

This is the cover of a 1908 Sears 44-page catalog offering a selection of ready-to-assemble homes.

## New homes in Cranford for \$4,000!

No use hurrying, though; we're all 52 years late for ready-to-build offer

Some 50 years ago township residents could pick, home shoppers were luckier than most. They had a up a Sears and Roebuck catalog and order just about anything they wanted. Even a home in Cran- home was on Raritan Road, between Contennial It may come a surprise to many but at one time known as Sunny Acres. People flocked to the Sears did more than supply merchandise for home, model home, excited over newspaper ads claiming hearth and family. In fact, right here in Cranford, off Walnut Avenue, Sunny Acres is living proof of a Under the Sears "First Flome Club plan" in venture Sears undertook all across the country. Up until the turn of the century, Sears had been ican dream of owning a home. Impressed by the selling watches, tombstones and farm equipment

By CHERYL HEHL

through its mail order catalog since 1886. The Modern Homes" department made a debut in the chased without a down payment, the homes sold spring 1908 catalog. Later that year Sears issued a 4-page catalog featuring 22 styles of homes. Over the next 32 years, more than 100,000 American families ordered homes from the world's largest retailer

A 1913 model featured 10 rooms, one and onehalf baths and a wrap-around porch with balcony, all for \$2,000. For the average production worker who made a little more than \$500 a year, this was a nificantly into why little architectural attention was bargain.

No one knows how many Sears houses are still standing today, but one thing is certain, in some parts of the country they are "too expensive for the average middle class family to afford," claims Smithsonian senior architectural historian Dr. Nina Freight rates were high and more and more materi-Marefat.

"Sears homes tended to be picturesque and quaint, the quintessential image of the American dream with enough variation to fit every pocketbook," she added.

And there are some Cranford residents who would agree, since many continue to live comfortably in many of the homes built by Sears during the early 1940s.

All told, there were probably some one-half million mail order homes built across the country. In . an era when labor was relatively inexpensive and power tools virtually unknown, the Sears kit houses gained popularity due to the speed and ease with which they could be constructed. The owner

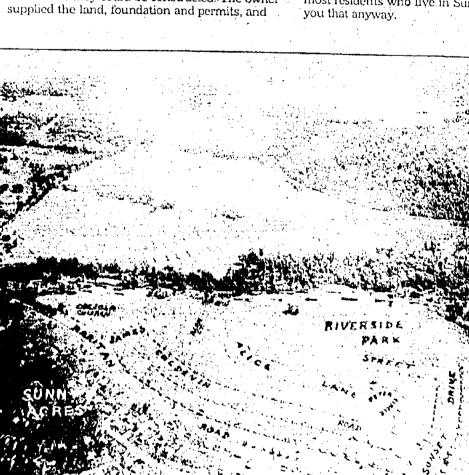
Sears provided everything else – from the light fixtures to the furniture All houses were shipped by rail, but Cranford model home right here in town to inspect. The and Walnut avenues, in an area that would become one could own a home for as little as \$34 a month. Cranford. 63 families were able to realize the Amerfact the homes were not "prefab" but constructed of "Sears own quality materials," and could be purlike hot cakes In December 1940, Mr. and Mrs. Redmond Jones

moved into the first Sears-built home at 5 Chero-

kee Road. An area once covered by open pasture soon became a thriving community of Sears-built homes. But the result was distinctly American. There were few innovative, modern designs, the styles often traditional and mixed, all figuring sigpaid to these homes. Despite the resurgence in home sales during the late 30s, Sears felt profits were not sufficient to remain in the housing business. At that time the railroads throughout the nation were in distress.

als were being delivered by truck. Either way, the ready-to-assemble houses were too expensive to ship, and the final book of "Modern Homes" was published in 1940. Sunny Acres was among the last Sears homes built.

In the spring of 1941, when Algonquin Drive and Iroquois Road were just truck ruts in the meadow and Mohawk Drive began at Raritan Road and ended in the woods where Oraton Drive now is, many families were moving into new homes in an area dubbed "Sunny Acres." Today on those same tree-lined streets, rows of immaculately kept homes attest to the fact "they



Aerial photograph from 1940 shows home buyers the relative positions of Sunny Acres, Riverside Park, and Winfield Park. Photo Is credited to "Tuttle, Cranford."

The Chronicle

July 9, 1992





Council to create a neighborhood park in memory of the late mayor, who was the first woman

mayor in Garwood's history, on this lot at the corner of Fourth and Walnut avenues. The Council

chael Crincoll, chairman of the Georgiana Gurrieri Memorial Comm

three of the educational objectives approved by the . Writing result. The district writing objective was N.J. Department of Education for the 1991-92 school met and exceeded with over 80 percent of pupils in

will address the request at its July 14 meeting.

Schools Leonard T. Fitts, Garwood Superintendent of cality; the average trate of growth for all grade 5-8 Schools Walter E. Boright said, "It is with great pride students was slightly higher than 3 points on the in our teaching staff and students that this district holistic scoring scale. can report to you that it has not only met but has • Affirmative action objective: By May 1992, at least exceeded its countional objectives for the 1991.93 80 percent of kindlergarten through second-grade sta school term.

percent of the students in grades 3.4 will meet or taining a score of 80 percent on a teacher-developed exceed the State MLP (Minimum Level of Profit post checklist. **Basic Skills** 

tive was met and exceeded for all students with more of 80 percent or higher on a teacher-developed checkthan 90 percent of the pupils in grades 3 and 4 ex- list. In actuality, 94 percent of the pupils earned a ceeding the MLP in the mathematics portion of the score of 80 percent or higher. 7 percent exceeded the MLP. • Writing objective: By May 1992, at least 80 percent for thorough and efficient education, each school dis of the students in grades 5-8 will demonstrate growth trict in the state annually is required to develop with in written composition skills by achieving at least a staff and community input district educational objectwo-point increase using the holistic scoring system tives. These must then be reviewed and approved by as measurement by a teacher-developed pre-and post- the Department of Education.

grades 5-8 increasing their writing scale score by at In a letter to Union County Superintendent of least two points on the bolistic scoring scale. In actu-

dents will domonstrate an understanding that gender. Mathematics objective: By May 1992, at least 90 race and ethnicity do not limit career choice by ob-

action-objective was met and exceeded. More than 80 • Mathematics result: The district mathematics objection percent of the students in grades K-2 earned a score

## **Rec staff lists playground winners**

The Garwood recreation program, Tuesday, and Nok Hockey tourna- Chrissy. DiStefano; third place, opened in July with a busy sched- ment. Wednesday. An arts and Nicole Perperas; ages 12 and up, ule of fun-filled events on the hori- crafts project is planned for Thurs- first place; Paul Pelusio, second zon. According to director Joseph day and a 3 on 3 basketball contest place, Adrienne Appello; third Escone, more than 65 children are in scheduled for Friday, July 17. place, Joe Pellusio participating in the program, which Winners in the 50-yard dash runs daily from 10 a.m.3 p.m. at Monday included: both Washington School and Hartboth Washington School and Hart-man Field. Children must be 5 Ages 5-7, first place, Chris Mea-place, Rich-Post; ages 8-11, first place, Anthony Petracca; second years old to participate.

The Garwood Lions Club award- allow the club to hold its annual programs would be threatened. ed an honorary Lions membership pancake breakfast there despite Said Mr. Todisco, "Such acts of to Joseph Scalzadona, the owner of the fact that it was in competition sellless giving for so many years The Westwood restaurant.

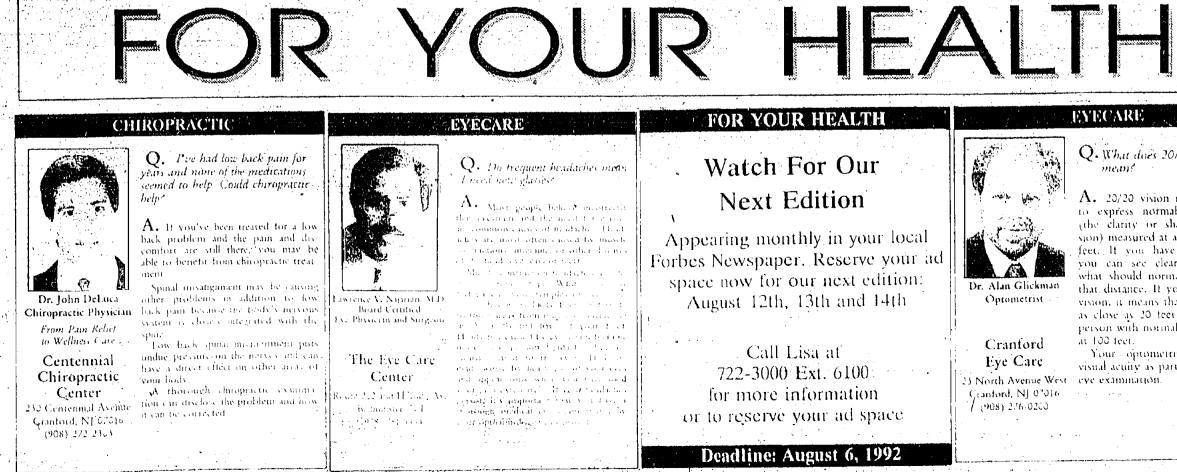
President Frank Todisco thanked used to donate free use of the facil-" stands what Lionism means and him for many years of support. He ity to the Gaiwood Lions because what we stand for. He is truly one noted that when The Westwood he knew that without this fund- of us and we can only say thank started its Sunday brunch busi- raiser, the club's ability to maintain you by recognizing him with ness, Mr. Scalzadona continued to its charitable, civic and scholarship membership,

Washington School gher; second place, James place, Ken Banic; third place, Next week events include a bi- McHugh; third place, Hamilton, Jimmy Marratta; ages 12 and up, cycle rally at Washington School Webster; ages 8-11m first place, first place, Anthony Goodel; second on Monday, a bubble gum contest Ryan McHugh; second place, place, Martin Buckley.

with him, Mr. Scalzadona contin- tell us that Joe Scalzadona under-

' Hartman Field Ages 5-7, first place, Sonny Heyder; second place, Billy Legg; third

## Scalzadona named honorary member of Garwood Lions



just don't make them like that anymore." But then, most residents who live in Sunny Acres would tell



