



Volume 13, No. 3

Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance

Summer 2011

www.raritanmillstone.com

THE MIDDLEBUSH INSTITUTE

The Middlebush Institute, a private school, began in the home of J. Newton Voorhees. A Rutgers graduate, Voorhees was a teacher at the Housatonic Institute in New Milford, Connecticut when he met and married another teacher, Amanda Olcott. In 1864 the couple moved to Middlebush, New Jersey, and established a “fine type of private school of high school grades.” Mrs. Voorhees taught French, music, and “the accomplishments, such as making wax flowers, hair flowers, and worsted flowers.”

When Mrs. Voorhees died suddenly on January 12, 1876, a substitute teacher was hired to complete the school year. The school then closed for several years, until Mr. Voorhees remarried. His second wife was also a teacher.

Scholars came to the institute from Bedminster, Franklin Park, Griggstown, Harlingen, Millstone, and Pennington. Some traveled on horseback, while others boarded at the school. In 1880, Voorhees built the main institute building, which consisted of two large rooms with a sliding door, two desks, and heavy tables and benches.

The Reverend DeWitt Talmage (1832-1902), who became a nationally famous preacher, was educated at Middlebush Institute. (He was a son of the Reformed Church of Bound Brook, in South Bound Brook.) Others who attended the school include Mary and Sarah Mershon, daughters of the minister; Stephen Mershon; Garret Hoagland, who became a doctor in Keyport; John L. Totten; Katherine Wilson, later the wife of the village doctor; Mrs. DeWitt

One of two staircases to the girls' quarters; there was one in the front of the house and one in the back.



The original Middlebush Institute at 17 South Middlebush Road. As youngsters, resident Patti Gaynor and a classmate ran by the Voorhees house on their way to the Middlebush School. When they noticed Miss Amanda Voorhees (in her late 80s) peeking out from the blinds, the girls imagined that Miss Amanda was a witch and did not want to be lured into the house.

Current owners Robert Gaynor, Esq. and his wife Ellen, live here. Bob kindly arranged a delightful tour of this lovely home for *The Link*. When it served as the institute, the house was divided to keep the family quarters separated from the students.



(continued on page three)

The next scheduled meeting of the
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
will be held on September 15,
2011

from 1:30—3:00 pm at the

KEARNY COTTAGE

Representatives from all Alliance
sites are encouraged to attend.

**DIRECTIONS TO THE KEARNY COTTAGE,
63 CATALPA AVENUE, PERTH AMBOY,
732-826-1826**

**GARDEN STATE PARKWAY/
NJ TURNPIKE/ I-287:**

Take Route 9 or 287 to Smith Street. Turn right
onto High Street, right onto Lewis Street, and
left onto Catalpa. Parking is available on-street
or around the corner on Sadowski Parkway.

Allow extra time to get lost!

To be excused, contact Susan Keating
at tktk@comcast.net or 732-857-7500 in
advance.

Kearny Cottage was the birthplace of Navy officer
Lawrence Kearny, who, in 1842, initiated the Open Door
Policy concerning trade between the United States and
China.

Kearny's mother was the half-sister of Captain James
Lawrence, a Navy officer who was killed during the War
of 1812.

The museum displays objects that belonged to the
Kearny family. It also houses a large collection of Perth
Amboy maps, drawings, and artifacts.

YOUR LINK TO THE PUBLIC: *The Link*, the newsletter
of the Raritan–Millstone Heritage Alliance, is a quarterly
publication.

News of upcoming events for possible inclusion in the
next issue must be mailed or emailed to the editor no later
than October 15, 2011. While the editor, George Dawson,
is working on the guide book, please send all items to: Ann
Suydam, Associate Editor, 54 Skillman's Lane, Somerset,
NJ 08873; 732-846-7448.

Please send photos (in .jpeg or .tiff) to Linda Barth,
908-722-7428; barths@att.net. Material submitted
electronically should be in WORD format. Photographs
will be scanned and returned.

**Raritan-Millstone Heritage
Alliance**

P.O. Box 5583
Somerset, NJ 08875-5583
www.raritanmillstone.com

*An organization of individuals,
organizations, and sites working to promote
preservation and understanding of the rich,
eventful, and cultural heritage of significant
historical, educational, and cultural sites
located in Central New Jersey*

OFFICERS

President, Donald Johnstone Peck
Vice President, Susan C. Keating
Secretary, Constance M. O'Grady
Treasurer, Stephen J. Russell

DIRECTORS

John F. Allen
Robert H. Barth/Linda J. Barth
Jan ten Broeke
Dr. Helen Brudner
George B. Dawson
Frederick Frintrup
Paula Henry
Sarah Israel
Elyce M. Jennings
Dr. Paul B. Jennings
Joanne Kaiser
Carol C. Natarelli
Marilyn W. Rautio
Elizabeth Reeves
Stephen J. Russell
Ann M. Suydam
Barbara Westergaard

The Board of Directors meets on the third
Thursday of March, May, September,
October, and November at designated
historic and museum member
sites in the region.



Woolsey; Miss Kate Garretson; Mrs. J. Calvin Ditmars; Fannie Drew, who married Benjamin Wyckoff; Annie Bennett, sister of Miss Dora; and Mabelle Lee, who became a life-long friend of Miss Amanda Voorhees.

By 1917, the building was owned by Lewis Stryker and known as Stryker Hall. After Middlebush Reformed Church was destroyed by fire that year, services were held at the hall until construction was completed on the new church in 1919. The building later became the home of the Frank Pennell family.



Mr. Voorhees built a separate building (above) for the Institute at the rear of his South Middlebush Road property. This building is located at 16 Olcott Street and is now a private home. ▲



◀ One can almost imagine on a chilly autumn evening hearing the giggle as the girls hurry out of the back door to the “necessary.” Said facility has been well preserved.

References: *Where The Trees Grow Tall*, by E. B. Stryker and Ralph Thomson, and *Franklin Township, Somerset County, NJ: A History*, by William B. Brahms.

Thanks to Ann Suydam for her work in compiling the information for this story.

CALENDAR OF CENTRAL JERSEY EVENTS

Now through Autumn, 2011—“Fore and Away: The Golden Age of Travel Posters” The United States Golf Association Museum and Arnold Palmer Center for Golf History, located at 77 Liberty Corner Road in Bernards Township, invites you to a temporary exhibit entitled, “Fore and Away: The Golden Age of Travel Posters,” which opened in July 2011 and will run through the fall. Visitors to the museum will journey to foreign locations through vintage travel posters that were used as promotional advertisements for international golf destinations. This USGA Museum exhibit features the work of one of the notable French travel poster artists, Roger Broders, who produced more than 100 iconic images during his career, most of them in the 1920s. These vintage images allow the visitor to explore modes of travel of the time and experience the varied artistic styles employed by the international artists who created them. We are pleased to offer special admission discounts to active military personnel and their families as part of the Blue Star Museum program, now through Labor Day. Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Mondays and major holidays. **Contact:** Kim Gianetti, USGA Museum, 908-234-2300 ext.1245; E-mail: kgianetti@usga.org. Visit: www.usgamuseum.com.

(continued on page four)

Saturday, September 10—“Patriotic Salute” - John Hnedak, Assistant Superintendent of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, speaks @ 11 a.m. on “Ellis Island: Past, Present and Future.” Tix are \$15/person and includes a light lunch. The talk and lunch are at the Van Liew-Suydam House, 280 S. Middlebush Rd., Somerset.

At 1 p.m. the day’s program moves to the Hageman Farm, 209 S. Middlebush Rd. There will be an apple pie contest and talks on heritage apples. At 2 p.m. there is a “meet-and-greet” for local political candidates. The day concludes at 3 p.m. with a solemn remembrance of the 9/11 victims who lived in Franklin Township. 732-748-7657.

Saturday, September 10—1776 Peace Conference Celebration. A recreation of the attempted peace talks between the British and the Americans, with Colonial-era music and dancing, crafts booths, outdoor cooking demonstrations, and children’s games and crafts. Suggested donation: \$5 for adults, \$3 for children and seniors. 11 pm—4 pm (rain date 9/11). The Conference House, 298 Satterlee St., Staten Island, NY 10307; 718-984-6046; info@conferencehouse.org.

Saturday, September 10—10 am to 4 pm - Rockingham Historic Site will host a Militia Encampment & Trade Fair with Outwater’s Militia. Soldiers’ camp life activities including musket drills, cooking, medicine, and family life. House tours, museum store, light refreshments available. FREE event/donations welcomed. Call 609-683-7132 or go to www.rockingham.net for more info. 84 Laurel Ave., Kingston, NJ.

September 7, 19, 24, and October 12—New Brunswick Library Celebrates Sendak Exhibit with Four Special Events. The New Brunswick Free Public Library will be hosting “In a Nutshell: The Worlds of Maurice Sendak,” a national traveling exhibition which explores the influence of the Old and New worlds in the work of renowned illustrator Maurice Sendak, from August 31 until October 14, 2011. Four distinctive programs have been planned during the time the exhibit is at the library.

“In a Nutshell” was organized by the Rosenbach Museum & Library, Philadelphia, and developed by Nextbook, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Jewish literature, culture, and ideas, and the American Library Association Public Programs Office. The national tour of the exhibit has been made possible by grants from the Charles H. Revson Foundation, the Righteous Persons Foundation, the David Berg Foundation, and an anonymous donor, with additional support from *Tablet Magazine: A New Read on Jewish Life*.

The Opening Reception for the exhibit at the New Brunswick Free Public Library will be at 7pm on Wednesday, September 7, and will feature a talk by exhibit curator Patrick Rodgers, Traveling Exhibitions Coordinator at the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the New Brunswick Free Public Library. On Monday, September 19, at 7pm, the library will present a Genealogy Workshop, connecting to the themes of family history that so inspired Sendak. Our very own Jackie Oshman, Senior Librarian, will be joined by Janet Riemer, a conservator at Rutgers University and a committee chairperson of the Genealogical Society of NJ.

On Saturday, September 24, at 2pm, recognized New Jersey poet and teacher BJ Ward will give a poetry reading as well as a short workshop focused on the theme of writing as catharsis, another major theme of Sendak’s work. This event is sponsored by Ian Buchanan, MA. Oxon., Pacific Director of Booz Allen Hamilton.

The Closing Reception will be at 7pm on Wednesday, October 12, and will also feature Patrick Rodgers, who will provide even more insight into the work of Maurice Sendak in this final lecture.

See our website at www.nbfpl.org/exhibit.html for additional details and updates. All of these programs are free and open to the public. Registration is suggested: Please come to or call (732-745-5108) the Reference Desk to sign up. Please contact Joye Crowe-Logan at 732-745-5108 x.20 or joye@lmxac.org with any questions.

Sunday, September 25—Van Harlingen Historical Society presents, *The History of Harlingen*, Sunday, September 25th, at 2:00 p.m. at the Harlingen Reformed Church, 34 Dutchtown-Harlingen Road on the corner of Route 206 in the Belle Mead section of Montgomery Township. Harlingen, despite its historic charm, is not on the National Register of Historic Places. To find out why, and learn lots more about this picture-perfect little village, join us on. We will present a program about the village which grew up around the church established at the crossroads in 1804. Featured will be a pictorial tour of the village narrated by Montgomery historian Ursula Brecknell with pictures of school days in the old Harlingen School, now Gasior’s Furniture. John Archibald, teaching principal from 1948-1950, will also speak. This event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For more information please call Jackie Weitzner at 609-466-8009.

Friday and Saturday, September 30-October 1—Haunted Perth Amboy Walking Tour, 7:30 pm. Ghosts, murder, pirates and graveyards - legends and history, too. Unique 8-block walking tour of Perth Amboy’s Waterfront District

with costumed guide. Admission \$10 per person. No registration needed. Come 15 minutes early and bring a flashlight for after dark. Tours start from the Proprietary House Museum, 149 Kearny Avenue, Perth Amboy, NJ 08861; 732-826-5527. Proceeds to benefit the museum. www.proprietaryhouse.org.

Saturday, October 1—“Vittles & Fiddles” Food & Wine Festival. Take a bite out of history at our first food and wine event. Music, tasty treats, and fun for the whole family. Please call the office, 718-984-6046, for details. The Conference House, 298 Satterlee St., Staten Island, NY 10307; 718-984-6046; info@conferencehouse.org.

Saturday and Sunday, October 8-9 - Colonial Times. Wyckoff-Garretson House, 215 So. Middlebush Road, Somerset, NJ 08873; 732-828-7418. Sat., 10–5; Sun., 12–4. **Saturday** – Colonial Times Banquet, The Meadows Foundation, Hageman Farm Barn, 6 p.m. 209 So. Middlebush Road, Somerset, NJ 08873; 732-748-7657. Linda Barth will present “Celebrate NJ” — Save gas as you tour our wonderful state from the comfort of your chair. Experience the famous and not-so-famous people, places, and events of our great little state. Explore our diverse geography: mountains, highlands, rivers, lakes, and seashore. Visit the South, the North, the Central, and little-known places in between.

Saturday, October 15—English Tea. Come and enjoy the second annual English Tea hosted by the Conference House Association Auxiliary. Play croquet, lawn bowling, and horseshoes - great for the young and young at heart. Shop boutique handmade crafts, garden inspired items/plants & baked goods. Raffles. Tea will be served in the Conference House kitchen by reservation. For tea reservations, call 718-984-2491. 12 pm - 4 pm. The Conference House, 298 Satterlee St., Staten Island, NY 10307; 718-984-6046; info@conferencehouse.org.

Saturday, October 22—Girl Scout “Manners Badge” — 10–12 p.m. The Meadows Foundation, Hageman Farm, 209 So. Middlebush Road, Somerset, NJ 08873; 732-748-7657.

Wednesday, October 26—The New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance invites you to a public program at 5 pm in the Pane Room on the first floor of the Alexander Library, 169 College Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Chad Leinawever, chair of the NJSAA’s authors awards committee, will moderate a panel of award-winning New Jersey authors. Parking passes for the College Avenue deck may be requested in advance from Bonita Grant (craftg@rulmail.rutgers.edu) or Nancy Martin (ngmartin@rci.rutgers.edu). Information on the Alliance is available at www.njsaa.org.

Sunday, October 30—Pumpkin Patch. 12–4 p.m. The Meadows Foundation, Van Wickle House, 1289 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ 08873; 732-748-7657.

Saturday, November 5— “The Wreck of the Lady Mary” - 2 p.m. The Meadows Foundation, Van Liew Suydam House, 280 South Middlebush Road, Somerset, NJ 08873; 732-748-7657. Amy Nutt, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for the *Star-Ledger*. Tix are \$10.

Saturday, November 19—Phil Jaeger speaks about “**Castles of New Jersey.**” Although not as numerous or grand as their European counterparts, a surprisingly large number of castles were built in New Jersey a century or more ago. This program will take you on a tour of well-known castles such as Lambert and Kip’s castles as well as lesser known ones throughout the state. Many of them still exist, some have been disguised over the years, and others have vanished. Van Wickle House, 1289 Easton Ave., Somerset. 2 p.m. Tix are \$10. 732-748-7657. Following the program, at 3 pm, the Meadows Foundation will hold its annual meeting.

Saturday, November 26—“Victorian Holiday Tea” - 2-4 p.m. Fast becoming a Meadows “can’t miss” event, this post-Thanksgiving afternoon, featuring delightful tea sandwiches and assorted teas, features Lisa Lewis in gorgeous Victorian array, explaining the many charming holiday customs of a bygone era. Van Liew-Suydam House, 280 South Middlebush Road, Somerset, NJ 08873. \$25. Advance ticket sale only. 732-748-7657. The Meadows Foundation.

Sunday, December 4—“Sinterklaas” - 1–4 p.m. The Meadows Foundation, Van Wickle House, 1289 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ 08873; 732-748-7657.

Sunday, December 11, 2011, 11 am to 4 pm – Rockingham’s Annual Candlelight Holiday House Tours. Docents in period dress will give a specially-themed tour of the historically-decorated house. Music, museum store, light refreshments available. Reservations REQUIRED: 609-683-7132 before Nov. 21/609-683-7136 after Nov. 20. Event is free/ donations welcome. www.rockingham.net. 84 Laurel Ave., Kingston, NJ.

RARITAN MILLSTONE HERITAGE ALLIANCE

Membership Contribution

- Membership Fees
- Individual \$35
- Site \$35
- Household \$50

Additional Support Levels

- Benefactor \$1,000
- Patron \$ 500
- Sponsor \$ 250
- Donor \$ 100

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please return this form with your check

To: Raritan Millstone Heritage Alliance
PO Box 5583
Somerset, NJ 08875-5583

Thank you!
Visit our website: raritanmillstone.org

Thanks to Steve Russell and our new webmaster, Greg Caggiano, we have an updated, bright, and newsy website. The new address:

www.raritanmillstone.com

(The old address was . org.)



Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance
PO Box 5583
Somerset, NJ 08875-5583