

Financial Statement

of the
MAYOR and COUNCIL

— of —
Middletown, Delaware
1949



Thomas R. Newnam, Mayor

James E. Buckworth, Councilman

Herbert L. Phillips, Councilman

C. Earle Shivery, Councilman

Wallace Hufnal, Councilman and Secretary

Mrs. Rosalie D. Armstrong, Treasurer, Alderman and Collector

Mrs. Jeanette Beaston, Assessor

Mrs. Ruth I. Green, Member of Board of Health

Dr. Allan R. Cruchley, Member of Board of Health

Mrs. Jeanette Beaston, Member of Board of Health

Gilbert L. David, Supt. of Utilities

L. Baynard Marvel, Chief of Police

Harry K. Hoch, Solicitor

This financial statement of the 1949 mayor and council includes the financial expenditures of the town for that year, as well as prominent people who served the town. Names include Mayor Thomas R. Newnam; councilmen James E. Buckworth, C. Earle Shivery, and Wallace Hufnal; Rosalie D. Armstrong, treasurer, alderman, and collector; Jeanette Beaston, assessor; Gilbert L. David, superintendent of utilities; L. Baynard Marvel, police chief; and Harry K. Hoch, solicitor. The 1955 photograph below shows Mayor John N. Sparks (in bow tie), who was instrumental in starting the Middletown Historical Society, to which he donated a large collection of pictures and information. (Both, courtesy of Middletown Historical Society.)



Six

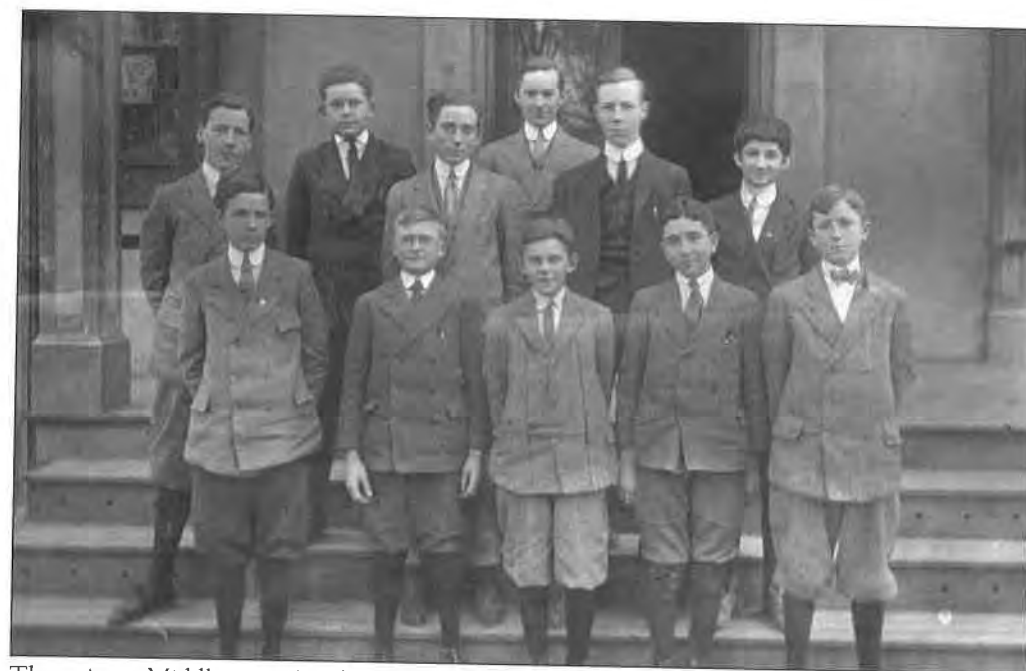
EDUCATION



The Middletown Academy, the oldest educational institution on record in the area, opened in 1827 as a private school on North Broad Street and offered English and classical education, with two sessions held each year. The cost for education in the "English branches of education" was \$8 per session, and mathematics and languages cost \$10 per session. Rev. Joseph Wilson was first to supervise at the school, with Isabella Anderson serving as head of the female students. In the 1840s, some residents expressed displeasure at the management of the school, but education was not affected. The academy became public in 1876 when School Districts 60 and 94 merged and rented the building for \$5 per term, which was later reduced to \$1 per term. Once the public school building opened on South Broad Street in 1929, the academy was no longer needed. (Courtesy of Scott Lawrence.)



The appearance of Middletown Academy, known as "Old Academy," has changed throughout the years. The school added a dining room and kitchen in 1865, plus another \$4,700 section in the late 1800s, when it became a public school. The academy suffered a fire in January 1903 and had to close its doors for several months. In 1945, the government sold the building to the St. George's Hundred Historical Society, which was organized to save it. Its central structure remains relatively the same, and in 1960, it was deeded by the historical society to the town for community use. It has housed the town hall, the Middletown police, a public library, and, at the date of publication, is shared by the Middletown Historical Society and the Middletown Area Chamber of Commerce. (Above, courtesy of Delaware Public Archives; below, courtesy of Middletown Historical Society.)



The private Middletown Academy offered students a "good English and classical education." The school year included two sessions with a short break in between. In 1840, principal William Harris reported that 33 pupils attended school in the building, and tuition was \$430. Discipline was to be "administered with firmness, yet with parental kindness," and students were encouraged to "behave toward one another in a mild, obliging manner, carefully avoiding all angry disputes and quarrels" when out of school. They were not allowed to visit taverns, balls, dances, or other similar events, nor were they permitted to partake in card games or other "harmful and destructive games." The men of the class of 1911 are pictured above, and the class of 1914 is below. (Both, courtesy of Middletown Historical Society.)





This Middletown Academy class photograph shows how the school grew to educate many more than 33 students by the late 1800s. In this 1897 image, the fifth-and-sixth-grade class is shown in front of the historic building with teacher Mary Price. (Courtesy of Middletown Historical Society.)



To Olivia

Farewell my friend, a long farewell,
 A mournful sad adieu,
 I call to mind the happy hours,
 So lately spent with you.

Your gaily inspired delight,
 And made the moments fly,
 Quick as the radiant beams of light,
 That sparkle in your eye.

Olivia

September 21st 1836.

Delaware.

This poem was written on September 21, 1836, in Olivia Rebecca Cochran's friendship book. Cochran, who lived just west of Middletown, used the book to collect autographs, artwork, and poems from Delaware friends and classmates from Christiana, Newark, and Cantwell's Bridge, as well as from friends and classmates at a boarding school in Pennsylvania. The poem "To Olivia" reads: "Farewell my friend, a long farewell, / A mournful sad adieu, / I call to mind the happy hours, / So lately spent with you. / Your gaily inspired delight, / And made the moments fly, / Quick as the radiant beams of light, / That sparkle in your eye." The green leaves and red flowers at the top were delicately painted. (Courtesy of David and Alison Matsen.)

Middletown's 'Old Academy'

THE OLD ACADEMY

By Al Berkman

Old Derelict, with sagging sills and dome—

The welcome worn from off thy rotting door,

You seem so bare, so friendless and alone,

The dust lies thick upon your splintered floor.

Although the Hand of Time has passed your way

And stilled the merry voices you once knew

Some wandering sons and daughters far away,

Remember still—and cherish thoughts of you.

Those empty rooms. They were not always so.

Their memories—how they clutch my very heart.

With life and laughter once they seemed to glow

And of our lives became an active part.

From primary thru graduation day

By woes made dark, by happiness made bright,

Their teachings more than once have paved the way,

And proved a watchword thru the lonely night.

The bell up in the belfry rings no more—

A relic—yes—but what a priceless gem.

Ah! would its tongue could clamor as of yore

To call the ones now grown to women and to men.

Hundreds once made haste its dictates to obey

Some with a laughing heart, while others yet felt blue

And now, the whispering breezes seem to say,

“School’s out for you old bell—school’s out for you.”

Deep scarred and old and touched by frosts of Fall—

A grey old monk, philosopher and sage!

A prideless place, yet very proud withal,

A beauty’s pride that scorns the touch of Age.

Despite thy scars, despite thy sagging sill,

You sense good cheer from mossy step to dome,

No breath of Time nor Winter frosts can chill

The love we bear to thee, no matter where we roam!

Lines written December 1931, upon seeing the old forsaken schoolhouse crumbling in decay.

Al Berkman crafted this poem in 1931 about the Old Academy building, which sat vacant at the time. In 1945, he wrote a letter to Clarence P. Weber requesting that certain lines be omitted and the final eight be replaced with, “Though old and scarred and crumbling in decay / A wise old Sage, with wisdom of the years. / Forsaken once—You’ll know a brighter day, / And soon will take your place with other seers. / Though once, we passed you by in proud disdain: / We hallow now your sagging walls and dome. / Through winter’s coldest frost, there will remain / The love we have for you, no matter where we roam.” Berkman was not alone in his nostalgia for the treasured school; in 1918, former academy instructor Ida Howell, who continued to teach local students after the academy closed in 1929, also penned a poem with lines such as, “The laughing boys and girls of yore / Whose voices come to us no more” and “The breezes sigh—our hearts do, too, To break with the old is hard to do.” (Courtesy of Middletown Historical Society.)



Floor Managers:

Willard D. Biggs,
John P. Cochran, Jr.,
Dr. W. F. Kennedy,
Horace M. Walker.



Middletown Hall, January 29th, 1885.

This 1885 dance card, printed by Middletown-based Freeman and Reeve, is an example of what was given to each young lady who attended such dances. The cards listed the schedule of dances, also called “engagements,” for the evening. A young man would “reserve” a dance with a lady by signing his name next to one of the engagements on her dance card. Reserving one lady for more than four dances was frowned upon. The style of dance, the name of the song, and the composer were included, along with many opportunities for young ladies to dance with young gentlemen. This particular card shows that the dance was held at the Middletown Hall with an evening of 20 separate engagements and a range of dance styles, including a waltz-glide to “Queen’s Lace Handkerchief” by Johann Strauss II and a schottische to “Hurry Little Children, Sunday Morn” by David Braham. (Courtesy of Middletown Historical Society.)