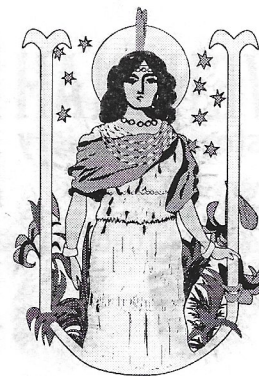


WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



January 2002
Published by the
Historical Society
of Wenonah, NJ

President's Letter

I hope everyone had a very happy holiday and that the year 2002 is a very good one for all! We have some great programs for the upcoming months as we listed in the December newsletter.

I hope to see a lot of faces this year and I hope we see some renewed interest in our town's rich history. If you have not had a chance to see the new display cabinet in the Wenonah Elementary School, be sure to stop in. We need someone to volunteer to do the next display for February... perhaps the Military Academy. There is a lot available, we just need some hand to do the set up.

I look forward to seeing you Friday night!

-Vicki McCall

WENONAH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM • 2001-2002

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

eMail Address _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ Check # _____ Enclosed Cash Enclosed

Please bring this form with your payment to any meeting or mail. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Monthly newsletter mailed to your home
- Monthly meetings with informative programs
- Access to various archives and memorabilia
- Network of knowledgeable historians
- Historical field trips

COST: \$10 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

RETURN TO WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 32 • WENONAH, NJ 08090-0032



WENONAH Historical Society

Newsletter Committee
P.O. Box 32
Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032



Ralph + Rachel Knisell
100 W Mantua Ave
Wenonah, NJ 08090

January Meeting

January 11th, 2002 • Wenonah Community Center • 7:30pm
Special "Antiques Road Show" Program



At this month's meeting, Cross Roads Antiques of Woodstown will present a special program about the antiques appraisal process. Each member is invited to bring with them one item for appraisal. Cross Roads Antiques has been in business for over 35 years and specializes in 18th, 19th and 20th century items.

Remember to bring one item with you for appraisal!

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32 · Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
E-mail: wenonahhistoricalnews@home.com

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WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



February 2002
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President's Letter

It was great to see such a wonderful turn out at the January meeting. It seems everyone enjoyed the Antique Road Show. We certainly seem to have some unique hidden treasures in our town! Much thanks to Crossroads Antiques!

The upcoming year promises to bring some interesting and unique programs. This month our program will be about archaeology and digs.

Next month we will be presented with an hour video presentation by South Jersey Ghost Research! Be sure to see their website!

Thank you to all of you who have helped bring these to fruition!

Thank you to all who have volunteered to continue with the various parts of our newsletter that we have all come to appreciate. This month's article on the Military Academy was put together by Eileen Caraker. Be sure to go to the Wenonah School in February to see the display of the Wenonah military Academy Artifacts. This should be up by Valentine's Day.

May the month of February find you all in good health and in the spirit of the season—filled with LOVE!

Happy Valentine's Day!

-Vicki McCall

A Reader's Submission

The picture of the old Railway Station in the October Newsletter made me think of the little gentleman that used to lower and raise the crossing gates when the trains came through town. He had a little shack on the S.E. corner of the railroad crossing where he could sit and wait for their arrival. At one time I lived at 5 E. Mantua Avenue. It had been my Grandfather Stout's home when he was the country doctor on Wenonah. It was either Sunday or Saturday that the Wenonah Military Academy would have their weekly parade down Mantua Avenue to the corner of the park where they would then turn south to their drill field. It was fun to watch. our phone number in those days was #1. I remember when the phone company changed it to #200 and my Grandfather Stout was upset. All calls went through the switchboard that was located on

the second floor of the building across the street from the station. When we went to Woodbury High School we could take the Wood Bus or the train. The cost was 10¢ on the train or the bus, but you could get 50 trips for \$4.50 on the train if you purchased a block ticket. Therefore, the Wenonah School Board would give us \$4.50 to cover 50 trips to Woodbury. That represented 25 school days. I can remember walking up Clinton to Wenonah Elementary School in the early 30s when there were several homes in those two blocks that were boarded up because they had been lost to the mortgage holder. They didn't get used until the war years brought in people to work in industry in our area. The Woodbury Times cost 3¢. As a paperboy, I got 2/3 of a cent per paper to deliver it. Wenonah was a great place to grow up in.

-Bob Sundt, Tucson, AZ

WENONAH

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The Wenonah Military Academy

1904-1934

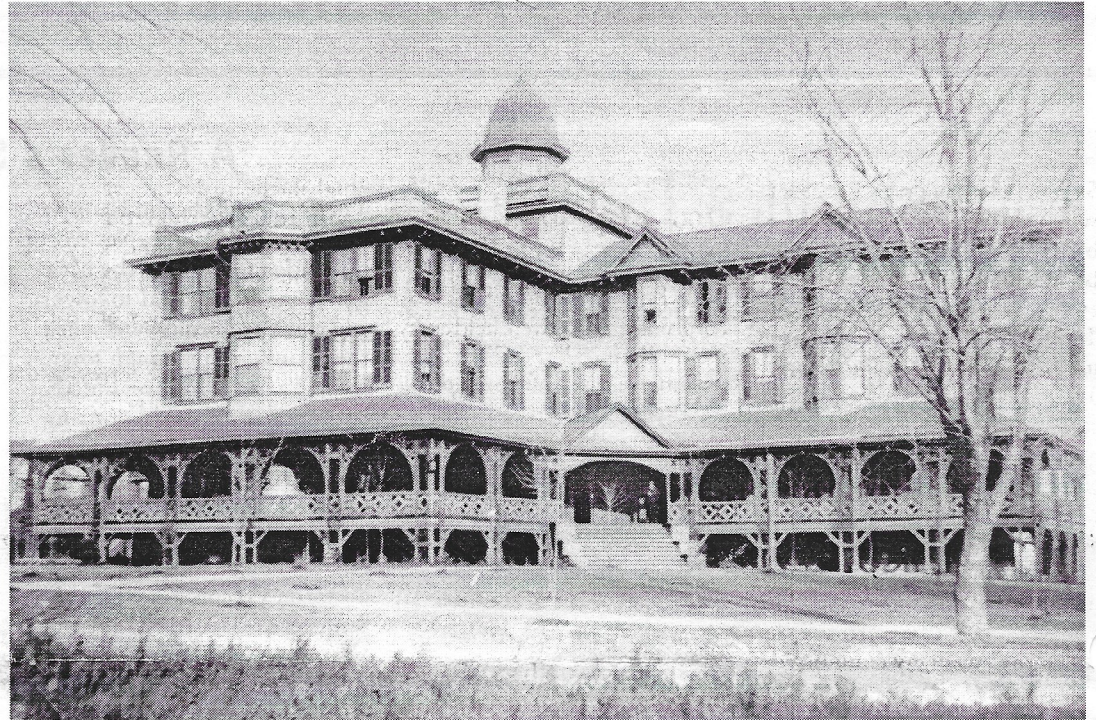
Fifth in a series of articles of some of Wenonah's more notable structures (series started by Milton Webb in February 2001)
Excerpts from Marge Lentz's book, *A History of Wenonah*

by Eileen Caraker

The Wenonah Military Academy opened its doors September 20, 1904 in what was previously known as The Wenonah Inn. The Academy was situated on the block east of Wenonah Park. The rooms that formerly accommodated hotel guests who were interested in dances and the cuisine now accommodated cadets interested in horsemanship and the highest standard of academic and military education. Hotel rooms were converted to classrooms, dormitories, a library, a chapel and an infirmary. The Academy consisted of a main building, a gymnasium, two cottages, two athletic fields, and stables for the horses. The main building, three stories high, contained the lobby, a large dining hall, a kitchen and bakery, a library, reading room, science hall, an infirmary with six beds, and sixty rooms which made up the dormitory and classrooms.

The first officers of the Wenonah Military Academy were Stephen Greene, president and owner, his son and vice-president Dr. William H. Greene, who was an internationally known scientist, local doctor H. A. Stout, treasurer and Major J. R. Jones secretary. It was Major Jones who originally conceived the idea of a military academy. On the Board of Counsel were the Rev. Raymond H. Gage and Thomas W. Synnott. Captain Percy C. Jones was commander of the cadets.

Although Wenonah was accus-



tomed to social activities at the Wenonah Inn during the summer months, the Wenonah Military Academy kept the town hopping during the school term. The first month the Academy was opened, there were several activities including, a reception and dance for two hundred people, a skating carnival on Warner's Lake with hundreds of lighted lanterns, a minstrel show, a house party and numerous football games. This was in fact the beginning of a social whirl that

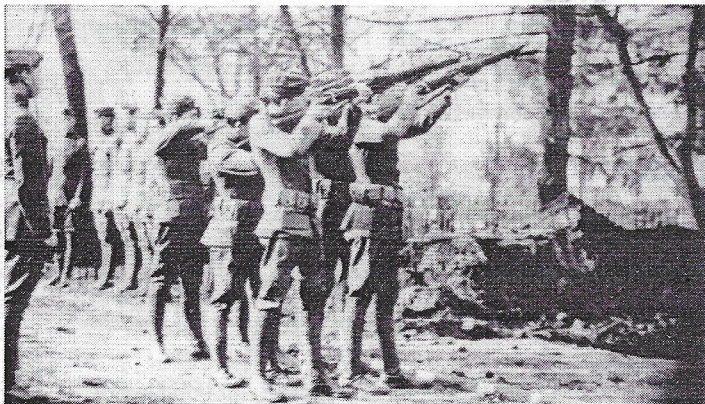
kept Wenonah spinning for the next thirty years. Wenonah residents were invited to band concerts, glee club performances, drama productions, declamation contests and horsemanship exhibitions. Local girls were invited to dances and on Sunday the whole town turned out for the dress parade and drill demonstrations. The big annual events were two gala dances, the Mid-Year Drill and Dance, and the Senior Prom at the end of the year. The Cadets wore full dress uniform with white cotton gloves and the girls wore full-length gowns. Dance etiquette at the time ensured that partners danced with six inches of space between them.

During the Presidency of Dr. Charles H. Lorence, the Wenonah Military Academy reached its peak with of 200 cadets who came from as far away as California and Cuba. The average student enrollment was 125 cadets. Cadets enrolled in the classical, Latin-scientific, or English-commercial courses. Military science included instruction

in rifle practice, infantry drills, horsemanship and military discipline. Horsemanship instruction was \$100 extra; this included the rental of the horse.

In its advertising the Wenonah Military Academy emphasized the following: "Established as its guiding principle the formation of moral character, the teaching of respect for authority and the adherence to the fundamentals of a sound academic and business education". It went on to say "Wenonah has a quiet seclusion and is sufficiently removed from the dangerous enticements of the city and yet is within easy reach of the city streets on the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad. Wenonah is an entirely residential town with no factories. It has its own entirely independent sanitary drainage system. The sale of intoxicants within a mile of the Academy is absolutely prohibited by law and the town has a marked freedom from sickness and disease."

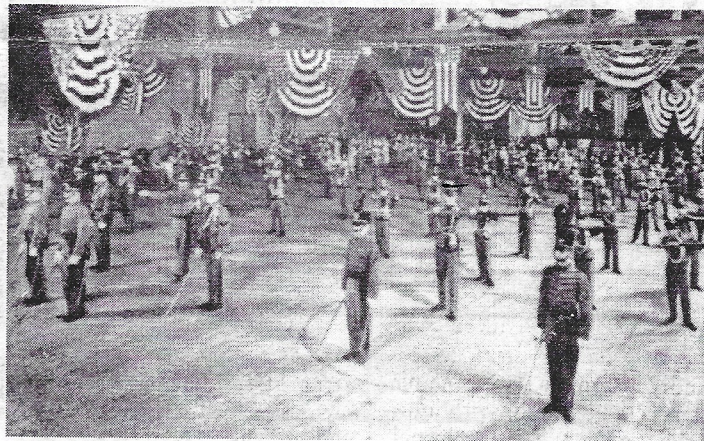
In 1913 the annual charges of \$600 include: tuition, board, heat,



light, twelve pieces of laundry and mending of underclothing. Tuition doubled during the years while adding to its services, table lined, pressing and use of firearms. However, this tuition did not include the \$250 cost for a uniform. The cadet wore a uniform of gray with a white belt and white crisscross straps both in front and back of the jacket and a chinstrap held the hat. The officers' full dress uniform included a sword, sash and a shako. The uniforms alternated between the khaki of the U.S. Army and the gray of West Point Academy. After the 1920's the uniforms stayed the same as the U.S. Army consisting of khaki puttees, high-laced shoes, jackets that buttoned at the neck, and overseas caps (a tall, neat cap worn by French soldiers). By 1916 the Academy announced that there is "now a waiting list: every available space is filled." Military training was under ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) regulations. Lessons were taught in accordance with U.S. Army Infantry Drill Regulations. All formations were in a military manner, cadets were expected to stand erect at all time and salute their officers. Rooms were inspected every day for dust or dirt, and properly made beds. The U.S. government assigned guns, ammunition, and equipment to the cadets, which had to be returned at the end of the year. To ensure that the cadets were on their toes an inspection of rifles, bayonets, uniforms and shoes was performed every week, and dirty equipment earned extra duty for the offending cadet. Extra duty consisted of walking guard duty at 128 steps per minute in the cadet's spare time, polishing the Civil War cannons at the campus entrance, or walking around the track in the athletic field with rifle in hand. Smoking was considered the worst offence; it earned fifty hours of extra duty, and a two-week suspension.

A Day in the Life of a Wenonah Military Academy Cadet

- 6:00 a.m. Reveille was called, signaling rising of the calisthenics. Breakfast in the dining hall
 - 8:00 a.m. Classes start until 2:00 p.m.
 - 2:00-4:00 p.m. Drills took place in the park or in the field
 - 4:00 p.m. Sports Practice
- Formal assemblies were held every evening before dinner. The cadets assembled in front of the Academy, and the band played and marched in parade formation for Retreat-the lowering of the flag.
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner in the Mess Hall
 - 7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m. Cadets studied in their quarters



- 9:00-9:30 p.m. Cadets were allowed to socialize
 - 9:30 p.m. Call to the quarters preparation for bed
 - 10:00 p.m. Final room check Taps sounded to signal the end of the day
- Academics were rated in four classifications, distinguished, Honor, Profaning, and Unclassified. Classes were posted quarterly, and decorations were awarded. The Honor role allowed for certain privileges such as reporting late on Saturday night. The classes were small, with eight to twelve students. Teachers were expected to stay close to their

students, each faculty member had his own group, and they lived with their group and ate in the mess hall. The school motto was "Send us your boys and we will return to you the man". The Academy focused high intellectual achievement, but with equal consideration to the development of a sound body and superior ideas.

The military discipline soon earned the Academy the name of "The West Point of South Jersey" and athletics brought fame to the school. Stephen Greene's athletic field boasted a grandstand that held 500 spectators. Cadets ran a quarter-mile cinder track, played football with prep schools like Malvern, Seton Hall and Pennington, played

baseball and practiced horsemanship and military tactics. A twelve-acre field along Woodbury-Glassboro Road was used for polo and lacrosse. Golf was played in the Oak Valley Country Club or, originally Altwald Golf Links, which was situated in a wooded area off Ogden Road. The word "ogden" is derived from the Swedish word meaning "valley of the oaks."

During the summer the polo ponies were taken to the Pocono area where Camp Wenonah was established for a number of years. On the Wenonah polo field one polo team defeated a West Point team. Many

graduating cadets gained recognition on college teams and Herbert J. Pennock, who became a major leagues pitcher, is named in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

In addition to the Wenonah Inn, the Military Academy occupied the Charles H. Lorence Cottage which housed senior cadets, currently known as 11 S. Clinton Ave and owned by Joe and Diane Magarelli. The Clayton A. Snyder Cottage which housed junior cadets is located on the corner of Mantua and Clinton Avenues. A drill hall was built behind the Academy along Cherry Street and it was claimed to have the largest floor space of any gymnasium in South Jersey. It was large enough to drill an entire battalion, and of course, to accommodate dances attended by as many as six hundred people. A stone wall was added fronting the Academy and in 1916. The building formerly housing Wenonah Inn's bowling alley was converted to a science laboratory.

At the start of the 1935 school year Dr. Charles H. Lorence announced the Wenonah Military Academy would close "because of economic reasons." The closing of the Wenonah Military Academy ended an era. The main building of the Academy was demolished in 1938 leaving its gray stonewall to mark its former location. The Academy's drill hall was declared unsafe and it along with the Cedar field grandstand was demolished. The fabric of Wenonah had been enriched by the presence of this great academy. As dogwood trees in the park were maturing into full grown beautiful trees, so was the Borough maturing. Although the Academy was gone, never to return again, Wenonah had gained a rich legacy from the Academy along with new residents and a strong sense of patriotism.

February Meeting

Friday, February 8, 2002 • 7:30pm
Wenonah Community Center (Train Station)



Our February meeting will be a program of interest about archaeology and archaeological digs. For a more detailed description of the program, please contact Jane Ramsay.

March's meeting

Come next month to see an hour-long video presentation by South Jersey Ghost Research. To find out about SJGR, visit their web site at www.sjgr.org

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32 · Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
E-mail: temporarily unavailable due to the demise of @home

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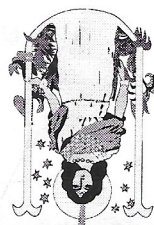
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08090+1823

Ralph + Rachel Knisell
100 W Mantua Ave
Wenonah, NJ 08090



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WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



April 2002
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President's Letter

Welcome to our many new members!! We have received a great response to our presence in the Wenonah School. The Display Cabinet and newsletters have been instrumental in bringing in some new faces. It is rewarding to see such a renewed interest in our town's history.

As some of you know, my father recently passed away. I wish to thank you for all your support and kindness. My father dearly loved this town and my parents recently pledged a donation of a town clock. This clock will be in his memory and the family hopes to see up in time for the Fourth of July.

We have some wonderful programs in the coming months. This month fellow townsman Arnold Karp will be doing a slide presentation on effects of September 11.

We hope to see some of the new faces at the upcoming meetings

-Vicki McCall

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32
Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032

E-mail:
wenonahhistoricalnews@comcast.net

The Railroad and Wenonah, Part 1

Sixth in a series of articles about Wenonah's heritage.
Compiled by Jack C. Sheppard Sr.



The new railroad station along the west side of the tracks of the West Jersey Railroad stood incongruous among the fields surrounding it. Farmers had eyed the station with interest because they anticipated it would be a convenience in transporting their sweet potatoes to the Philadelphia markets. However, as the newspaper, *The Constitution* stated, the station looked far "too elegant" for sweet potatoes because it boasted of "two compartments, one for the sale of tickets and joined by a comfortable passenger saloon."

Heading toward the station on December 19, 1870 was a special train that left Camden, New Jersey, just before noon. The train followed the West Jersey Railroad tracks past Gloucester, past Westville and at Woodbury took the Y that made a beeline to the station known as the New Mantua Station. The passengers who detrained that day were not in the least interested in transporting sweet potatoes, but they were interested in converting the sweet potato patches into building lots and in transporting commuters to a new suburban town.

From the rise of the land at the New Mantua Station the visitors had a sweeping view of the fields now sliced by the railroad tracks. They saw Henisey's Landing Road that led to the busy wharves along the Mantua Creek. Within sight of the station they looked across to the dwelling of the Stone Farm House" already 97 years old. A short distance away were meandering lanes that led to a few other farmhouses and to the west was the abandoned road bed" of the railroad tracks that previously surmounted a thirty-two

Continued on next page...

Acknowledgement: Some of the information in this document is from a book authored by Marjorie Lentz on behalf of the Wenonah Historical Society and distributed in connection with the Community Center dedication July 4th, 1976. The remainder of the information is from research, personal records, and information from a book by J.C. Sheppard Sr.

The Railroad continued . . .

foot high trestle" over the Mantua Creek leading to the old Mantua Station.

The stop at the station was brief, but while the passengers were there they envisioned how the land could be leveled, the country lanes erased and the existing farmhouses squared and placed properly on straight streets. After a site visitation the Gentlemen met in the passenger saloon of the New Mantua Depot" at 1:15 p.m. when Samuel A. Whitney read a proposal for forming a "Real Estate and Improvement Company to operate at the New Mantua Station of the West Jersey Railroad." Whitney augmented the report by noting that the land, consisting of 572 acres, could be purchased for \$69,575. The group unanimously agreed and in a few minutes \$29,500 was subscribed.

It was just a railroad station but it witnessed the beginnings of a town and the town, still unnamed, already had a history.

Early maps reveal small campsites of the Unalachtigo Indians of the Lenni Lenape tribe spotted along the banks of the Mantua Creek and the Chestnut Branch that flows into it. In the 1600's cartographers named the streams for the Indians who lived by them, and it is assumed that the Mantua Creek was named for the Manteses, a small band of Indians who had campsites along these waterways. The trails that border Mantua Creek and Break Back Run are considered to be Indian trails and it is along these waterways that arrowheads, net sinkers, stone hammers and axes have been found. Potsherds of the Woodland Period have been discovered and sufficient fragments at one site have made possible the reconstruction of pottery revealing a skillful design of inverted V's

Some of the land bordering the Indian trails was owned by Nathaniel Chew who in 1712 recorded in Gloucester County's earmark book the marks of his pigs, "a slitt in each ear and half penny on each side." One of his sons, Jeffrey Chew, inherited a part of the acreage and to his holdings purchased 125 acres from Samuel Maffett. Maffett either retained or later secured a five-acre plot from the farm on which in 1773 he built a dwelling that traditionally was a stage line stop on the route from Camden to Cape May. The house was strategically located on the Old Ford Road which led to the edge of Chew's farm to the only place below Berkeley, now Mount Royal, that stage lines could cross the Mantua Creek. During the ownership of Robert Sparks it is recorded that "the militia met in a field in 1777 to practice, hold meetings and elect officers at the stonehouse." Deeds note that the five-acre plot was later joined to the farm and it was known as the Stone House Farm.

Traditional accounts relate that a Revolutionary War skirmish occurred at the intersection of Old Ford Road and Bark Bridge Road."

On both sides of Glassboro Road was the "plantation of Benjamin Clark. The story has been told that while the British camped along the Monongahela Trail in 1777 they seized Clark's team of horses and a load of wheat he was driving to Valley Forge for General George Washington's Army. However, that night Clark crept into the British camp and retrieved his horses hiding them on an island in the Mantua Creek. Also that same winter General Anthony Wayne foraged for supplies for Washington's army and records note that he secured hay along the

Mantua Creek in this area and probably some of the hay was secured from the Stone House Farm.

By the 1850's the Mantua Creek was bustling with shipyards where an open boat fitted with oars or sails or both. Shallopssm and flatboats were built. To the Philadelphia markets were shipped sweet potatoes, buckwheat, turnips and shad and in return from Philadelphia was received staples. Another commodity received from Philadelphia was manure that was sold to the farmers in this area. Shipped out of Philadelphia to the Mantua Creek in 1855 were 120 loads priced at seventy-five cents a load.

When the West Jersey Railroad was extended from Woodbury to Glassboro in 1861, a newspaper account notes that there was "difficulty in bridging the Mantua Creek." When a Danforth locomotive was added to the line it was reported that it had a three hundred ton traction and that "the power of this massive iron horse was seen recently when it took 24 loaded cars up the steep grade at Mantua." With the merger of the West Jersey Railroad with the Millville and Glassboro Railroad plans were made to relocate the tracks to alleviate a dangerous curve and to reduce the height of the tracks.

New railroad tracks, a new station, easy commutation to and from Philadelphia, "healthy breezes that promised a malaria free area, high elevation above the Mantua Creek that assured adequate drainage" were all prerequisites for a "new suburban town."

William F. Allen, resident engineer of the West Jersey Railroad and son-in-law of the President of the railroad, made contact with the seven landowners whose lands

were adjacent to the tracks. Each one agreed to sell his land. The largest landowner was Isaac C. Stevenson who owned about 244 acres extending from the New Mantua Station northward to Glassboro Road and south to Bark Bridge Road. Charles Starn owned 163 acres in the area of the railroad station reaching westward toward the Mantua Creek. The Peter Kier landowners were David Kay who owned the land including Dilk's Little Mill and the mill pond, Edwin Stokes whose land bordered the northern stretch of the new railroad tracks, Nathaniel Chew, a tanner whose land bordered the northern section of Glassboro Road and Samuel W. Chew who owned a small slice of land on the road leading to the mill.

On December 14, 1870 Allen invited a group of twenty-one businessmen to the Camden office of the West Jersey Railroad Company to consider a plan to organize a land development company. Horatio J. Mulford of Bridgeton was appointed presiding officer and he named a committee to prepare the proposal.

Five days later on December 19, 1870 the businessmen reassembled in the Camden office and heard the first reading on the proposal which had been submitted by Samuel A. Whitney, former President of the Millville and Glassboro Railroad and leader in the glass industry.

General William J. Sewell, Vice-President of the West Jersey Railroad who secured the special train for the site visitation. George Wood, a director of the West Jersey Railroad and president of the Millville Manufacturing Company and William F. Allen. The entire group then boarded the special train that took them to the New Mantua Station.

Although the visitors may have seen dormant sweet potato patches that winter day, they visualized the possibilities of a "new suburban town." The Constitution reported that "from the known energy of the gentlemen at the head of the enterprise, there is no doubt of its success."

Much pride centered on the railroad station. Flowerbeds were groomed and permanent plantings established. The People's Stage Line brought passengers from Woodstown, Mullica Hill and Mantua. In 1873 passenger receipts from the West Jersey Railroad were \$9,232.34 and freight receipts were \$1,469.94.

By 1875 the Pennsylvania Railroad owned 80% of the West Jersey Railroad stock and plans were developed for a double track to extend from Wenonah to Glassboro. With increased railroad service, troubles grew. Accidents were frequent. South of Wenonah a train collided with a Cape May freight and six cars were demolished. As one observer described the scene, "a more complete train wreck cannot be imagined." A Bridgeton freight lost a

wheel forcing three cars down an embankment. Locomotive sparks started frequent brush fires, on-coming trains killed track-walkers and passengers were discouraged from standing on the platform as the trains approached. With the railroad came a deluge of tramps that were blamed for stealing everything from watermelons to trousers from local clotheslines.

The railroad controlled the town. No special church service, no musical program, no out-of-town dinner guest was scheduled without first consulting the time table. Advertisements to Presbyterian musicals noted that "Woodbury people can take the 7:07 for Wenonah and return on the 10 o'clock train." Even funeral announcements included the time when trains arrived in Wenonah and one as far away as Mullica Hill noted that "carriages will meet the 8 o'clock train from Philadelphia at Wenonah station." Special cars were attached to regular trains. Special cars brought visitors to the dedication of the Presbyterian Chapel, to weddings, and, of course, to the annual meetings of the Board

of Directors of the Mantua Land and Improvement Company.

To be continued next issue...

Notes

- i Relocated and now a residence at 8 South West Ave.
- ii 100 South West Ave.
- iii Extended through the parking lot of Wenonah Playground to Mantua Creek, slightly west of South Jackson Ave.
- iv Remains still visible in the Mantua Creek at location commonly called Clay Hill.
- v Extended from South Monroe Ave. To the area of West Cedar St. Where it curved through the woods fording the Mantua Creek.
- vi In area of West Cedar St. And South West Ave.
- vii In Mantua Creek opposite South Jefferson Ave.
- viii An open boat fitted with oars or sails or both.

Who remembers this program???

HATS OFF to our members!!!



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April Meeting

Friday, April 12, 2002 • 7:30pm
Wenonah Community Center (Train Station)



Arnold Karp, 177th Fighting Wing, Air National Guard
will present a slide and picture presentation of the
Effects of September 11, 2001

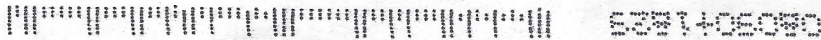
Future meetings

- May 10, 2002.....**Historic Postcards and Ephemera**
Jo White and Sallie Murphy
- June 14, 2002.....**Family Picnic at Wenonah Lake**
- July and August.....**No Meetings**
- September 13, 2002.....**Porch Party at Little Grange**
- October 11, 2002.....**South Jersey Ghost Research**
Scientific approach and study of
the paranormal

THE MISSION OF THE WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

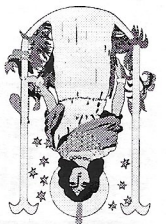
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ALL AROUND TOWN

Garden Fair

The Wenonah Lake is having a fundraiser on May 18, 2002. There will be a plant sale and fair in the Wenonah Park from 10:00am-12:00pm.

A garden tour of some of our resident's home (including our Mayor) will start at 11:00am. For more information, contact Bernadette Faix at 468-4912.

Historical Society Picnic at Wenonah Lake

We will have our annual picnic at the lake on June 14, 2002. Join us for food and fun and good conversation. We provide the hotdogs and ice tea; we ask everyone to bring a share dish. For more information contact Vicki McCall at 589-2774.

Victorian Herb Garden

RACHEL KNISSELL

Thanks to Rachael Knissel for all her hard work as she cares for the Victorian Herb Garden at the Community Center. Her painstaking attention to this project keeps this garden looking beautiful for our visitors. If you happen to walk by while Rachael is "trimming", you may even be the beneficiary of some aromatic herbs!

Fourth of July

YES, it is almost that time again! Roco Doto has offered to do a historical slide presentation at the Community Center between 11:00am and 1:00 pm. He has given this presentation at several local organizations and it has been very well received. If you would like to help out, please let us know! Look for more on this in June's newsletter.

We will be reintroducing the House Decorating Contest this year. The theme for this year's parade is "A Salute to America's Heroes." The House decorations can be in this theme or any patriotic manner.

We will have judges going around and awards will be given during the evening ceremonies. All participants will receive an 8 x 10 photo of their decorated home compliments of Tomorrow's Treasures, Inc. of Woodbury Heights, NJ (Thanks to George Braun for this ongoing tradition!). Applications will be available at the Wenonah Library. Look for more information in the June newsletter.

Japanese Teahouse Restoration

The Environmental Commission has been working VERY HARD to restore the Comey Lake Japanese Tea House. This project was the brainchild of Chuck Forsman and his perseverance is paying off! The commitment of people like Chuck Forsman, Bob Bevilaqua, and John Schad is truly appreciated. We thank the Environmental Commission for their efforts to bring back to life a monumental historic structure in this town. Anyone interested in donating to this cause can contact Chuck Forsman at 304 Mohawk Dr, Wenonah, NJ 08090. Look for updates and an article on this project in upcoming letters!

Help Needed

We need help in contributing to the newsletter. Anyone who can spare an hour a month to do the research for "Milton Webb's 100 Years Ago" PLEASE, PLEASE CALL US!

We can start you off with Milton's meticulous files. Groundwork is already done for much of this. This is an opportunity to really get to know your town!

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS - PO. Box 32
Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032

E-mail: wenonahhistoricalnews@comcast.net

President's Letter

April's program featured a moving slide presentation by Arnold Karp that portrayed events from the September 11th attacks. The presentation brought home the importance of remembering those events and realizing the ongoing importance of protecting our country. Thank you Arnie for sharing with us your own personal experiences and reminding us that the events of September 11th should not be forgotten are taken lightly.

We have a full business schedule for the May meeting and it is important that we have a good turnout. There are some exciting events coming up and of course the Fourth of July is just around the corner! There are plenty of fun projects for you to participate in, so, even if you've never volunteered before, here is your chance to do your part!

There are many members who no longer reside in Wenonah. We would love to get some letters from you about your life in Wenonah that we could put in the newsletter. Anyone who would like to share an experience, please write in!

I look forward to seeing you Friday night.

-Vicki McCall

The Railroad and Wenonah, Part 2

Sixth in a series of articles about Wenonah's heritage.
Compiled by Jack C. Sheppard Sr.

Continued from our April issue...

The manure problem created heated arguments. With the mixing of Philadelphia commuters and Wenonah House guests who used the passenger service of the railroad, and farmers who used the freight service there was bound to be a conflict. The commuters declared the unloading of manure in the center of town a nuisance and the railroad was requested to build a siding near the water pumping station to unload the manure. However some farmers were not satisfied with the new location and wrote letters claiming they would never use the railroad again. The siding was installed and the farmers did use it. Also the commuters did attempt to prevent freight trains from stopping more than five minutes and they complained of excessive locomotive whistling at night.

Freight service accelerated. Joseph Cattell shipped his baskets of sweet potatoes to the Philadelphia markets and T.P. Darlington, a local poultry shipper, sent four tons of poultry a week out of the Wenonah Station. Sweet potatoes, watermelons and tomatoes were leading farm crops. Charles Buckman continued to operate his Wenonah Mills at the millpond, John Steward operated a steam corn sheller, and on a sad note, John Kromer's cow died from eating potato vines sprinkled with Paris Green. One farmer boasted of a hog that weighed 775 pounds and another farmer displayed a watermelon in Thomas Savage's tobacco shop that weighed 63 pounds. The story was reported in the newspaper that "two young ladies were told they could have the watermelon for nothing if they could carry it away without letting it down to rest on the way. The ladies put the watermelon in a clothes basket and carted it home." The Duell and Perry canning house was still purchasing the farmers'

tomatoes and one progressive farmer succeeded in raising very large potatoes by using chemical fertilizer.

The town was growing at a rapid pace and by the early 1890's the old "New Mantua Station" was deemed inadequate to handle the number of people coming to Wenonah. Also, the Wenonah House, originally constructed in 1871, was apparently not attractive or large enough to provide the drawing power the railroad company felt was necessary for the greater number of passengers they sought.

A news article in April 1893 put it this way; "The Wenonah Inn Company is just completing a magnificent hotel designed to accommodate 150 guests." The erection of this hotel, which replaced the Wenonah House, was reportedly one of the conditions under which the West Jersey Railroad erected a handsome railroad station of rough-faced Pompeian bricks to "harmonize with general improvements and surroundings of the Borough."^{ix}

Trains were scheduled every fifteen minutes "during the busy part of the day and no break of more than one hour on the schedule from five-thirty in the morning until midnight." A total of sixty-one trains a day ran between Philadelphia and Wenonah. An advertising brochure issued by C.C. Grosscup, President of the Wenonah Realty Company, noted that Wenonah has every "modern convenience, artesian water, sewers, electric light, gas, both telephones, graded and curbed streets and paved sidewalks." Also "it has a high moral tone and an earnest, happy social life that makes it a good place in which to live." The water has no "filtering or boiling process" and "the high pressure maintained by the Holly System for every house." Furthermore the brochure stated "the sewerage system is one of the few entirely satisfactory systems in the state. Sidewalks are of flagstone and con-



crete and there are one hundred thousand feet of walks. Every street is well lighted at night by gas lamps of sixty candle power. Both electric and gas available for homes. No industries. Churches are thoroughly organized for service."

A newspaper article in 1896 noted that "the Inn is full, the cottages are all occupied and the people prefer the proximity to Philadelphia instead of the shore." A few years later a warning signal was sounded when the same newspaper revealed that "several of the summer residents have autos and sometimes the streets are lively with them." Before the advent of the car, the railroad brought summer visitors to the Wenonah Inn after the advent of the car, the automobile tempted summer visitors to more distant resorts. Fewer and fewer visitors spent their summers at the Inn. The Wenonah Inn closed its doors. In 1890 the Wenonah Hotel Company sold the hotel, the servants' quarters and the sewer plant to Stephen Greene.

Summer visitors were not the only people who owned cars. Local people also owned them. Blair Smith is believed to be the first resident of Wenonah to own a car. George Frederick owned an Allen, Oscar Odgen, Theodore Rison and Clement Mattson owned

Waltham-Orient Touring cars, Dr. H.A. Stout had a Buick and Edward L. Farr had a White Steamer that could hold seven passengers. Automobile parties traveled as far as Salem and sometimes to Atlantic City. By 1912 there were enough cars in Wenonah for all the children in the Borough to ride in the fourth of July parade and after the parade they were treated to rides as far as Sewell. In fact so many cars appeared that "Go Slow" signs were erected at the town entrances. The town bulletin board was often rammed by cars and cars often rammed residents' carriages. Garages were built instead of carriage houses, although Edward E. Grosscup, when he built his house^x, constructed both a garage and a carriage house. George Frederick built a garage^{xi} large enough to hold fifteen cars at one time. He not only serviced cars, but also had one of the earliest car agencies in this area.

Although the automobile forced the closing of the Wenonah Inn and ultimately railroad passenger service, a new era opened in Wenonah. Major J. R. Jones, former head of the drill team sponsored by the John Wanamaker Store, Philadelphia, riding past the vacant Wenonah Inn, conceived an idea for the use of the facility. He immediately relayed his plan to Stephen Greene and on

Acknowledgement: Some of the information in this document is from a book authored by Marjorie Lentz on behalf of the Wenonah Historical Society and distributed in connection with the Community Center dedication July 4th, 1976. The remainder of the information is from research, personal records, and information from a book by J.C. Sheppard Sr.

September 20, 1904 the Wenonah Military Academy opened. But that is a story for another time.

There is still a railroad station. Somehow it reflects the whole story of Wenonah.

When the original railroad station outgrew its usefulness, a more adequate station was built. Wenonah also rebuilt as it grew, sometimes discarding the old for the new. However, throughout the history of Wenonah, the railroad station has been a part of its growth. From the station, farmers' sweet potatoes were shipped to Philadelphia markets, summer visitors arrived to spend the season at the Wenonah Inn, the cadets arrived to attend the Wenonah Military Academy, the commuters rode to their places of employment beyond Wenonah. Still changes came. Trains became less and less frequent. And one day the passenger train no longer stopped, and the freight train shrieks and rumbles by it too, no longer stopping at Wenonah. The railroad station stood useless, forlorn and dilapidated.

And then came an event that was both unforeseen and fortunate for the future of the station and for the Borough.

During the early 1970's Mayor Jack C. Sheppard Sr.SM had been researching Borough history using old Borough records belonging to Thomas Synnott III, grandson of one of the founders of Wenonah.

During this research he discovered a Letter from the West Jersey Railroad Company to the then Borough Commission stating in part, ... "The West Jersey Railroad Company hereby accepts the provisions of the Ordinance of the Borough Commission of Wenonah, New Jersey entitled "An Ordinance to vacate a portion of the west side of West Jersey Avenue, between Mantua Avenue and Poplar Street, adjoining the right of way of the West Jersey Railroad Company and to sanction the use thereof by the West Jersey Railroad Company for station purposes", passed January 10, 1893, and hereby agrees to use the land in said Ordinance described, for the purpose and in the manner in said Ordinance described and not otherwise."

By marvelous coincidence about this same time the Mayor heard a rumor that Conrail had sold the station to a private party. Contacting the Railroad Company he was told that

the station had already been sold to a party who purportedly intended to open a food service shop of some sort and that the deal was already done. When Mayor Sheppard protested the sale and advised the railroad real estate agent of the words of the 1893 Ordinance he was told "your information is too old, it has no validity today."

The Borough challenged the sale in the Superior Court of New Jersey and it was the unique wording of this Ordinance that gained Wenonah ownership of the railroad passenger station in 1973. Superior Court Judge John B. Wick decided this provision was valid and governing and decreed the land should revert back to the Borough. The railroad company, no longer owning the land under the station and unable to convey clear title to any buyer, somewhat grudgingly agreed to sell the building to the Borough for \$3,000.00.

Volunteers from every section of town, from Academy Hills, from the Synnott Tract, from the original town plot and from beyond gave freely of their skills. Their skills were varied. They planned and painted, hammered and hauled,

landscaped and labored. Together they restored the station, which was opened and dedicated to community use on July 4, 1976.

From that time until today the railroad station turned Community Center has served as a focal point for the community. The building houses Wenonah's Municipal Court and Council Chambers, the Court Clerk's and Borough Clerk's offices, and is in constant use by all Boards, Commissions and private groups in Wenonah.

The railroad station seems to be a symbol. Just as many people representing many skills have made possible the preservation of this landmark, so have many people representing many skills made possible the preservation of a heritage that belongs in Wenonah.

Notes

- ix See historical information on page 5
- x 9 West Buttonwood St.
- xi Rear of 203 West Mantua Ave.
- xii Serving Wenonah 1962 thru 1990

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM • 2001-2002

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

eMail Address _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ Check # _____ Enclosed Cash Enclosed

Please bring this form with your payment to any meeting or mail. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Monthly newsletter mailed to your home
- Monthly meetings with informative programs
- Access to various archives and memorabilia
- Network of knowledgeable historians
- Historical field trips

COST: \$10 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

RETURN TO WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 32 • WENONAH, NJ 08090-0032

May Meeting

Friday, May 10, 2002 • 7:30pm
Wenonah Community Center (Train Station)



May's program will feature Joanne White and Sallie Murphy of Murphy's Loft in Mullica Hill, NJ. They will be sharing information on historical postcards, letters, and memorabilia. Please join us for an informative "SHOW AND TELL".

Bring in your own items for evaluation!

Future meetings

June 14, 2002.....	Family Picnic at Wenonah Lake
July and August.....	No Meetings
September 13, 2002.....	Porch Party at Little Grange
October 11, 2002.....	South Jersey Ghost Research
	Scientific approach and study of the paranormal

THE MISSION OF THE WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

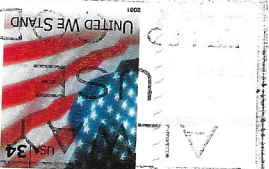
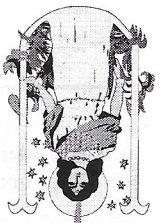
The objectives of this Society shall be:

1. To acquire and preserve historic documents, records, artifacts and memorabilia of the Borough of Wenonah.
2. To locate and acquire a suitable place for the storage and display of such materials.
3. To encourage the protection and preservation of historical landmarks and points of interest within the Borough of Wenonah.
4. To encourage historical and genealogical research, and publication of its results.
5. To encourage interest in history generally, and in Wenonah history in particular, among the youth of Wenonah.
6. To make all information and acquisitions of the Society available to the public.

Ralph + Rachel Knisell
100 W Mantua Ave
Wenonah, NJ 08090

Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
PO Box 32
Newsletter Committee

WENONAH
Historical Society



WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



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Her Life was Rich by Example

Reprinted from the Gloucester County Times, August 19, 2002 · By Bob Shryock

The oldest of the six Ramsay children was 10 years old when their father left home. But Jane Tucker Ramsay, their mother, never wavered in her awesome responsibility as a single parent.

"She was a strong woman who was very protective of her children," says David Ramsay, oldest of the six. "She always showed us a positive attitude. Things could be bad for her but he'd still come up smiling, get through the days and weeks, and have dinner for us. We went through a lot of powdered milk and goulash.

I remember Christmases with \$5-\$10 budgets per kid. We always had hand-me-down clothes. She had a specific definition of what she'd accept and what she wouldn't. She didn't want charity from people who felt sorry for her, but she'd accept from good neighbors, and she was always helping others as well. She would absolutely refuse public assistance of any form. She wouldn't take Food Stamps. She wouldn't take unemployment."

Jane Ramsey died June 27. She is survived by her six adoring children: David, Tucker, Jimmy, Ed, and the twins, Jane and Louise. Four graduated from college. Five of the six are in business for themselves, and successful, a classic case of them mirroring their mother's powerful independence.

"We grew up with a very strong work ethic," David Ramsay says. "She taught us that and she demonstrated it. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and she



worked 53 years as a dental hygienist. Her independence traveled through us. We were one adult and six kids who stood our ground. As a family, we were very cohesive and balanced and backed each other up. We fought among ourselves like cats and dogs but we always stuck together as a family.

"It was a very good environment to be raised in. She didn't play favorites. She focused on our strengths and encouraged us to do whatever was good for us—as long as we had good grammar and used good English. She taught us to be independent, believe in ourselves, and beat the odds.

"Her kids were her life. After our father left, she shut down her social life. In the days after he left a single woman didn't get invited out so she decided early to stay out of the fray.

"Her legacy was that she accepted people for who and what they are. One of my brothers said that since her death we realize who she was as an individual. Hundreds have come forward to tell us how she gave them, and others, encouragement. She loved people and loved to be around them. Mother wasn't invited out much, and she hated to miss a party."

Jane lived in a big, sprawling house, and was a resident for all but one year of her life.

She gave back to the town what she felt the town gave to her. She belonged to the Wenonah Reading Club, the Wenonah Woman's Club, the Wenonah Historical Society, and served as Sunday school treasurer of All Saints Episcopal Church. A free spirit, she also was a member of the Wenonah Rifle and Gun Club as a young woman.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Dentistry, she worked for four dentists, including Dr. Don Furey in her hometown of Wenonah, and during her career worked with and educated children, migrant farm workers, and underprivileged children and adults in the Camden Free Dental Clinic. She was a uniquely talented woman whose many interests ranged from pottery making to jewelry smithing to watercoloring to antiquing and carving.

Besides her children, her work and her hobbies, Jane Ramsay also had a healthy love for the uniqueness of Wenonah. No one loved the day-long Fourth of July celebration in Wenonah more than Jane. She passed away a week before the 2002 parade and festivities. Jane would have loved to be there, seeing old friends, remembering the good times, and perhaps the tough times as well.

"But I think she wanted to check out before the Fourth," son David says. "Mother never wanted to do anything halfway."

President's Letter

This had been a difficult year for many of us and we have experienced many losses. It is with a very heavy heart that I report the passing of a DEAR friend to the Historical Society, the town, and to me. Jane Tucker Ramsay passed away in June. She leaves a legacy of friends and family. She inspired us all to follow her lead and dedicate ourselves to preserving the wonderful history of this town. Jane raised her family in this town and LOVED every bit of this town. She loved life and taught many of us how to savor each day.

Her love of the Historical Society was unquestioned. She brought new life to this organization under her terms as President and Vice President. She will TRULY be missed.

-Vicki McCall

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32
Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032

E-mail:
wenonahhistoricalnews@comcast.net

The Origin and History of Comey's Lake

Acknowledgments: Some data derived from the archives of Wenonah Historian Milton H. Webb



Milton Pierce, a member of the Mantua Land Improvement Company, had a Carp pond in 1872 along a stream called "Patrick's Run" in the vicinity of what is now Comey's Lake, where natural land contours had already created a water reservoir. It is believed that this was part of Aquadale Lakes where high quality Carp were raised to sell as food in Philadelphia and surrounding areas to the Jewish population as Gefilte Fish. A large lake was established in about 1885 when a leveling dam was placed at the South end of the Patrick's Run stream and the dam increased the water area to about four acres. In 1886 the first Wenonah Parks and Woodland Improvement Association was formed and they participated in the improvements to the lake. The inlet stream to the lake was later named "Camels Back Run". During the Spring of 1890, Stephen Greene purchased the land around the lake and made important improvements to it. In 1894 a new leveling gate and other improvements were made to the lake dam and they named it Camels Back Lake. That same year, the Northern end of the lake had filled

up with silt to such an extent that 20 men were employed for six weeks by Mr. Greene to clean and deepen it. This made the lake better for boating.

Robert H. Comey bought the lake and surrounding property Feb. 1904 from Stephen Greene. He bought an adjoining 27 acres April 1904 from George L. Dilks and started construction of a handsome, large White Mansion for \$25,000.00 as his residence on Mantua Ave. He also had a servants building nearby. (presently located at #12 Lenape Trail). April 1905 he received a large number of shade trees for a Park on his property that was to be stocked later with Deer. March 30, 1908 he moved into his new house. March 13, 1910 the Northern end of Mr. Comey's Lake was dug out again by eleven men to make a better boat landing. Dec. 7, 1910 he built a beautiful Wooden Arched Bridge with decorative side rails (constructed of Long Leaf Yellow Southern Pine) fifty feet over the upper lake and it was painted a bright Vermilion color. April 3, 1911 he built a new dam on his lake and added a colorful Japanese Tea House,

built by John L. Drummer, on Cedar pilings at the North end of the lake. An Amphitheater with five levels was built on the East side of the Tea House. Canoes and small rowboats were docked under and around the base of the Tea House for the use of guests who dressed in their finest for a ride in the lake. Adjacent to the amphitheater a large pool was built that was shaped like the State of NJ and a Tennis Court was also built nearby. A variety of Yellow, Gold and White Algae eating fish were introduced into Comey's Lake. The predominate fish species was Carp and although not specifically mentioned, it is believed that the others were a variety of Koi.

By June 1912 large catered parties were held at the Tea House area. The lake and Tea house were beautifully decorated with colored electric lights and all around the lake Japanese Lanterns peeked from the green foliage. The Tea House was illuminated with hundreds of lanterns and it looked like a fairy garden. A full string orchestra played all the catchy tunes while the guests sang with them. Launches plied up and down the lake for

the pleasure of the guests and the evening ended while they danced under the stars.

In 1924 Ethel R. Hassrick bought the property from Robert Comey. One year later she sold it to Doctor H. Wesley Jack and wife Pearle C, who carried on the tradition of parties at the lake until 1958. On 3/17/58 the lake and surrounding property were sold to Bryant and Sarah Langston. That same year Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Sanderson bought the mansion on 4.760 acres. The Langston's built a large home overlooking the lake. The Sanderson's sold the mansion in 1979 to Mr. and Mrs. Ken Sharp who made wonderful improvements to the building and grounds. The mansion was again sold to Mr. Lou Paolino in 1985. He made many additional improvements to the home, pool, tennis court and outbuildings and he is still the current owner.

During the 1960's the lake became known as Langston's Lake. Bryant and Sarah Langston died in a private plane that Bryant was piloting when it crashed in 1969. Through the efforts of the Wenonah Woodlands Council, the entire lake and the land on the East and West sides was dedicated to the Borough of Wenonah by the Stewart Estate for inclusion in their conservation lands. The house on 1.003 acres was then sold to Anthony S. and Carol (Wick) Balchan on Feb. 27, 1970. The house was sold again on May 8, 1971 to Jerome A. and Dolores W. Hoffman. On July 8, 1982 the home went to Sheriff George G. Small for lack of tax payment. The 1st National Bank of Princeton took over the property Feb. 11, 1983. On May 15, 1985 Charles and Dolores Cornell purchased the house overlooking the lake. They made many improvements to the home, built large gardens around it and cleaned debris from the Southern portion of the lake. Charles and Dolores Cornell

are still the current owners of the lakefront home.

Mr. Edwards, a builder, purchased additional land of about 30 acres adjacent to the lake in 1966, subdivided it into building lots and constructed 49 homes (Academy Hill). Up to this time the lake had remained crystal clear for over eighty years. As homes were built and lawns established, the rain-water runoff into the lake increased and along with it came fertilizer. This added excessive nutrient to the lake causing more and more Algae and Duckweed blooms on the surface. At the same time there were less Algae eating fish species due to other predator fish like Pickerel and Bass.

In 1972 Robert & Jane Kitz who owned the Tea House property, with the help of Chuck Forsman, Environmental Commission Members and neighbors, completed a partial restoration of the Tea House and Amphitheater. There was a large celebration with celebrity guests, music, dancing, entertainment, great food and drinks. From 1973 through 1982 Chuck Forsman promoted a massive cleanup of the area surrounding the lake and trail plus dam repair projects, which were all done by volunteers from the homes in Academy Hill.

In 1983 a second overflow dam was built adjacent to the existing dam. It was paid for by Heinz Hoefers to handle the increased water runoff by new homes he was building in the Brookmeade Development (Tom Synnott's property). Slowly silt filled the Northern end of the lake diminishing the size to about two acres. Chuck & Dolores Cornell, owners of the lakefront home, developed attractive gardens down to the lake on their property where they built a trail and allowed hikers to pass by.

By 1991 the lake developed a total cover of Green Algae and Duckweed during the summer months

and although the basic quality of the water remained good, it was not a pleasant sight to see the green cover over the water. In 1993 a pump from the lake to an attractive waterfall was built by the Cornell's, which helped aerate the water and increase the oxygen content. During the following years, Chuck Forsman with the help of volunteers, filled in the earthen area at the dam and raised it two feet to contain the erosion at the lake. A variety of indigenous plantings were placed over the area and the outlet stream was cleaned of debris. The original 1885 dam was rebuilt with material and funds provided by Bob and Dan Bevilaqua in 1995. A wooden dock was built in 1995 as a protective cover over both the original leveling dam and the 1983 overflow dam, with funds provided by the Cornell's. Two hatches in the dock provide access to the dams for maintenance and repair. In 1996 the Northern end of the lake inlet channels were cleared by hand with 7 local volunteers led by Gary Reddig. Frank Eggert and Chuck Forsman restored a bridge over the inlet stream with wood from the original arched bridge and placed a sample of the original bridge side rails nearby in 1996. During 1997, 1998 and 1999 several large trees were removed from the lake with many volunteers.

A program was instituted by Chuck Forsman of the Wenonah Environmental Commission in 1999 & 2000 to decrease the fertilizer runoff into the lake, rake off the bulk of the Algae, increase aeration, increase water activity/circulation and increase the Algae/Duckweed eating fish and fowl population. A railing was also added to the dock. The Cornell's again donated funds for these projects. Old and new trails around the lake were defined for hiking and equipment access. They were lined with mulch by

volunteers in preparation for the annual 4th of July trail hikes conducted by the Wenonah Environmental Commission members.

December 2000 the Japanese Tea House was exhibiting such severe damage that drawings and specifications were developed by Chuck Forsman in preparation for restoration. During that severe snowy winter the structure began to collapse and by April it was down. A call for volunteers to clear away the enormous amount of debris went out along with a request for \$5,000.00 in donations to purchase materials for the restoration of the Tea House.

Chuck Forsman, with the assistance of Bill Schnarr operating a tractor along with nineteen men and women, removed all the debris except key reusable parts of the Tea House. The group was so inspired that they also removed all the vines that had covered a won-

agreed and the first upright beams were in place on 6/12/01. Donations for materials began to arrive and by 6/15/01 \$2,370.00 had been received from former and current residents. Again, the Cornell's made a generous contribution towards the materials. By 6/23/01 John Shad had all the vertical posts, floor beams and knee braces in place despite the frequent and very heavy rainfall, which created terrible working conditions. Work continued on the Tea House in September. By October 26th \$4,300.00 had been donated, the decking was complete and roof beams were installed. December 2001 the roof rafters were installed. January 2002 the upper roof was enclosed. Nearby, a new trail and repairs to the inlet stream waterfall were completed by Jonathan Nate as an Eagle Scout project with the help of his volunteers. March 2002 the lower curved roof was installed. By May 2002 the steps and railings



derful 5 level cement Amphitheatre next to the Tea House. The only disappointment was later that week when 8 of the 20 had Poison Ivy infections. The base of the Tea House still had the original nine concrete foundation columns. Three of them needed masonry repair. Bob and Dan Bevilaqua donated forms, concrete and their time to complete the repairs on 6/2/01.

Chuck Forsman asked John Schad (Wenonah builder, Schad Construction Co.) to volunteer his time to reconstruct the Tea House. He

were installed and the project was completed within the one-year time frame. The goal of \$5,000.00 for materials was achieved. Another new trail was designed to go north from the Tea House Waterfall area and connect to Synnott's Pond on Elm Street, which would allow the trails to encircle two thirds of Wenonah.

Comey Lake ERI Document, Phase 4. Do not reproduce without express permission of C.R. Forsman, Chairman, Comey Lake Historical Restoration & Maintenance Committee 1973-2002.

Jane T. Ramsay

Jane T. Ramsay of Wenonah, NJ on June 27, 2002 at home among her children. Born Jane Tucker to Samuel Lewis and Frances Rode Tucker in Swedesboro, she moved to Wenonah at the age of 1 and resided there until her passing. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dentistry, she was a licensed dental hygienist for 53 years. She began her career in private practice working with Dr. Sausser of Center City, Philadelphia and later with Dr. Don Furey of Wenonah and Dr. Don DeFonce of Mantua. Also during her career she worked with and educated children and migrant farm workers throughout southern New Jersey and later for underprivileged children and adults to the Camden Free Dental Clinic. She then joined H.I.P. of South Jersey from where she retired, but ended her career back in private practice working part-time for Dr. Holtzheimer of Mantua.

Mrs. Ramsay's hobbies and interests included designing,

making and painting pottery for the last 60 years, jewelry-smithing, gem cutting, painting in water colors, antiques, cooking and carving. Her particular interest was spending time and exchanging stories with her family and many friends. She was a member of the Wenonah Reading Club, the Wenonah Woman's Club, and of the former All Saints Episcopal Church, where she served as Sunday School Treasurer for many years. As a young woman she was a member of the former Wenonah Rifle and Gun Club. She remained a very active member of the Wenonah Historical Society until her passing.

She was previously married to David Ramsay, Jr. Together they had six children, all of whom survive her. The are: David Ramsay III and his wife Linda of Wenonah, Tucker Ramsay and his wife Tina of Woodbury Heights, James L. Ramsay and his wife Terry of Wenonah, Edward A. Ramsay and his wife Clare of Pittsgrove, Jane Ramsay, Jr. of Annapolis, MD and Louise Ramsay Cotta and her husband Chuck of Annapolis, MD.,

and four grandchildren, David IV, Scott, Victoria and Rebecca, also survive her. Also surviving are her sisters, Nancy Mohr of Yellow House, PA and Louise Tucker of Wenonah. Her brother, Donald K. Tucker predeceased her.

Friends and neighbors may call Monday evening 6-8pm at Smith Funeral Home, 47 Main St., Mantua, NJ. Funeral services Tuesday 10:30 am at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, N. Monroe and W. Poplar Streets, Wenonah, NJ. Interment will immediately follow at Eglington Cemetery, Clarksboro. Memorial contributions may be made to either the Wenonah Historical Society, PO Box 32, Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032 or the Wenonah Fire and Rescue Department, 14 S. West Ave., Wenonah, NJ 08090.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Archiving and Preservation Committee

Photography is still underway to accompany the recorded written records in our database. As the cooler fall evenings and shorter days come upon us, we will have more time to work indoors to get back to the task of photographing the remainder of the archives.

If you have any ideas or items that you would like to contribute to the Historical Society please contact me.

Rocco F. Doto · 415-1215
rockracc@aol.com

Japanese Tea House Restoration Completed for Fourth of July!!!

The efforts of many volunteers under the guidance of Chuck Forsman and Bob Bevilaqua were rewarded at a dedication ceremony led by Chuck Forsman. John Schad, a resident builder, was recognized for his untiring volunteer efforts in the reconstruction of the nearly destroyed 1911 Japanese Tea House. The Historical Society thanks the many volunteers who have worked VERY HARD to restore

the Comey Lake Japanese Tea House. The commitment of people like Chuck Forsman, Bob Bevilaqua, and John Schad is truly appreciated. We thank all those who contributed to the efforts to bring back to life a monumental historic structure in this town. Anyone interested in donating to this cause can contact Chuck Forsman at 304 Mohawk Dr., Wenonah, NJ 08090.

All Around Town FOURTH OF JULY

YES... it was a banner year for the Parade. There was a HUGE turnout and patriotism galore. We did ourselves PROUD!

The House Decorating Contest this year was also a success. We Thank all those who entered. The theme this year was "A Salute to America's Heroes." The judges had many entries. All entrants will receive an 8 x 10 photo of their decorated home compliments of Tomorrow's Treasures, Inc of Woodbury Heights, NJ (thanks to George Braun for this ongoing tradition!).

The Top Three Winners Were:

- 1st Place.....The Snock Family at 8 N. Monroe
- 2nd Place.....The Scott Shaver Family at 1 N. Jackson
- 3rd Place.....The Redmond Family at 103 S. Marion

HELP NEEDED

We need help in contributing to the newsletter. Anyone who can spare an hour a month to do an article, interview a longtime resident, or can contribute in any way PLEASE CALL. This is a great opportunity to get to KNOW your town!

WENONAH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM • 2002-2003

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

eMail Address _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ Check # _____ Enclosed Cash Enclosed

Please bring this form with your payment to any meeting or mail. Thank you!

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- Monthly newsletter mailed to your home
- Monthly meetings with informative programs
- Access to various archives and memorabilia
- Network of knowledgeable historians
- Historical field trips

COST: \$10 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

RETURN TO WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 32 • WENONAH, NJ 08090-0032

September Meeting

Friday, September 13, 2002 • 6:00pm

The September Meeting will be held at two locations:

First, at 6pm at the newly restored Japanese Tea House will be the dedication of the plaque from the Wenonah Historical Society recognizing the efforts of Chuck Forsman, Bob Bevilacqua, John Schad, and the many other volunteers who have worked so hard to restore and preserve this historic treasure. For those who have not seen this wonderful restoration, this is a good time to come and bring a friend to thank those who have followed our mission statement and preserved the integrity of one of Wenonah's structures!

Second, at 7pm, we will have our meeting at Littlegrange (The McCall Porch). Refreshments will be served.

In the event of rain, both events will be held in the Community Center.



Future meeting

October 11, 2002.....South Jersey Ghost Research
Scientific approach and study of the paranormal

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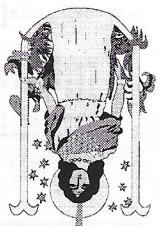


08090+1829 06

Ralph & Rachel Knisell
100 W. Mantua Ave.
Wenonah, NJ 08090

Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
PO Box 32
Newsletter Committee

WENONAH
Historical Society



WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



October 2002
Published by the
Historical Society
of Wenonah, NJ

Speak of the Devil

Over the past century, the Jersey Devil has been sighted throughout our area—including in Wenonah.

Move over, Dracula and Frankenstein. When Halloween comes to South Jersey, trick-or-treaters in the know tremble at the mention of our own local monster: The Jersey Devil. Sightings of the creature have been recorded throughout the 20th century, from 1909 to 2000. The list is long in Ocean and Atlantic counties (Winslow Township, Bamber Lake, Whiting, Leeds, and Mays Landing) but also closer to home in Salem and Gloucester counties (Salem, Greenwich, Woodstown, Gibbsboro, Bridgeton, Penns Grove), including right in our own backyard (Sewell, Barnsboro, Woodbury, Mantua, and yes, even in Wenonah!)

The appearance of the creature and its behavior varies only slightly. It is portrayed with a horse or monster turtle's head on which eyes glow. Its slimy, feathered body stands 3-1/2 to 6 feet high, on long back legs, crane- or frog-like. Its front legs or arms are short, and bear sharp claws. Its bat wings always help it to fly away. It lets people know of its presence by howling, hissing, or barking and can also produce unearthly, chilling screams. It has left behind strange giant prints of cloven hooves.

Even though it is accused of savagely killing many domestic animals, it has never injured a human being. Instead, it stalks unfortunate hikers in dark woods or peeps through windows at night.

Though many Wenonah residents have heard of the Jersey Devil, some may be unfamiliar with the macabre legend of its birth and life. According to South Jersey lore, a woman liv-

ing in the Pine Barrens near Leeds Point gave birth to a child in 1735—her thirteenth. Its freakish anatomy included a horse's head, the wings of a bat, cloven hooves and a serpent's tail. Originally called Leed's Devil, and later dubbed the Jersey Devil, the newborn beast is said to have flown away into the woods, where it has been hiding ever since. Through the years, it has been the subject of many a fireside story, and has even inspired two recipes: the Jersey Devil sandwich (eggs, pork roll, cheese and fried peppers and onions on a roll) and a Jersey Devil chocolate cake.

In 1909, the year a rash of sightings occurred throughout South Jersey, Wenonah had its very own sighting. According to the Gloucester County Times, "There was a skating carnival last night at Green's Lake. It was largely attended by the boys of Wenonah. They declared that they saw the (Jersey) Devil. They said it spit fire and had a head on it like the Gorgon Medusa."

In the same year, mysterious tracks were reported throughout South Jersey towns, including in Wenonah, and Professor Breikoph of Philadelphia identified them as those of a Jurassic lizard, *Peleosaurus Cattelleya*. He recommended feeding the creature fish and milk. If you are inclined to follow his advice, you could be the next observer of the Jersey Devil. As long as we preserve Wenonah's woods, we have a good chance of seeing it again.

For more information on the Jersey Devil, you can visit the web: www.pressplus.com/pinclands/folklore or www.parascope.com/en/cryptzoo/predators03.htm

President's Letter

We have a busy and entertaining evening ahead of us. Come prepared for a work session and then enjoy the program as South Jersey Ghost Research joins us with tales of the paranormal and shares with us the scientific instruments used to measure paranormal activity. Our own Train Station seems to be alive with "traces from the past!"

Our agenda for the evening will include nominations for officers for the upcoming terms, program scheduling, Christmas party discussion, and the purchase of memorial items.

We will be reviewing our accomplishments of the past year and setting goals for the new term. As many of you are aware, there are some major changes that may be taking place in our town over the next several years. The town's new Community Center will mean changes for our Railroad Station. Many of you spent a LOT of effort and time in preserving the Train Station and it is our hope that we continue in this vein. Jack Sheppard is serving on the Committee that will review how a grant that was received will be used for the Train Station restoration. Roco Doto is also working on having the train Station recognized as a State Historic Structure.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to share ideas and time. **We need your support!**

We hope to see all of you at this meeting and please bring a friend. We have been fortunate in having a lot of new members that have contributed to the growth of the Historical Society. Each new face brings new and welcome ideas.

Refreshments will be provided.

Reminder: Please be sure to send or bring your dues: \$15 per family. (We have increased dues from \$ 10 to \$15 per year. If this causes difficulty for any member, please contact our treasurer for alternatives.)

-Vicki McCall

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32
Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032

E-mail: wenonahhistoricalnews@comcast.net

The Wenonah Fire Company

Condensed by Vicki McCall from "Wenonah" by Marjorie Lentz and an article from Wenonah's "100 Year Celebration" pamphlet



The first record of the Wenonah Fire Company was on April 17, 1883 in a report from the Fire and Lightning Committee to Borough Council that 22 galvanized fire buckets were in good condition at the freight station. At the same meeting, Council passed a motion to purchase a 15' and 25' ladder for a cost of \$9.25!

On December 11, 1883 the cellar of the Wenonah School (later the Legion Hall and now a private residence) on N. Marion became the first fire house. Three years later, the Wenonah Water Works was built adjacent to the dam at Warner's Lake and the first fireplug was installed. Also in this year, official formation of the Wenonah Fire Company was initiated. The first piece of equipment, was purchased in this year, a one hose cart and 45' of hose. These were housed in the barn of the Wenonah Inn (which later became the Military Acade-

my). The first test for this equipment was done by setting fire to a pile of barrels on the outskirts of town. Within 9 minutes, the hose cart and team arrived and extinguished the fire.

On April 6, 1888 it was recorded in the Borough minutes that the Wenonah Fire Company had been officially formed. The first Fire Chief was E.R. Winthrop. The equipment consisted of two hose carts and hoses. They were stored at Birdall's Garage (located on the site of the present Library) and in Synott's Ice House. After one year of existence, there were NO fires!

In 1905, the lot where the Fire House now stands, known as Harrison Lot, was purchased for \$150. On June 21, 1906, the Fire Company was incorporated with ten charter members. In 1908, the building was constructed for a cost of \$1,420. This is the front por-

tion of the older section of the present firehouse.

During the early years before electric sirens, striking a suspended locomotive wheel rim with a sledgehammer sounded the alarms. This was eventually replaced with a rope pull bell. And for years the Methodist Church bell was used as a fire alarm. In 1918 the first siren and tower was placed at the corner lot of S. West Ave and Cherry St.

In 1918 the Fire Company purchased its first piece of motorized equipment. In 1921 a new Stutz fire truck was purchased giving Wenonah two motorized trucks.

Beginning in the early 1920's, a carnival was held every August as a fundraiser. This continued until 1942. In 1940, Wayne Ralston suggested an annual get together dinner. The first banquet was December 2, 1941. This eventually

evolved into a "Stags Night" and a "Ladies Night".

In 1943, an application was made to The American Red Cross. This was approved and Wenonah became one of the first Fire Company's with an official rescue squad in the State.

In 1960, with the increased equipment purchases it became necessary for the Fire Company to build an addition. This was completed in 1963. An upstairs game room was completed in 1969 with an original bar from the Telford Inn.

The first female member of the Fire Company was Susan Auerbach

In 1976. As a member of the ambulance squad and a fire fighter, Lorraine Geston became the first female line officer. Today, the Fire Company is open to men and women and welcomes all volunteers.

The Fire Company has served our community for over 100 years. It is through the support of volunteers, Borough Council, and the community that we are fortunate enough to have our own Fire Station.

The Wenonah Historical Society thanks all of our Fire volunteers for their service and commitment.

Be sure to see the Historical Display presented by the Fire Company in the Wenonah Elementary School in honor of Fire Prevention Month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Archiving and Preservation Committee

Photography is still underway to accompany the recorded written records in our database. As the cooler fall evenings and shorter days come upon us, we will have more time to work indoors to get back to the task of photographing the remainder of the archives.

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HELP STILL NEEDED!

We need help in contributing to the newsletter. Anyone who can spare an hour a month to do an article, interview a longtime resident, or can contribute in any way PLEASE CALL. This is a great opportunity to get to know your town!

THANK YOU!

- To the children from Wenonah who participated in the dedication of the Japanese Tea House by singing songs from THE MUSIC MAN. We truly enjoyed the performance. The Gloucester County Times did a nice write up on the Tea House and the event on September 26, 2002.
- To Diane Magarelli, Roco Doto, Bernadette Faix, and Eileen Caraker for running the cart at the Wenonah Craft fare. They sold Historical Society bags and flags.
- To the Wenonah Fire Department for their display of archives in our cabinet at the Wenonah Elementary School. Be sure to stop in for a peek.

WENONAH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM • 2002-2003

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

eMail Address _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ Check # _____ Enclosed Cash Enclosed

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RETURN TO WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 32 • WENONAH, NJ 08090-0032

October Meeting

Friday, October 11, 2002 • 7:00pm

GUEST PRESENTATION BY SOUTH JERSEY GHOST RESEARCH

Free lecture with photo displays, equipment displays, EVPs and videos.

SJGR is a group of investigators that can trace it's roots back to 1955. They conduct discreet investigations, assist people in need, educate the public, conduct field research and promote the learning and understanding of ghosts and other psychic phenomena. They use the latest scientific methods and tools as well as psychic investigators in our research. SJGR members come from all walks of life, from nurses and psychologists to grandmothers and teachers. Most have years of personal experience dealing with ghosts and hauntings. SJGR routinely investigates documented hauntings and conducts field research to gain more knowledge of the phenomenon.



Future meetings

November 8, 2002.....**No Program Set as of Yet**
December 13, 2002.....**Annual Christmas Party**

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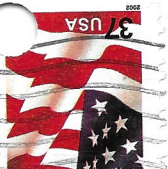
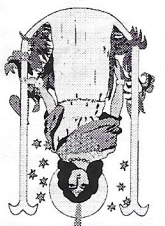


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Ralph + Rachel Knissell
100 W Mantua Ave
Wenonah, NJ 08090

Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
PO Box 32
Newsletter Committee

WENONAH
Historical Society



WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



November 2002
Published by the
Historical Society
of Wenonah, NJ

President's Letter

We have a full business schedule for the November meeting and it is important that we have a good turnout. We will be electing officers, trustees, discussing programs, and planning the Christmas Party. There are plenty of fun projects for you to participate in, so, even if you've never volunteered before, here is your chance to do your part!

There are many members who no longer reside in Wenonah. We would love to get some letters from you about your life in Wenonah that we could put in the newsletter. Anyone who would like to share an experience...please write in!

I would like to thank all who came out for the October meeting. We had a great program from South Jersey Ghost Research. They shared some very interesting information on the paranormal. The South Jersey ghost Research team will be conducting a study of the Train Station on...of all days...Friday the 13th! This will take place following our Christmas Party. Stay tuned for their findings!!!

As the holidays approach and my long running term as President comes to an end, I want to thank you all for all your help and support. I wish you all a Happy and Bountiful Thanksgiving.

I look forward to seeing you Friday night.

-Vicki McCall

Proposed Changes to WHS By-Laws

October 30, 2001

Notification to Members;
Re: Proposed By-Law Changes

Dear Members:

At the October 2002 meeting of the Society a request was made by President Vicki McCall for the elimination of the post of second vice president.

It was further proposed that the terms of officers be increased from one to two years.

Finally, due to the conflict posed by the December meeting being an annual Christmas party and not a business meeting, it is proposed that the Nominating Committee be appointed at the November meeting with nominations/elections to take place at the January meeting.

To accomplish that goal it is proposed that the by-laws be amended as noted on the reverse side of this letter.

In compliance with the requirement of the Constitution for changing the Bylaws this proposal is being provided "at least one week" in advance of the meeting at which it is to be acted upon, that being the meeting to be held Friday, November 8th 2002.

Should you have any questions concerning the above please feel free to contact President Vicki McCall (468-9555) or myself (468-8724) at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Jack C. Sheppard Sr., Proposing Member

Proposed Constitution and By-Law Changes

Constitution, Article IV - Officers and Trustees, Sections 1. and 2.

Current Wording (Deletions underlined)

The officers of the Society shall be a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Recording Secretary and a Treasurer.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of these five Officers plus two Trustees, all of whom shall be members in good standing of the Society.

Proposed Wording

The officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice President, Recording Secretary and a Treasurer.

The Board of Trustees shall consist of these four Offi-

cers plus two Trustees, all of whom shall be members in good standing of the Society.

Article V - Election of Officers and Trustees, Sections 1. and 2.

Current Wording (Deletions underlined)

The Officers and Trustees shall be elected for terms of one (1) year by a majority vote of those present at the Annual Meeting.

Proposed Wording

The Officers and Trustees shall be elected for terms of two (2) years by a majority vote of those present at the Annual Meeting.

Current Wording (Deletions underlined)

A Nominating Committee consisting of two (2) members of the Board of Trustees and two (2) regular members of the Society shall be selected by the membership at the regular meeting preceding the Annual Meeting, and at the Annual Meeting shall present a slate of five (5) Officers and two (2) Trustees.

Proposed Wording

A Nominating Committee consisting of two (2) members of the Board of Trustees and two (2) regular members of the Society shall be selected by the membership at the November Meeting, and at the Annual Meeting shall present a slate of four (4) Officers and two (2) Trustees.

Bylaws - Article I, Section 3.

Current Wording (Deletions underlined)

The First and Second Vice-Presidents shall in the absence of the President have all the powers and prerogatives of the President, and be subject to all restrictions of the President. In the absence of both, the Board of Trustees shall appoint one of their members to preside.

Proposed Wording

The Vice President shall in the absence of the President have all the powers and prerogatives of the President, and be subject to all restrictions of the President. In the absence of both, the Board of Trustees shall appoint one of their members to preside.

November Meeting

Friday, November 8, 2002 • 7:30pm

HELP NEEDED!

We need help in contributing to the newsletter. Anyone who can spare an hour a month to do an article, an interview, or share a story, PLEASE, PLEASE CALL US!

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Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32 · Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032

E-mail: wenonahhistoricalnews@comcast.net



Future meeting

December 13, 2002.....Annual Christmas Party

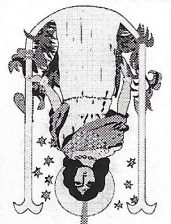
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Newsletter Committee
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WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DECEMBER 2002

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It is hard to believe this is my last letter as President. I have truly enjoyed the honor of serving as an officer of the Wenonah Historical Society. I thank all of our long-term members who have been so generous with their time and expertise. Without your help, I would not have been able to accomplish the many goals we set. Like many of you, I will miss the company and stories of our two favorite Wenonah residents, Jane Ramsay and Milton Webb. I am so very grateful for having known them and so honored to have called them "friend".

Our new officers come to you with a lot of energy and commitment to this town. I know that under their leadership we will see many new accomplishments. We should all welcome them and offer whatever help we can. It is as a team that we make a difference. Step up and let your voice be heard. Every contribution, no matter how small it may seem, is a huge step towards keeping this Historical Society alive. Let's keep up the hard work that people like Jane Ramsay, Milton Webb, Jack and Jean Ehlers, Jack Sheppard, Rachael Knissel, Betty Macleod, Lucy Schulz ...just to mention a few...have done for so long!

This is a WONDERFUL town and in the spirit of the season, lets' remember that, as in Bedford Falls, Wenonah captures the spirit of Community and Friendship... it is why we all have chosen to live here. Truly, "It's a Wonderful Life"!

Thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your President and HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 13, 2002
6:00 pm Wine and Cheese
6:30 pm Dinner

WENONAH COMMUNITY CENTER

\$ 15.00 per person

RSVP Betty Macleod 468-6981
Lucy Schulz 468-5392

BRING AN UNWRAPPED DOOR PRIZE

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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6:00 pm Wine and Cheese
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