



# NANNYKIDS



Volume 1

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Newsletter for "Kids"

Fall 2003

**NANNYKIDS** is a new, kid-friendly addition to the **Nannygoats** newsletter published by the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society. We hope kids (and those young at heart) will enjoy the games and activities in these pages. If you have any comments or suggestions for future editions of **NANNYKIDS**, please send us a letter by email to "ayersallenhouse@msn.com" or by snail-mail to "NANNYKIDS", c/o the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, P.O. Box 61, Metuchen, NJ 08840. We want to hear from you!

## MUSKRATS

The following story is an excerpt (a fancy term for "taken from") from the chapter entitled "Muskrats" in David Trumbull Marshall's 1930 *Boyhood Days in Old Metuchen*. This book,

which is in local libraries and available through the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, is full of stories about what Mr. Marshall remembers about growing up in the Metuchen Area.

My brother Will graduated from college in 1878. He had to pay his expenses at college by doing everything and anything that came to hand by which he could earn a few dollars. Among other things he used to trap muskrats in the swamps near Metuchen. It was my job to skin these rats and dry the skins while my brother took the train for New Brunswick and to Rutgers College.

Trapping muskrats in cold winter weather is no picnic. It meant getting up every morning at four o'clock visiting the traps,

which were the usual steel traps made for trapping small game, bringing the traps home and in the evening going out and setting the traps again.

Will could not leave his traps set during the day for there were always boys and men who stole traps and rats whenever they found them. Nowadays, Muskrat skins are very

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## JUMBLE

GHEETMUN

TRISHOY

TRAKUMS

SNOIDE

DIMDSLEEX

What did Mr. & Mrs. Nanny Goat call their children?

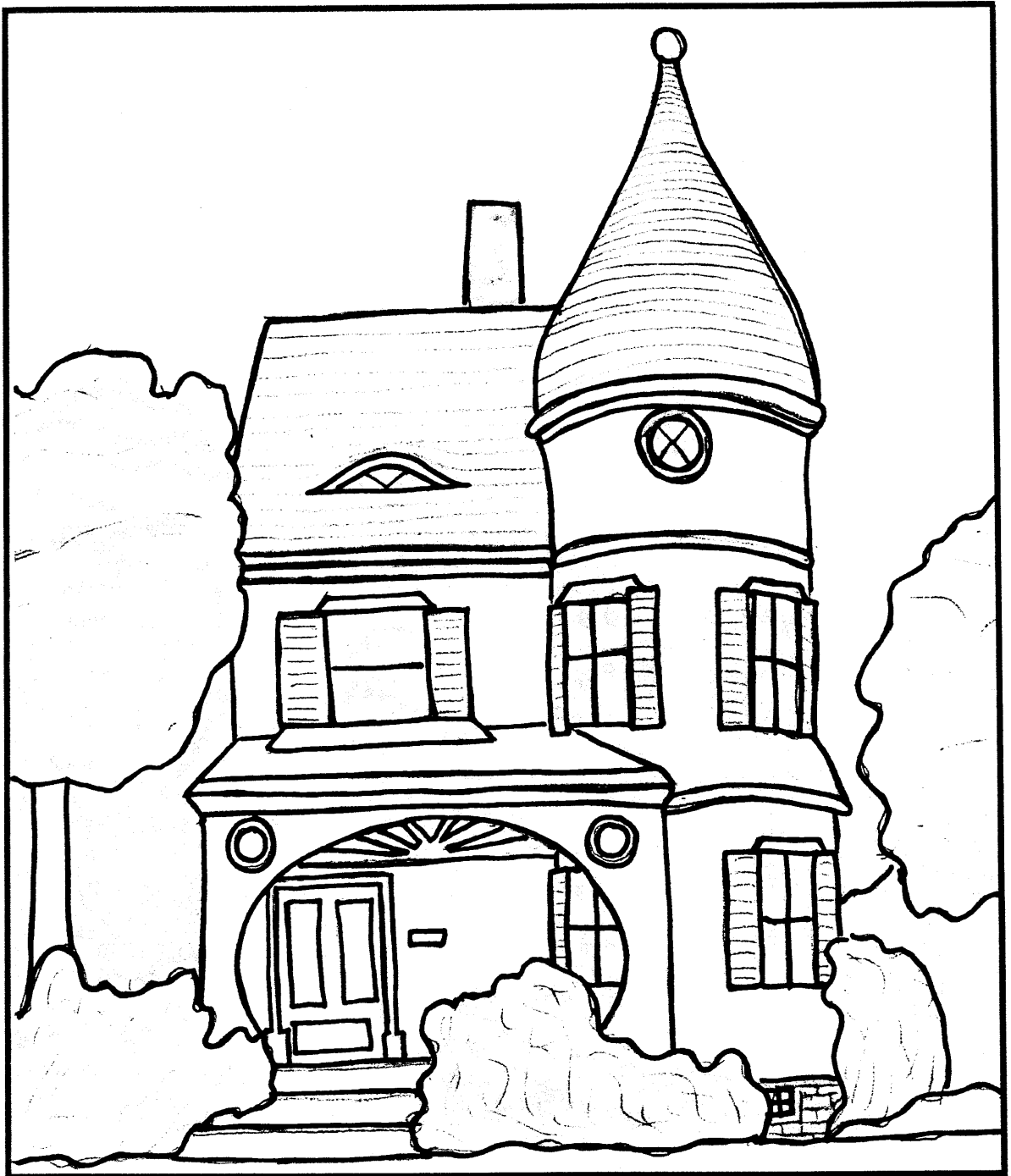
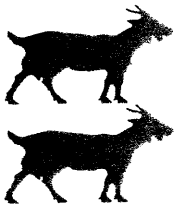
N

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## Historic House Coloring

This house is located at 259 Main Street in Metuchen. It was built at a time when it was popular to paint your house a lot of different colors. You can use colors you think your family might have wanted to paint the house, or try to color it with the beautiful colors the current owners have chosen.



## Letter from the Editor

It seems to me that we adults try to share and preserve our local history so that people who are kids today – but will be adults soon enough – can learn about the past. But, I think there are a lot of other reasons as well. Maybe the most important is the opportunity for kids to gain respect for themselves, their heritage, and the world around them.

I went to Sweden a few years ago and visited the village where my great-grandmother was born. The church in this village was almost 1000 years old - really, one-thousand years old! We went to tour the church, but found it was closed. However, next to the ancient front door was a large, iron key hanging on a hook. The sign next to it said that if the church was closed, visitors were welcome to let themselves in. It made me very happy to hear from some of the young people who lived there that nobody ever considered vandalizing this church. When I

*(continued on next page)*



# Connect the Dots!

When finished with connecting the dots (#1-48), you'll see a famous place in Edison and be able to fill in its name in the dashes in the center.

4

5

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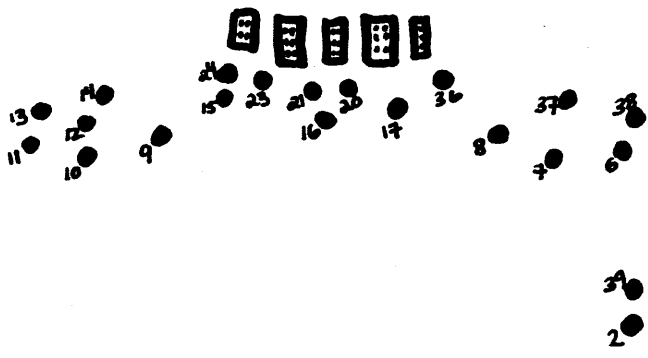
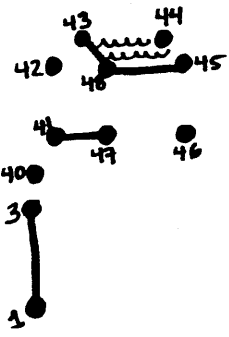
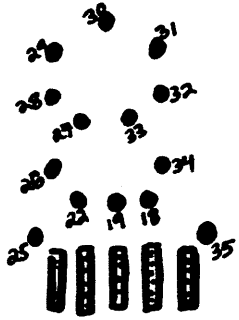
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asked why they weren't worried that someone would use the key to get in and damage the church, they answered something like "Why would they? That would be like hurting everybody here, and who would want to do that?"

I think it is easier to respect something that you know a lot about. The kids I met in this village knew a lot about their town's history and cared very much about their beautiful old church. I think they showed a lot of respect, too - for their town, their history, and themselves. I know there are kids right here in Metuchen and Edison just like them and I hope there will be more and more of them all the time.

Tyreen A. Reuter  
September 2003



# Muskrats

(continued from Page 1) much in demand and bring a high price. The skins are clipped and dyed and sold under a variety of trade names; "Hudson Seal" is one. The fur below the long, coarser hair is soft, like that of the seal. Many muskrat furs are made up in their natural colors, which are browns and grays. In 1876 I think no woman would be seen wearing natural muskrat fur.

The name muskrat is a good illustration of the old adage, "give a man a bad name and he will be rated bad," or something to that effect. The Muskrat is no rat at all. It does not belong to the rat family. He is more like the wood chuck or the rabbit, for he eats about the same kind of food.

The muskrats my brother caught lived in holes along the banks of brooks, not in nests built of grass and sticks as do the pond muskrats. The brook muskrats make a tunnel in the side of the bank with its entrance just below the water. A little way from the entrance the tunnel rises above the level of the water and there the nest is built under the ground. Muskrats feed after dark, so one rarely sees one in the daytime. The borders of the meadow brooks in New Jersey are sometimes honeycombed with the tunnels of the muskrat. One has to be careful in walking along the brooks not to step in the old caved-in tunnels. One is likely to go down to one's knees in mud.

Sometimes Will set box traps for muskrats. These traps are made by nailing together four boards about three feet long and a foot wide, forming a pipe open at both ends. I remember that once Will caught a mink in such a trap. He got the whole of \$1.25 for that skin.

## Word Find

Jersey  
State  
Middlesex  
Local  
History  
Study  
Preserve  
Education  
Significance  
William  
Trent  
Farm  
Newark  
City  
Shore  
Devils

Brother  
Will  
Rutgers  
College  
Marshall  
Boyhood Days  
Old Metuchen  
Memory  
Story  
Muskrat  
Mink  
Furs  
Skins  
Traps  
Catch  
Sell

Thomas  
Alva  
Edison  
Famous  
Inventor  
Well Known  
Menlo Park

Incandescent  
Bulb  
Recorded  
Sound Light  
Tower  
Monument

C	O	D	E	D	R	O	C	E	R	S	M	I	B	L	I	B	E
I	M	W	E	L	L	K	N	O	W	N	A	T	R	A	P	S	C
T	O	S	S	O	U	N	D	E	V	I	L	S	O	B	R	E	N
Y	N	U	M	C	N	E	W	A	R	K	V	P	T	O	E	L	A
L	U	O	E	A	T	H	O	M	A	S	A	X	H	R	S	L	C
I	M	M	L	A	C	S	W	A	M	P	E	E	A	E	E	I	
G	E	A	O	X	R	U	T	G	E	R	S	S	R	T	R	D	F
H	N	F	R	N	U	T	M	G	E	M	Y	E	W	O	V	U	I
T	T	U	Y	O	M	E	E	A	X	A	R	L	I	R	E	C	N
T	A	R	K	S	U	M	N	R	D	R	O	D	L	Y	Z	A	G
O	T	S	Q	I	N	D	L	D	M	S	T	D	L	F	C	T	I
W	S	T	U	D	Y	L	O	E	I	H	S	I	A	A	I	S	
E	H	N	I	E	E	O	P	N	N	A	I	M	A	R	T	O	T
R	O	E	S	T	H	O	A	L	K	L	H	J	M	M	C	N	O
M	R	R	A	Y	M	N	R	C	O	L	L	E	G	E	H	K	R
T	E	T	O	R	U	P	K	A	R	O	T	N	E	V	N	I	Y
J	S	B	U	L	B	T	N	E	C	S	E	D	N	A	C	N	I

## Kid-Count

Count the number of "kids" pictured in this newsletter. The answer is under the drawing of the muskrat on Page 1.

