



NANNYKIDS



Edition #2

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Newsletter for "Kids"

Fall 2006

LONG PANTS, A ROLLER COASTER, & ICE CREAM

The following story is taken from Allen C. Hansen's 2001 book, "The Hole in the Doughnut," about his life growing up in Metuchen during the 1930s. Copies are available in local libraries and are for sale through the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society and the Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce.

In the 7th and 8th grades many of the boys, myself included, wore pants that hung tightly just below the knees and long stockings slipped under the pants to cover our legs. These "three-cornered pants," called "knickers," were an accepted style for that age group at the time. But when I entered the 9th grade, one other boy in my class, Jim Hughes, and I were the only ones still

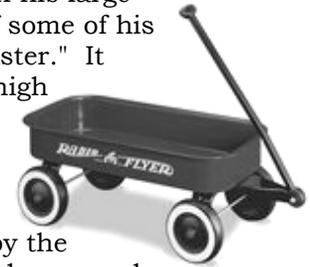


Metuchen High School Class of 1939, as sophomores. Allen Hansen's brother, Henrik, is one of the young men above wearing long pants. Photograph thanks to R.E. Layburn.

wearing that style. This was no way to build my self confidence as a "highschooler." We both argued with our parents that we were now in high school and should be wearing long pants. I suppose my parents didn't want to spend the money to buy more pants for me, but eventually I was able to discard the old style about the same time that Jim's parents relented. Seeing what students wear to school these days, it is hard to believe what we wore then, and how Jim and I stood out, to our great concern, as high school freshmen.

Among my school buddies was Doug Waring... Doug was a very inventive guy. In his large backyard he built, with the aid of some of his friends, what he called a "roller coaster." It

consisted of a pair of wooden tracks running from a platform about ten feet high built against a big tree in his back yard. The tracks were just the width of the wheels of a little red wagon. When the project was finished, he had designed it so that if you sat in the wagon at the top of the run, you could ride on down to the ground for a distance of ten feet or so to where the ramp bent upwards a few feet and then down again. The little red wagon, moved by the force of gravity, gave its occupants a nice ride. He held a fair in his back yard once and this ride was one of the main attractions. Little wonder that he later became an engineer.



Whenever I was visiting Doug, and his dad was home, he would usually be in his study and we had to be careful not to disturb him. The family lived in a large, sprawling house that, in later high school years, was the scene of some terrific parties. His sisters were all younger than him.

One of them, Doristelle, was so pretty that she reminded most of us young boys of Jean Tierny, a beautiful movie star at the time.



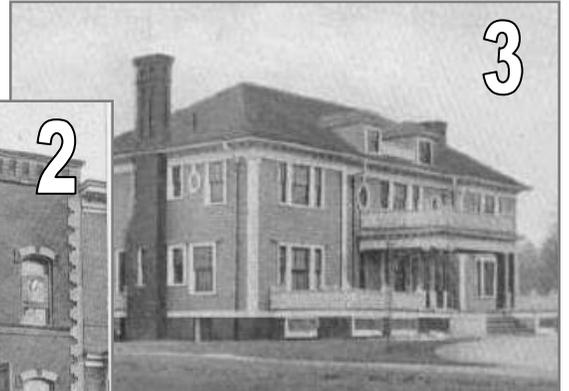
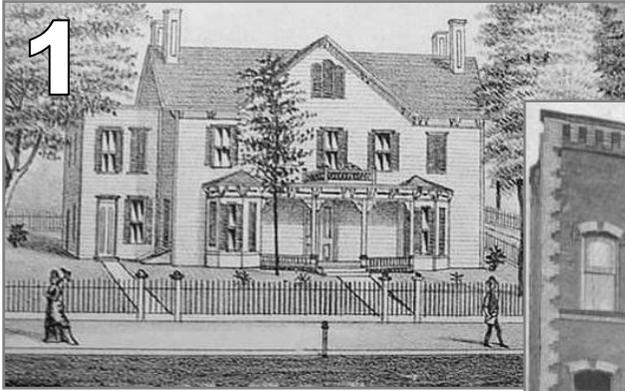
Another day that I went home from school to spend the afternoon with Doug we stopped off at Danford's, a general store on the corner of Main Street and Middlesex Ave., just across from the Boro Hall. Doug wanted to get a banana split or an ice cream soda. They were 25 cents which he plunked down on the counter. I just sat alongside and watched him eat it, impressed that he could spend all that money just because he felt like having a treat! I thought that, gosh, it must be nice to be able to spend that kind of money whenever you felt like it.

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'd like to hear from you!

Nannykids is published by The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, Tyreen A. Reuter, Editor.

WHERE, OH WHERE?

Do you know where these places are? Some of them look a lot different than they did when these pictures were taken or drawn. Need help? See the clues at the bottom of the page, or ask someone you know who might remember when they looked more like they do here. The answers are at the bottom of Page 4.



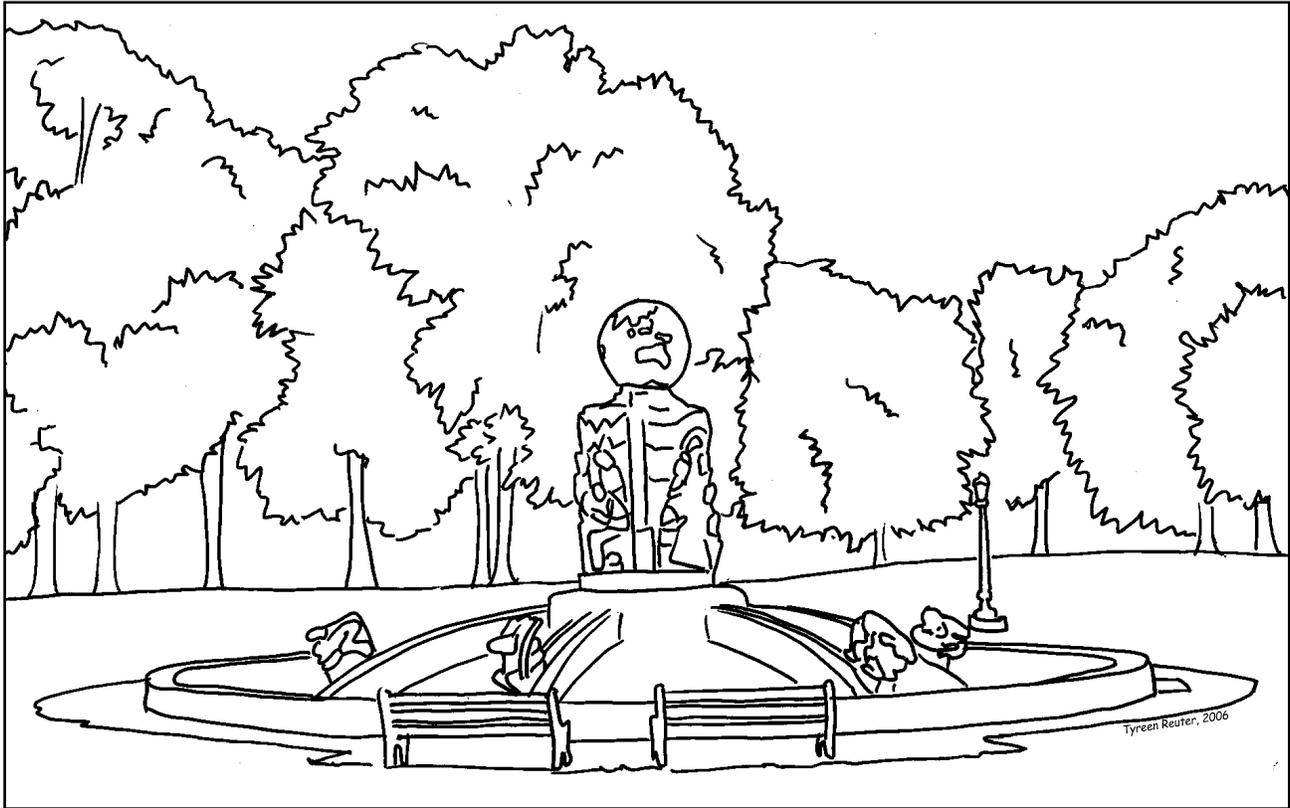
1. This is a very old sketch of an even older building. If you've ever been to *The Forum* in Metuchen, you've been close to it.
2. The "Main" view of this Metuchen building looks the same as it did many years ago, even though the first floor now contains stores instead of firemen.
3. Once the "Metuchen Club," this building is still a clubhouse, but for a different group – and it even hosts a few Bulldogs on weekends.
4. A hard one – but the soldiers in the picture should tell you it is a Camp in Edison, even though there aren't a lot of "Trees" shown.
5. A lot of weddings and parties have been held here in Edison over the years. It looks very different now, but there is a clue on the left side of the picture .
6. This is the easiest one - you don't need a *doctorate* to figure this one out.



COLORFUL HISTORY



The famous "Light Dispelling Darkness" fountain in Roosevelt Park was recently restored through the efforts of the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission. The ceramic and cast concrete fountain was created in 1938 by the artist Waylande Gregory as a tribute to Thomas Edison's industrial progress and the cooperation between education, labor, and industry. Now that its colorful figures, wayer sprays, and lighting have been restored, this unique, Depression-era fountain can be appreciated by the public once more.



JUST FOR LAUGHS

Why do sea-gulls fly over the sea?

Because if they flew over the bay they would be bagels.

What did the judge say when the skunk walked in the court room?

Odor in the court.

Why couldn't the pirate play cards?

Because he was sitting on the deck.

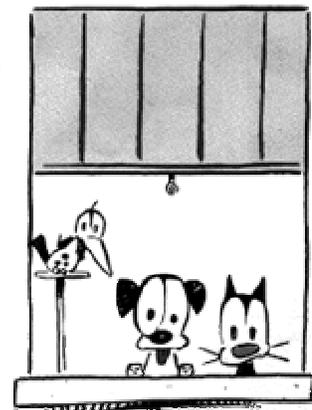
What starts with a P, ends with an E, and has a million letters in it?

The Post Office.

DID YOU KNOW...

...that the creator of the comic strip *Mutts*, Patrick McDonnell, is an Edison Resident?

In 1998, he won a Harvey Award for Best Syndicated Comic Strip.





IT'S A GUNDERFUL LIFE!



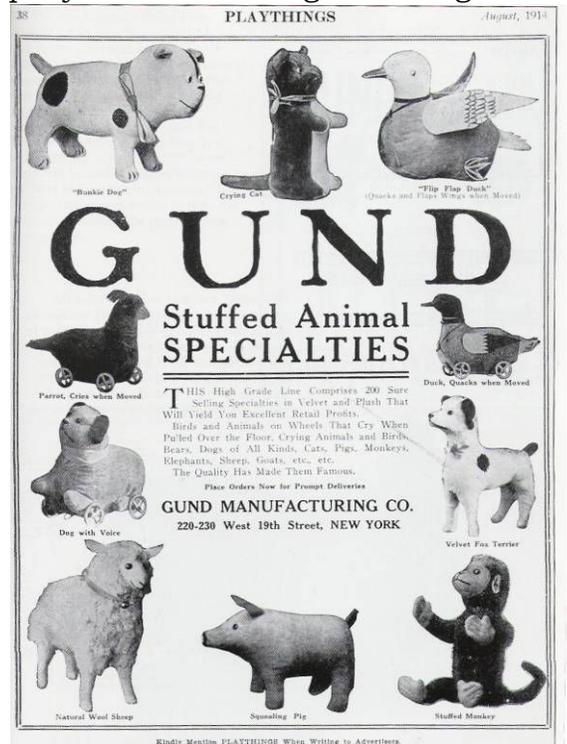
Can you believe that one of the world's oldest and most famous toy manufacturers, Gund, has it's international headquarters in Edison, New Jersey? It's true!

A German immigrant, Adolf Gund, founded the company in 1898 and began making stuffed fabric animals in 1899. At first, the factories and offices were located in New York City, but now they are all over the world... in places as far away as England and China! But the international headquarters and East Coast distribution center is located right here in Edison – on Runyon's Lane, near the historic Shotwell House. If you want to know more, look for the Arcadia Press book, "Gund," compiled by Bruce and Alex Raiffe – a father and son team, whose family has been running the company for three generations.



Left: An advertisement from 1980, featuring the famous bear Snuffles and the slogan "Gotta Getta Gund."

Right: a 1914 advertisement showing a few of the early items Gund became famous for.



Adolf Gund	Germany	A	P	P	I	G	A	R	C	A	D	I	A	C	I	R	B	A	F
advertisement	Gund	S	D	A	V	B	A	D	O	L	F	G	U	N	D	E	O	S	Y
Alex	headquarters	R	L	V	Y	E	H	I	M	R	U	U	E	O	I	D	L	R	L
animals	hens	E	A	D	E	A	I	S	P	U	R	N	S	R	N	A	O	P	L
Arcadia	historic	T	M	O	O	R	S	T	A	N	Y	D	R	A	M	T	Z	L	E
bear	international	R	B	G	S	A	T	R	N	Y	E	E	L	I	C	A	N	A	W
Bruce	lamb	A	F	K	N	I	O	I	Y	O	K	G	N	A	O	P	N	Y	T
cat	monkey	U	A	R	U	F	R	B	S	N	N	A	F	A	M	I	L	Y	O
China	mouse	Q	M	O	F	F	I	U	R	E	O	O	R	A	L	E	X	D	H
company	New York	D	O	Y	F	E	C	T	A	U	M	N	O	S	I	D	E	U	S
distribution	pig	A	U	W	L	C	H	I	N	A	C	E	G	Y	U	C	A	C	E
dog	play	E	S	E	E	S	L	O	G	A	N	E	N	O	A	R	K	K	A
duck	Raiffe	H	E	N	S	K	I	N	T	E	R	N	A	T	I	O	N	A	L
Edison	Runyon																		
England	seal																		
fabric	Shotwell																		
factory	slogan																		
family	snuffles																		
famous	toys																		
frog																			

Answers to "Where, Oh Where?": 1) 280 Amboy Avenue, at the northwest corner with Main Street. 2) 394 Main Street, formerly the Eagle Hook & Ladder Fire Company. 3) The Masonic Lodge at 483 Middlesex Avenue. 4) Camp Kilmer, named after poet Joyce Kilmer, the author of "Trees." 5) The Pines at 2085 Route 27/Lincoln Highway. 6) Roosevelt Hospital in Edison!