., to our board, and bade farewell to Edie Salisbury and Anthony Perrotti who had each served us well for a number of years. While we will miss their talents and energy, we wish them well in other important endeavors. Our new board members (Sue has actually returned after a hiatus of five years!) bring new energy, talent and vision to our Society. Terry is an expert with Websites; Sue is an accomplished artist and designer, and Ray has performed extensive research into Middlebury's history. Agnes Lutes continues as Vice President; Agnes is our resident artist, newsletter editor, docent and tireless worker for the Historical Society; I continue as President for another year. Agnes and I began as board members about 1995. Also continuing on our board is Zachary Marotte who has been graduated from Pomperaug High School and will continue his studies at Eastern Connecticut State College. Zach will have been a student intern for three summers, researching our town's honored military veterans; you may have read his article in the Bee-Intelligencer at the end of May describing our town's veterans from the 18th to the 21st century. Terry "hit the board running". He has already set up a new Web site for our Society for which we have great hopes:

www.MiddleburyHistoricalSociety.org

What we would like to know is, how can our new Web site be of most help to our members and the community? Please contact anyone at the society to let us know your suggestions and ideas.

Now that our membership has just about doubled, we continue to be grateful for our members' continued support, and promise that we will continue to serve Middlebury—our past is our prologue!

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Hours of Operation

We are open each Monday from 2 to 5. Bob Rafford and Agnes Lutes are usually there to welcome visitors and work on the exhibits. It's best to call ahead if you are planning a visit. Bob's cell phone is 203-206-4717 and of course, you may always make an appointment for other times by calling Bob.



Girl Scouts Visit

On February 22, 2010 the Middlebury Junior Girl Scouts Troop 64146 from the fourth and fifth grade along with their Scout leaders Rachel Barclay and Shawna Lee Kwashnak visited the Historical Society to work on their local lore badge. They were interested to learn about the history of town, changes over time and famous people from Middlebury's past. Bob Rafford, pictured above, told the story of Chauncey Judd, our famous hero from the Revolutionary War. Bob also compared maps of Middlebury from the Beers Atlas of 1868 and a current map to show how streets changed and new ones were added. The girls listened to the presentation while sitting in the school desks in our period school room arranged as it was at the time Center School was built. Agnes Lutes described some of the items from our collection that were used at that time including school slates, slate pencils, a wooden mouse trap and a metal lunch pail.

Annual Meeting of the Middlebury Historical Society

Our annual meeting was held on Sunday April 11, 2010 at the Middlebury Firehouse. Our speaker for the day was Ann Y. Smith, lecturer and former director of the Mattatuck Museum who spoke on the Whittemores and



Middlebury's Golden Age. The Whittemore family's generosity helped shape the town through many building projects like their summer home overlooking Lake Quassapaug, pictured above, and the Center School, now the home of our own Middlebury Historical Society. They also commissioned the beautiful local landscapes throughout town including the Middlebury town Green.





From our Collection

While having some renovations done on their house, Chris and Molly Parker made a great discovery. It was a very old shoe that had once belonged to a child. It was found in the west wall of the north west bedroom of the Bronson-Wheaton Parker house on the Green. While we can't be entirely sure, we think this might be what is called a concealment shoe and demonstrates the custom of hiding a shoe in the house in order to protect it from harmful spirits and assure good fortune. This custom seems to have been brought to America by early settlers. Often only a single child's shoe was hidden but shoes belonging to men and women were also found. These shoes were placed inside the house walls when building or during renovations.

Boy Scout Meeting

The Tiger Scouts Pack 6, held their regular meeting at the Historical Society building on May 5, 2010, in our school room. Bob Rafford spoke to them about the history of Middlebury and took them on a tour of our building. They enjoyed looking at 3 D pictures using our stereopticon. This ingenious device utilizes stereo pictures taken with a camera with two lenses placed about 2.5 inches apart, approximately the distance between the eyes. When viewed through the eye-piece, prismatic lenses blend the two images and we see it as 3 dimensions as we do in normal vision. The first model was created in 1833 and in the beginning was used to show random photographs. As time went on, changes and improvements were made and the photos were arranged chronologically creating a story. This was the beginning of the first "moving" pictures which eventually lead to movies as we know them today.



Pictured above, left to right are Christopher Stowell, Sean Barton, and Gunnar Lucuk.



Thank you!

The Middlebury Historical Society would like to extend our most sincere thanks to the Junior Girl Scouts of Troop 64146 and their troop leaders Rachel Barclay and Shawna Lee Kwashnak who donated the lovely flower pots filled with flowers that brighten the entrance to the Historical Society building.



Recent Acquisitions

We have acquired several new additions to our collection including the beautiful Regulator clock seen here. We wind it faithfully every week and it repays us by keeping perfect time. We have also added to our post card collection, acquired items relating to Westover School and purchased this autograph book signed on February 21, 1890 by Edith V. Abbott of Middlebury when she attended Parker Academy in Woodbury, Connecticut.



Annual Open House

The Middlebury Historical Society had its annual open house on Sunday, May 30, 2010 in conjunction with the town's Memorial Day Parade. Our lovely building was decorated with flags outside and inside visitors were provided with lemonade, coffee and snacks. It is a well attended event that everyone seems to enjoy. We typically display things from our collection that are not normally on view during this open house such as our collection of quilts. Thanks to Joannie Rafford for the beautiful flower arrangement made with exquisite and fragrant blooms from her garden and for her assistance at the open house.



Middlebury Historical Society
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Our beautiful Middlebury Historical Society building, just east of the Green in Middlebury, Connecticut.

ITEMS NEEDED

As our collections increase we are in need of shelving and storage items. If you know of a display case that needs a good home please consider us..

Also we are always interested in acquiring items related to Middlebury and its history. You can rest assured that any contribution to our collection, will be treated with the utmost respect and care and will become part of our town's history.