



Middleton Area Historical Society Newsletter

March 2018

Number 172

Middleton, Wisconsin

OUR MISSION: TO PRESERVE AND PUBLICIZE THE HISTORY OF THE MIDDLETON AREA.



The Rowley House... A Middleton Landmark

- Built in 1868 by Dr. Newman C. Rowley, using 30,000 bricks, at a cost of \$800. Rowley insured the house for \$2,000. One of Middleton's oldest, it is on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Design: Gabled-Ell domestic architecture popular during the mid-19th century. The house has a two-story front gable, a two-story perpendicular wing and a one-story kitchen in the back.
- Dr. Rowley was not wealthy so the house has few architectural flourishes. The exterior includes cut stone lintels and sills framing double-hung windows, a main entrance with glass sidelights, and an ornamented front porch.
- The interior also has limited decoration: an unusually wide pocket door, wood-grained paneling, front and back parlors, and pediment window trim, all still intact.
- Behind the house is a two-story carriage house, similar to the original barn.
- The house was home to three generations of the Rowley family who served the Middleton area as physicians. During its residential use, the house was continuously occupied by Rowley descendants.
- In 1989, the home was sold to the Middleton Area Historical Society using funds donated by local farmer Gilsie Techam. This gave the Society space to house and its collections of artifacts and archives.

Thank You

MIDDLETON FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS WHOSE DEDICATION TO MIDDLETON'S HERITAGE WAS MEMORIALIZED WITH GIFTS TO MAHS

John Skinner
Karen Myers
Vera Bauman

Helen Black
James Reinke

PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION FOR CARRIAGE HOUSE ENVIRONMENTAL RETROFITTING

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MIDDLETON BUSINESS SUPPORTERS BARRIQUES

Costco
Culvers
CVS Pharmacy
Hubbard Avenue Diner
New Horizons Band
Orchid Garden Center
Perkins
Pick n Save of Middleton
Stamm House
Walgreen's
Willy Street Co-op

As Pothole Season Comes Around Again....

an excerpt from "When You and I Were Young" by Pearl Geary Williams

The government of Middleton was quite simple in 1900, and so the taxes were low, as there were not too many places to use the money. The streets were as yet just dirt roads, and a grader pulled by four horses went over them occasionally. Any culverts in the streets were made by carpenters spiking together four twelve-inch planks in a sort of box form to let the water flow through. The length according to need, perhaps only ten or twelve feet. Transportation was by horse and buggy or horseback, and walking was the most popular. There were passenger trains by which one could visit the City of Madison, which some

considered to be a real lark. The fare was fourteen cents each way, but if you wanted to go to the Capitol Square you usually walked the six blocks from the railway depot. The road to the north and west (now highway 12 and Airport Road) was deep marsh sand and the drier it was, the deeper the dust became. It was known as the "marsh road." I remember the first house built there in 1895 by a man named Peter Miller of Waunakee. Everyone around here thought it a daring undertaking, as nobody would wish to live in the sand. How wrong they were!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It probably seems like only yesterday, but believe it or not, our Rowley House is now 150 years old! That's right, built in 1868, the Rowley House will celebrate its sesquicentennial in 2018. Therefore, MAHS is planning to commemorate this with a few special activities. We are working with Capital Brewery to co-host an event that would celebrate the brewing of a special "Rowley House" beer. Our plans are to have this event at the Brewery on Saturday, August 4 in conjunction with Middleton's annual Mustard Days activities ... so mark your calendar for a fun-filled weekend in downtown Middleton. More details will be forthcoming !!

We are also developing a series of 5-6 history presentations that we will offer to community groups that are seeking a speaker/talk for one of their meetings or events. These will include:

- The Rowley Chronicles
- The Great Fire of 1900
- Middleton's Early Years
- African Americans in Early Middleton
- Tales of Pheasant Branch
- Middleton Churches

and perhaps others as time permits.

This spring or early summer, we are planning to renovate/rejuvenate the small garden area in the back (northeast corner) of the Rowley House property. We want to also add some new plantings (including an ornamental tree) and eventually erect a monument or plaque that would recognize and commemorate the Founders of our Middleton Area Historical Society.

Another project at Rowley House will be the placement of two signs along the city sidewalk in front of the house. One sign will depict the history of Rowley House and the Rowley doctors; the second will tell some of Middleton's history. The signs will allow Middleton visitors to glean something about our community's past when the Rowley Museum is not open. We hope to install the signs in late spring.

A few dates for your calendar:

On Saturday, April 7 we will "host" our annual cleaning day for Rowley House (starting at 9:00 AM) ... so, if you are free and want to give us a hand with sweeping, dusting, etc.

Please join us; on Saturday, April 14 we will have a morning workshop for those who wish to serve as a volunteer docent at the Rowley House.

On Tuesday, April 17 we will have our official opening of the Rowley House (from 1:00 to 4:00 PM) for the 2018 season;

And finally make sure you hold the date of June 20 for our annual Pie and Ice Cream Social.

We also plan to host several grade school classes this spring and that is always a fun day for those of us who volunteer. If you have time to chat with the youngsters and tell them a bit about the old-timey things in Rowley House please contact me ... I will find a spot for you! And, if you haven't visited in a while, please plan to do so during our sesquicentennial year.

Jeff Martin

Middleton Area Historical Society President



Pheasant Branch Brewery-the Middleton areas first brewery



The Pillars on Mary Street

The Middleton Landmarks committee has shown interest in preserving the two pillars leading to the original Elm Lawn school shown here. Alderperson for the neighborhood, Kathy Olson, has approached the city about restoring the historic concrete columns. When a mason, with knowledge of historical work, was approached for an opinion, it was stated that the pillars may be beyond repair due to deterioration from time and the elements. Replacement of the two pillars to replicate the original ones might be cost prohibitive. At this time nothing has been decided.

If you would like to weigh in on the subject please contact :

Shawn Stauske

City of Middleton

Dir. Public Works / City Engineer (608) 821-8381

or

Alderman Mark Sullivan

Chairman of Finance Committee

district8@ci.middleton.wi.us

The First Elm Lawn

The five room Elm Lawn graded school (old building) was constructed in 1911 and 1912 and was first used as a school in

January 1913. The cost of construction of this building including land of this building was approximately \$12,000. A second

building was constructed at a cost of \$25,000 near the old building which consisted of four rooms and was used for the first time in September 1937. A large addition to the four room structure was built in 1950 and 1951 at a cost of \$185,000 and was used by graded school pupils for the first time in September 1951. The new addition consists of four large class rooms, a modern school kitchen and an all-purpose room and stage.



If You Grew Up In Middleton Do You Remember...?

by Mary Felton

Recently the picture of the original Elm Lawn School was posted on the “if you grew up in Middleton, do you remember...?” Facebook page. As soon as I saw it, I smiled! I lived on Hubbard Ave. and every school day from 1951 to 1960, I would walk to school gathering friends along the way. By the time, we reached the pillars there would be five or six of us walking down the concrete path that led to the school building... books in hand, laughing, or worrying about a quiz, and planning our day. Many former Elm Lawn students commented about the school and the pillars. We all hope people realize the historical value of the pillars and are able to have them restored.

- This postcard was mailed to my grandfather, Russ Green, in 1912 while he was working in the oil fields of Oklahoma. It is titled the new Middleton Grade School. (see top photo on opposite page)
- Elm Lawn from the pillars on Hubbard! What a great photo - and one I've never seen!
- There has been talk of taking down the pillars. Has anyone else heard anything? That would be a sad day for many Elm Lawn students.
- Back in September, I read an article about Mary Street and the pillars leading down to Elm Lawn School. In the article they said the pillars were in poor condition and they were considering taking them down because it would cost too much to repair them.
- Elm Lawn School (May she RIP) unlike most of us have ever seen her! Who hasn't been on that sidewalk?
- I no longer live in Middleton but when I visit my family there, I always drive down Hubbard Ave. so I can see the pillars. Memories come rushing back!
- Great picture of the school, complete with well-known pillars. Note the cornfield on the left.
- The pillars are there but the ball on top of one has been missing for a while. Does anyone know when and how that disappeared?
- I remember one year in the early 80s someone put a pumpkin on one of pillars!

- In my colorful youth, I organized bicycle races down the hill from the pillars. That was the starting line.
- I loved the pillars and the building, walking down that path with lilac bushes covering both sides! Then in the winter when it was covered in snow was absolutely breathtaking!
- Love these Pillars. I lived four houses from these pillars. Historic indeed!
- Priceless photo! Thank you! I still love walking past the pillars! Graduated in 1959!
- Yes, the school's pillars are still there and the bell is displayed in the new Elm Lawn School.
- Great memories the pillars, of playground fun, and first kisses!



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middletonhistory.org

We Value Your Membership

Already a member -- you will be contacted by mail or email when it is time to renew.

Name _____ Address _____

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Annual Memberships

- Junior Historian (under 18) \$5.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Family \$25.00
- Business/Club \$75.00

Special Donor Category

- Contributing \$100.00
- Honorary

Gift for Museum Restoration/Maintenance \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Mail to:

Middleton Area Historical Society
7410 Hubbard Avenue
Middleton, Wisconsin 53562-3118

For those who itemize their taxes:
The Middleton Area Historical Society is a
not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation

To update your contact information or to receive this newsletter
via email, please contact Mary at 836-6776.