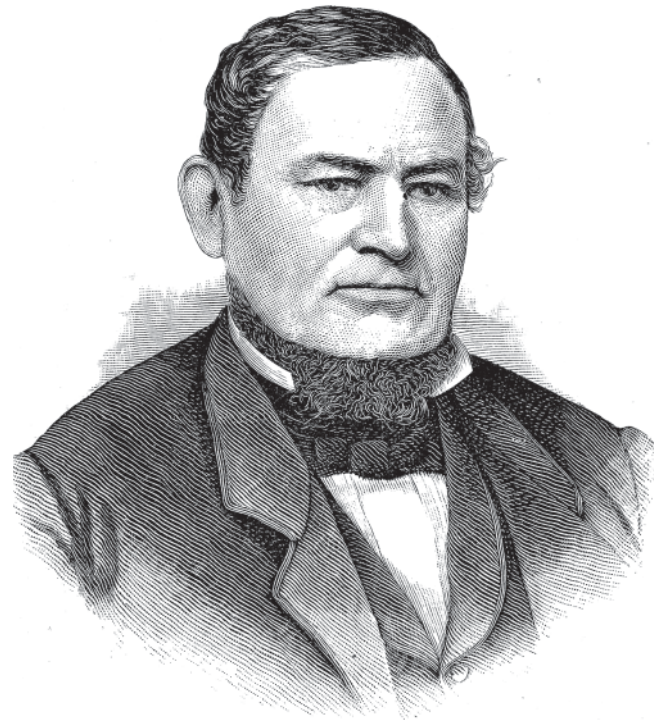


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

This is the first in a series of notable residents of Middletown Township as recorded in History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, by Henry Graham Ashmead, 1884.



Thomas Pratt

Thomas Pratt, the father of the subject of this biographical sketch, who was of English descent, married Hannah Haycock, of the same county and township, and had one son, Thomas, born on the homestead in Middletown Township, now occupied by his son, William H. Pratt, on the 11th of February, 1818. After receiving a substantial English education at the popular Friends' boarding-school at Westtown, Chester, Co., Pa., he returned to the parental roof and engaged in labor on the farm. He married, in 1839, Mary Worrall, of Middletown township, a descendant of John Sharpless, and had children,--Elizabeth (Mrs. Jesse Darlington), William H. (married to Clementina M., daughter of Charles Johnson, who has four children), T. Mitchell (married to Eva Woodward, of Chester, who has three children), Peter W. (who married Barbara Herr, of Lancaster County, and has five children),

Phineas (deceased), and Anna Mary (Mrs. Thomas Byers). All the sons reside upon the family estate. Mr. Pratt was a second time married June 15, 1874, to Miss Sarah, daughter of Oliver and Emma Johnson, of Middletown, Conn., to whom was born Sept. 8, 1875, a daughter, Emma. By the purchase of adjacent lands considerable additions were made to the homestead farm, which Mr. Pratt cultivated and greatly improved. He was the pioneer in a branch of industry which has since grown to large proportions in the county,--that of the manufacture of ice cream. This is made on the farm and shipped before the completion of the railroad by boat from Chester to Philadelphia, where a ready market was found. The enterprise proved so profitable as to have induced many others to embark in the business. Mr. Pratt retired from active labor some years before his death, and ultimately was removed to Media, where he died on the 5th of March 1882. He was a Republican in politics, active in the defense of the principles of his party, and a strong and outspoken Abolitionist. He served a term as commissioner of the county, and also held various minor offices. He was for several years identified with the Delaware County Mutual Insurance Company as its president. He was a member of the Delaware County Institute of Science, and a life member of the Pennsylvania Training-School for Feeble-Minded Children, both of which institutions commanded his warmest interest. His influence was ever given in the cause of temperance, both by precept and example. He was one of the board of trustees of the Charter House, in Media, a body with whom he met but a few days prior to his death. He was also one of the early projectors of the Farmers' Market of Philadelphia, now so successfully established. Mr. Pratt was from childhood a member of the society of Friends, and devoted to the faith he espoused.

(Note: the Pratt farm was located on Middletown Road opposite Cumberland Cemetery. Old Forge School was built on this property.)



Middletown Township Historical Society Newsletter

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OTHER TIMES

February 24, 1910 – One hundred and seventy lots were auctioned at Cumberland Cemetery in Lima with prices ranging from \$1 to \$8 per lot according to the size and location. The Thomas Pratt Estate had owned the lots.

January 2, 1935 – Mr. and Mrs. William Smedley entertained at a New Year's dinner at their Penncrest Farm on Barren Road in the Lima section of Middletown.

January 27, 1960– Volunteers, Dr. Philip Barkan, president of the Middletown Library, Dr. Robert Engle Jr. and Truman W. Read took over the job of completing renovations of the old building on Pennell Road. Contractor is Edward J. Krutsky of Glen Mills

March 22, 1985 – Honeycomb UAME Church in Lima is having a spring fashion show at the church.

January 8, 2000 – Lima Fire Co. in Middletown took delivery of a 2000 Horton ambulance that is equipped to respond as the department's paramedic unit. The unit is staffed 24 hours a day.

GETTING STARTED

The spring of 2009 was spent sorting out plans to reestablish the historical society. Input from interested residents was used to set priorities and create core committees. We got down to business and adopted the new logo, set a dues schedule, and began plans to create the MTHS website.

ORIGIN OF OUR LOGO

The Black Horse Hotel was licensed as a public house in 1739. It was located at the crossing of two main roads, Middletown Road and Baltimore Pike. The historic inn was demolished in the 1940's to accommodate the construction of the Clover Leaf. The ornate brass doorknocker was removed prior to demolition. Coupled with our motto, Opening the door to our past, it creates a perfect logo.

PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The MTHS is committed to preservation of structures through efforts to develop a township plan for historic designation of properties in the township. We are hoping to meet with the DELCO Planning Department this summer about how to get started on Historic Preservation in the Township.





MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PRIDE DAY 2010 - A WINDY DAY AT WILLIAMSON

Our canopy held up for most of the morning but eventually succumbed to the gusting winds that were the only problem of the day. Many township residents and visitors to Pride Day stopped at our display to look over the pictures and maps, to ask questions, and reminisce about earlier times in Middletown. One resident made a donation of old pictures and postcards. It was our pleasure to join other organizations and businesses to promote Middletown Township.

SMEDLEY PROPERTY



Susan Mescanti was invited to represent the historical society on the Park Committee for the Smedley Tract Master Site Plan. This provided an opportunity to make suggestions and recommendations about preservation of the existing buildings on the property, especially securing the main barn. The historical society has expressed an interest in the building located at the corner of Middletown and Rose Tree Roads for future use, staying within the deed restrictions on the property. The final plan was presented to Council on June 28.

CUMBERLAND CEMETERY AND HONEYCOMB UAME CHURCH

We are excited about working with the owners of the historic Cumberland Cemetery located on North Middletown Road across from the Old Forge School. One of the ideas we are working on is a Halloween Flashlight walking tour. If you are more comfortable in the cemetery in the light of day, Gary Grove and Mike Benson are both Civil War buffs and are hoping to work with the cemetery to conduct a reenactment. Many prominent families are laid to rest at Cumberland and we are hoping to connect this with our history of the township.

In addition, we are interested in connecting with the Honeycomb UAME Church, located on Barren Road at the end of Van Leer Avenue. We hope to meet with the church historian to learn about the history of the church and the Civil War dead buried in their cemetery.

MFLA AND MTHS WORKING TOGETHER

The Middletown Free Library Association has extended a hand to us and has proposed several ways in which the two organizations can work together for the betterment of both. The library association is willing to help us grow by publicizing our events and offering a venue to hold lectures. We also hope to work together to attract needed funding. Look for our article in the next issue of the Library Newsletter, *BUZZ*.

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP DVD AVAILABLE

Helene and Larry Weathers are responsible for producing a DVD on Middletown Township, which previewed at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Middletown Township Business and Professional Association. The DVD features many homes and businesses in Middletown that no longer exist or have gone through dramatic changes. Through their generosity, DVD's are available for purchase at the Middletown Free Library. Proceeds from previous sales have been donated to the historical society. If you do not have a copy, treat yourself to a walk down memory lane, or just enjoy seeing what used to be.

UP NEXT

Middletown Mondays 2011 Lecture Series

The historical society will celebrate the Township's 325th Anniversary with our "Middletown Mondays" lecture series on the fourth Monday of each month throughout 2011 (except June, July, August and December). Each program will deal with a different aspect of township history such as railroads and trolley lines through Middletown; Middletown in the Civil War; Sam Riddle; and the Painter, Pusey and Smedley families. The final schedule will be published in December 2010. If you have an idea for a topic please contact us at info@mthsdelco.org or phone Mary Anne Eves at 610-566-2342.

New Book on Middletown Twp Coming in 2011

We are also working with Arcadia Publications to produce a new book on Middletown Township and we would like all residents and former residents to contact us with photos of the Township throughout the 19th and 20th century. We'd be happy to scan your photos for you at a location and time that fits your schedule. Please contact us at info@mthsdelco.org or phone Mary Anne Eves at 610-566-2342.

Middletown Township Historical Society
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