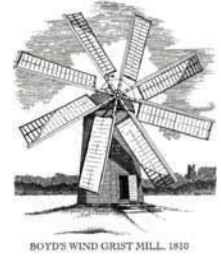


MIDDLETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS



November, 2007

IN MEMORIAM JEAN H. PERRY and ROBERT DENNIS

By Evelyn LeDoux

Jean Harrison Perry, who died on September 12, was a most generous member of the Middletown Historical Society. She donated the funds which enabled us to have our replica windmill pins designed and crafted. They are currently available for purchase in pewter, gold plate and sterling silver. It would be a fitting tribute to Jean's memory if our members would purchase the pins. Anyone wishing to do so may call Pin Chairperson Kathy Poremski at 683-6053. She will be happy to fill all order.

Jean's mother was Mrs. George Harrison of Harrison Ford. Jean and her sister donated their mother's beautiful wedding gown to our Society many years ago. Shortly thereafter, our organization held a very successful Antiques Show, which was all based around the wedding dress. The Middletown Historical Society is deeply indebted to Jean for her generosity and will treasure her memory.

Another great loss to our group is the passing, on September 22, of Robert Dennis. Bob was a long-time member and served on the Board of Directors for several years. He was active in the restoration of Boyd's Windmill and, through his efforts, we obtained several grants which helped tremendously in the project. He hand carved replicas of the mill which are now on sale at Paradise School. We appreciate all that Bob did for the Society and we will indeed miss him.

ANNUAL JONNYCAKE FESTIVAL SET FOR NOVEMBER 11

The Middletown Historical Society will host its Annual Jonnycake Festival on Sunday, November 11, from 1:00–3:00 p.m. at Paradise Park, corner of Paradise and Prospect Avenues.

Diane and Bob Smith, owners/operators of Carpenter's Grist Mill, in Perryville, RI, will be in charge of the griddles. Hot coffee and windmill cookies will also be served.

Carpenter's Grist Mill was built in 1703 and still operates powered by water from a nearby stream. The mill grinds only Rhode Island corn, known as "white cap flint", to make cornmeal.

Boyd's Windmill, in Paradise Park, will be in full operation under the supervision of Andy Shrake, who was the project manager for the restoration of the mill when it was moved from Portsmouth to its present location in Middletown. The mill will be open for tours, and trained docents will be on hand to provide additional information.

Custom designed and crafted windmill pins will be available for purchase. These pins, which were designed especially for the Middletown Historical Society, are available in pewter, gold plate, and sterling silver.

This event is open to the public and is free of charge however; donations for the upkeep of the windmill are gratefully appreciated. Hope to see you there!

Witherbee School News

Witherbee School, at the corner of Valley Road and Green End Avenue, is receiving some much-needed TLC. The town has been awarded grant monies for exterior scraping and painting, gutter replacement and window repairs.

The 1892 schoolhouse was built by Joseph Coggeshall at a cost of \$1,975 and paid for by a special levy on District Two taxpayers. This building was destroyed by fire in 1907 and immediately rebuilt on the 1892 foundation, to the same design, by John R. Coggeshall, son of Joseph, at a cost of \$3,500; this time paid for by a general levy on all town taxpayers.



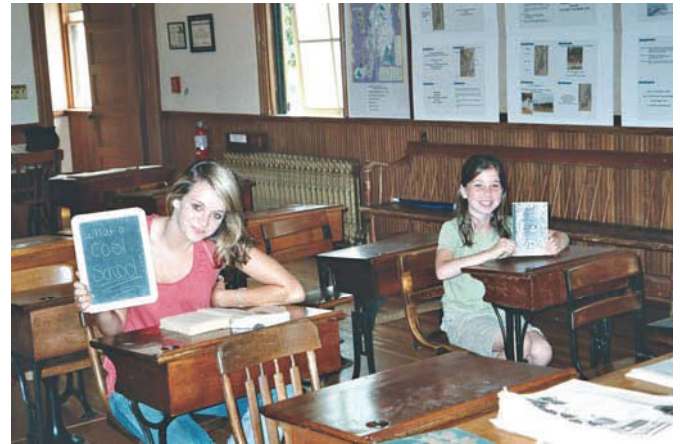
1892



2007

Summer Open House

Witherbee School was open on Sundays during the months of June, July and August this year. Among the visitors who signed the guest book were Maggie Fitzsimmons, of Scottsdale, AZ, and her cousin, Colleen Edwards, of Portsmouth, RI. Maggie wrote, "This is a COOL SCHOOL", on her chalkboard.



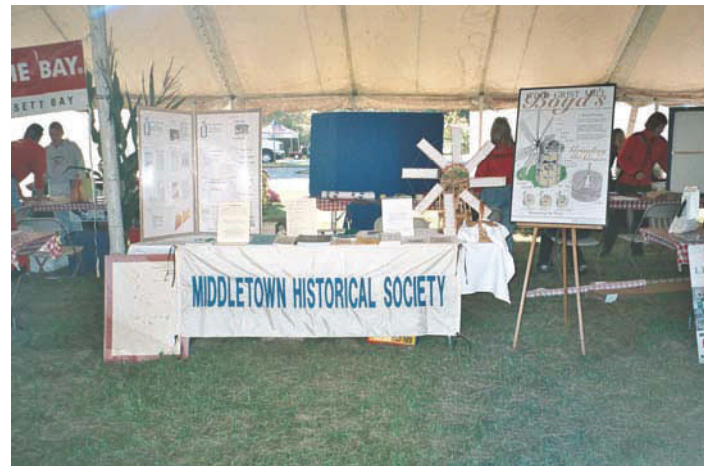
Maggie Fitzsimmons and Colleen Edwards

MHS Sponsors Booth at Harvest Fair

For the second consecutive year, the Middletown Historical Society sponsored a booth in the Education Tent at the Norman Bird Sanctuary's Harvest Fair. This year's Fair was held on Saturday, September 29th and Sunday, the 30th.

Much information filled the table including a replica of Boyd's Windmill and Society items for sale.

Our thanks to Society members Mary Bellagamba, Gladys Silveira, Mary Fran Redgate, Betty Jane Owens, Theresa Santos, Bill Nedderman, Theresa Spengler, Tom Wigand and Ken Walsh for volunteering at the booth.



Middletown Historical Society Booth at Harvest Fair

* IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT *

Will the person who borrowed the large brown book from the open shelves at Paradise School on the day of the Jonnycake Festival in 2006, please return it. The Paradise School building holds most of our archival collection and is usually open Wednesday morning from 10:00 a.m. ~ 12:00 noon. Please call 849-1870, or return it to the school at your earliest convenience. Thank you very much.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership in the Society is yearly, January 1st to December 31st. Current members will receive renewal notification by mail. Please do not send payment until then and, if possible, only pay one year at a time. Thank you for your continued support.

HISTORIC HOUSE PLAQUES

The Middletown Historic House Plaque program continues. If you reside in a house that is 100 years old, or older, and you feel it has historic interest or significance, it can be researched and an application made for admittance into the Society's Program. Applications are available at the Society's headquarters in Paradise School, Paradise Avenue, Middletown.

URI GRAD STUDENT RESEARCHING FOUNDING FAMILIES

The Middletown Historical Society welcomes Mary Finkel, a graduate student at the University of Rhode Island who is doing research involving cataloguing and archiving of one of the Middletown Historical Society's manuscript collections. This project will involve several weeks of work that will benefit Mary and the Society.

The collection of documents and historical material was acquired from different branches of the Peckham family. It is hoped that the information gathered from such research will enable the Society to plan an exhibit on the lives of some of our founding families.

STONE WALL APPRECIATION



By a proclamation of the Town Council, the Monday of Thanksgiving week is designated Stonewall Appreciation Day. The town of Middletown is distinguished by its rural heritage of beautiful stone walls. Monuments to the past, the Middletown Historical Society encourages the preservation and maintenance of stone walls as tributes to the founders of the town.

If you would like to register your Middletown stone wall, please call Stephan Lepley at 401-848-5991

MIDDLETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

The officers of the Middletown Historical Society consist of the President, Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and Treasurer, all of whom are elected for terms of two years. Officers may serve no more than three, two-year terms.

As of September 15, 2006, the Society Officers are:

William Nedderman - **President**

Marianne Tomassone - **Vice President**

M. Theresa Santos - **Treasurer**

Barbara Murphy - **Recording/Corresponding Secretary**

MIDDLETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION

In order to ensure a record of the town's past, its heritage - where we came from, what we have done, what has been important to us - the Middletown Historical Society was formed to protect and preserve that priceless legacy which we have inherited.

FOUNDED JUNE 1, 1976

The Middletown Historical Society, Inc.
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