

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 1 January 2008

MESSAGE FROM  
VICE PRESIDENT  
BARBARA CAPELLI

Dear Members;

Happy New Year! We celebrate another great year gone by and look forward to an even happier and more prosperous 2008! So, while you're putting away all your Christmas decorations and recalling all those wonderful holiday memories maybe take time to jot them down or even save a Christmas card that might mean something special to you or your family in the future. Keeping those memories remind us where we have been and help us look forward to creating new and fun filled adventures that your family and friends will certainly look back upon with fondness.

I must say that this past holiday season for me personally was very special. A wonderful Historical Society Christmas Dinner Party with many special friends and neighbors was one of the first highlights. Spending time with so many good people and family is what makes the holidays something truly special. We, here in Wenonah are so very lucky that our neighbors are our friends and for some our friends are our family. From events at the schools, the parks, the playgrounds, the meeting places and our homes it is clear that we in Wenonah know how to celebrate those special occasions with our friends and family.

I wish all of you a wonderful new year and look forward to new programs/speakers and to new members that will certainly enjoy all that the Wenonah Historical Society has to offer.

I want to share a phrase/quote I found in the newspaper a while back, by Mattie Stepanek.

"Even though the future seems far away, it is actually beginning right now. And while we are living in the

### WHS OFFICERS 2008

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VICE PRES.	BARBARA CAPELLI
SECRETARY	JO DOMINY
TREASURER	CAROL WILTSEE
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present, we must celebrate life everyday knowing that we are becoming history with every word, every action, every moment because we, today, are the history of tomorrow."

I am very pleased to inform you that our speaker/presenter for the January meeting is Paul Ladder.

Paul and his wife Sandy are fairly new to Wenonah and we are very happy that they are becoming involved with the Wenonah Historical Society. Paul will give us an overview

on New Jersey and South Jersey before and during the Civil War.

He will speak about South Jersey and in particular the Gloucester County region during the Civil war. He will discuss local personalities and figures and spotlight those from Wenonah who served in the civil war. Also, of interest he will show us how to trace our own ancestors who may have served in the war. He has a small slide show prepared and will certainly provide an evening of great intellect. Make sure to join us! Bring your friends and neighbors!!

### REMINISCENCES OF WENONAH HISTORY BY J.C. SHEPPARD SR

The first formal government in Wenonah was not the Borough form but a Commission. The Commission form of government was adopted in April, 1883 and changed to the Borough form in 1896.

The first "President" of the newly created Commission was Dr. George W. Bailey, a physician who served during the Civil War, who built and occupied the handsome dwelling on the southeast corner of East Mantua and South Clinton Avenues.

The first "Mayor" of Wenonah, Charles M. Wilkins, assumed his seat as Borough mayor January 1, 1896, was replaced as mayor by William J. Dawson and then by Andrew Carey within the same year. Carey then became Mayor January 1, 1898.

Interestingly, prior to becoming a Borough, while still a Commission, residents continued to pay real estate taxes to Deptford Township.

COUNTY VITAL TO BEGINNING OF RAILROADS  
South Jersey had role in development  
By GLENN KOPPELMAN, Staff Writer, *Gloucester County Times* 5/28/95

*(Last in a three-part series.)*

Railroads and railroad companies started popping up all over Gloucester County. The Williamstown Railroad. The Williamstown and Delaware River Railroad. The Glassboro Railroad. The Swedesboro Railroad.

The abundance of railroads prompted stations to be built in just about every large town in the county.

Early railroad stations served many purposes. Stations sold tickets and stored goods which were to be shipped via rail. They served as a gathering place for the community — a center of activity where all townsfolk could assemble to hear news and gaze in awe at the huge, steam-driven monsters that crawled along the tracks. Some stations even served as post offices as well.

"The biggest gift of the railroad; early on was to give the common man the ability to travel beyond his own town's borders," Schopp says (Paul Schopp, a historical consultant who specializes in rail history).

It was an uncommon man who helped bestow the gift of rail travel to Gloucester County.

Henry Roe Campbell, a Woodbury native, was called upon by railroad organizers to head the Camden and Woodbury Railroad's planning committee. He was later retained as its chief civil engineer and oversaw the technical aspects of the railroad.

Railroading was in Campbell's blood. His father, Amos, was famous as a builder of railroad bridges. He built five bridges for the Camden and Woodbury Railroad and many other bridges in the area.

Henry Campbell's most notable achievement was his design of the 4-4-0 "American" Type locomotive, which was patented in 1836. Campbell's locomotive was driven by eight wheels — standard engines had six — and had a heavier freight hauling capability than the locomotives of its day. Campbell's engine was reportedly capable of pulling 40 cars up an inclined plane.

Campbell prided himself in doing things cheaply but efficiently, Schopp says.

"He was very sure of himself," he said. "If he said something would work, then he was sure it would."

As the Camden and Woodbury line was nearing completion Campbell gambled and purchased two locomotives from the state-run Columbia-Philadelphia Railroad. At the time, locomotives were difficult to maintain and were in need of constant repair. The two Campbell purchased — the Fire Fly and the Red Rover — were deemed especially bad by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In fact, upon receipt of their sale, it was recorded in the Pennsylvania State Canal Report of 1836 that "it would have been a savings to the Commonwealth had they been given away for nothing the first day they were placed on the track."

Despite Pennsylvania's snickering, Campbell managed to get four years' use out of the engines, but they required frequent repairs.

"I think he honestly thought he could do something with them," says Schopp, who intends to write a book about Campbell.

On the job, Campbell was a stern boss. In fact, his firm demeanor almost cost him his life.

According to court documents, Campbell was attacked on Aug. 15, 1838 by a mob of six to 10 men "wielding fists and brickbats."

Although the motive of the attack is unclear, Schopp thinks the men may have worked for Campbell at one time. Campbell had a strict policy prohibiting use of "spirituous liquors" by anyone working for the railroad. Schopp thinks the malcontents may have violated that rule.

"He might have fired them," he said. "But that's just my opinion."

The day after the assault he was "attacked again by two men wielding Bowie knives with an intent to kill," according to court documents.

Campbell survived both attacks and continued to work on the railroad.

But all was not well with the Camden and Woodbury line. Rider-ship was never as strong as the organizers had hoped, due in part to a reluctance to change practiced routines.

The locomotives proved unreliable and horse-drawn cars were introduced. Heavy rains routinely washed away rails and ties. In April of 1839, sparks from a locomotive caused a brush fire. Saboteurs

routinely placed ties and other debris on the tracks and jammed switches in an effort to thwart the train's progress.

Bad business practices implemented by a scandal-plagued stockholder board led to more problems. A revision of the railroad's original charter allowed for the line to continue to Cape May. That project dried up the railroad's funds and plunged it further into debt.

Eventually ridership declined to a point where the tracks lay barren. Schopp said stagecoach drivers — the railroads direct competitors — used to take passengers along the empty tracks and laugh at the railroad's misfortune.

"The ridership was never as strong as the proposers anticipated," Schopp said.

It was dealt a deathblow in November 1842 when a fire at the Woodbury stable destroyed several pairs of horses used to drive the railroad cars. The line ceased operations in April 1846 and the rails and ties were taken up in 1850. Campbell, who had acquired a bad reputation, left the area and took up operations in New England where he was held in such high regard that a song was written about him.

Despite its failure, the Camden and Woodbury Railroad did usher the age of rail travel into Gloucester County.

The old railroad's right of way was later used by the West Jersey Railroad, which was chartered in 1853.

At the time, "Gloucester County was just not ready for a railroad," Schopp said.

#### RESTORATION OF PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE THROUGH WENONAH – A BAD IDEA?

By 1860 the tracks from Woodbury to Glassboro had been straightened and improved and a sizable amount of both freight and passenger service was being generated. Just imagine how the passenger service benefited the communities along the line.

Prior to the coming of the trains, freight and people moved very slowly and arduously. Horses and wagons on dirt roads, barges on the rivers and creeks, walking, movement was difficult and slow at

best. Then, almost miraculously, a person could board a train and get from Camden to Cape May, or from Glassboro to Camden or Philadelphia quickly and comfortably. What a quantum leap in technology.

Then along came the automobile, bus, truck, paved roads and everything changed again. People and jobs moved away from city centers and the rails no longer took them where they wanted to go and or to live. According to a Philadelphia Inquirer study conducted in 1996, "While 13,500 Gloucester County residents work in Philadelphia, nearly four times that number work in Gloucester County". "Only about one in ten workers who live in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties works in Philadelphia according to a special compilation of statistics from the 1990 Census".

In spite of statistics such as these the DRPA and other agencies are proposing putting trains back on the tracks, the very same tracks where they took them from in the 1960's due to lack of customers.

Well in my opinion it will not work. The alternative is no longer the horse and wagon, it is the motor vehicle that wants to go east and west (cross-county), not north to Camden.

Residents, especially those of Wenonah and Pitman should know that a two-rail system is no longer easily accomplished. The railroad companies sold off a lot of their lands and the right-of-way is no longer the width it needs to be. Reacquisition of the necessary land would do away with Wenonah's new municipal building and severely impact Pitman's business district. With the rails at grade (ground level) the disruption to cross-county auto traffic would be substantial and unacceptable. When this problem was raised during the 2005 study, we were told the rails would either be raised on towers or buried in an open trench. Besides the tremendous cost of such a design, the resulting disruption to town centers would severely damage many towns along the route and cause significant reduction of property values at and near the tracks.

Add in the very real possibility of a nearly \$1 billion cost and you may be forced to agree that putting trains back on the old track is definitely an idea whose time has passed.

Jack Sheppard Sr.

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 2 February 2008

MESSAGE FROM  
PRESIDENT LOU MCCALL

Dear Members;

Many thanks to new Wenonah resident Paul Lader for his outstanding presentation about the Civil War along with the local impacts and contributions thereto. We look forward to seeing (and hearing) a lot more of Paul and his family in the future!

This month's meeting will include a wonderful program by Linda Boyd who is going to do a presentation on all the etiquette of serving tea. She is a science teacher that has always had a love for tea but has furthered her love for tea into the whole idea of how tea is served, the china, the food, the type of tables used and of course the types of teas. Please be sure to attend!

Those of you attending our January business meeting will recall Betty Rose's comments for acknowledgement of support and our related discussion of the many ways the Gloucester County Historical Society has always assisted the Wenonah Historical Society, including loaning us many interesting artifacts which help keep our display case full, ever changing and always interesting. Accordingly, I just wanted to share some information with you about the Gloucester County Historical

Society and encourage you to lend them your support. Please be sure to stop by in at 17 Hunter Street in Woodbury to either visit their Library, the Museum, just make a contribution to, or attend one of their upcoming activities!

The Library of Gloucester County Historical Society (where Wenonah's own Barbara Price helps out) specializes in genealogy. They have scheduled the following upcoming genealogy workshops for you genealogy buffs!

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Friday, April 11, 2008, 7 pm-8 pm "Pursuing Your Ancestral Trail: Starting on the Right Path".

Learn the basic standards of good genealogical research. Do it right the first time!

Saturday, April 12, 2008, 9:00 am-10:00 am - Preponderance of Evidence vs. Genealogical Proof Standard - What is the Difference?

Reservations are required. Seating is limited. Please call 856-845-4771 to reserve:

Good researchers examine primary and secondary sources, direct and indirect evidence, original records and documents, including published and unpublished sources as well as records contradicting them. Then and only then have they met the Genealogical Proof Standard or have they?

Saturday, April 12, 2008. 10:20 am-11:20 am - Ten Research Shortcuts Used by Professional Genealogists

You may be amazed that their Library holdings include:

- Vertical files for hundreds of Delaware Valley families
- Over 2,200 microfilm reels of census, wills, deeds, newspapers, church and cemetery records
- Approximately 900 family genealogy volumes
- Over 300,000 vital statistics records

### GCHS Library Hours:

Monday thru Friday, 1 - 4 pm

Tuesday evening 6 - 9:30 pm

First Saturday of each month  
October thru June, 10 am - 4 pm

The last Sunday of each month,  
2 - 5 pm

The Museum of the Gloucester County Historical Society is in the 18th century house that was the home of the Reverend Andrew Hunter, a tea burner and educator of the Revolutionary War era, James Lawrence of "Don't give up the ship!" fame in the War of 1812 and John S. Jessup, a judge and prominent citizen of the 19th century.

A gift shop is maintained in the Museum. Fine reproductions of South Jersey glass and unique items that reflect the collections are available.

Museum Hours:

Monday Wednesday and Friday, 1-4 pm

Last Sunday of each month, 2-5 pm

Admission Fees: Members free

Non-members and adults - \$4.00

Children ages 6-18 - \$1.00

Children under age 6 free

Please visit the Gloucester County Historical Society's website

<http://www.rootsweb.com/njgchs/-index.htm> for more information about their history, programs, contributions and how to join. Many thanks again to the Society for all its support!

The following are some excerpts from their listed history on their website:

In the December 10, 1902 issue of the Woodbury Constitution, it was reported that plans were discussed to form an historical

society in order to protect the Revolutionary War battlefield and Whitall mansion at Red Bank from impending sale. The Federal government intended to sell the tract at public auction. Those at the meeting announced that "the dues will be \$1 per year and it is requested that every person interested in the commendable work, which the Society proposes to take under its care, will not hesitate to come forward and give what assistance they can."

One month later, on January 12, 1903, the Gloucester County Historical Society took life at its first annual meeting. Officers were elected, the Constitution and By-Laws were unanimously approved and thirty-five members were proposed and elected to membership. The object of the newly formed Society was to "discover, procure, preserve and exhibit whatever may relate to the natural, civil, military, literary, educational and ecclesiastical history of Gloucester County, the State of New Jersey or the country, and to protect and preserve the historical landmarks and points of interest within the county."

From its very inception, the Society has been the recipient of many interesting and important gifts. In the early years, these gifts were often recorded in the local newspapers. One of the first so recorded was a "handsome picture of Big Cattle" donated by Mrs. Mary Bradway. The cattle were owned by Edward Tonkin and were carried around in specially made wagons to be viewed by

curious crowds. Named The Earl of Jersey and the Duke of Gloucester, one weighed 3,750 pounds and the other 3,800 pounds. In a society that was primarily agricultural, they were a source of pride. On February 9, 1838, Mr. Tonkin sold the cattle to a buyer from Washington, DC for \$3,500, an enormous sum of money for that time. The Society purchased and installed a cabinet in the corridor of the Court House to display such artifacts.

John Gill Whitall, our first president, held that office until he resigned in 1918. For Mr. Whitall, the Society's fight to retain the mansion and battlefield had special meaning. He had been born in the mansion on the grounds of the Red Bank Battlefield. James and Ann Whitall, who lived there during the Revolutionary War, had been his grandparents. Both are historically important in our county's early history. Following the Battle of Red Bank on October 21, 1777, the house was used as a hospital for wounded soldiers. Many of the Hessian casualties were buried on the grounds. The Battle was one of the most important battles of the Revolutionary War and an important American victory. The famous Jonas Cattell ran from Haddonfield to Red Bank to warn the Americans of the approach of the Redcoats.

On July 11, 1904, the Society held a meeting in the old Whitall mansion with a celebration following on the battlefield grounds. Every citizen of Gloucester County was invited.

Trolley cars carried the guests directly to the battlefield. Music was provided by Jennings' Third Regiment Band. Luncheon was served by the Ladies' Committee. Tours of the rifle pits, battle monument and house were given.

In a speech later that year when the Society held a meeting at the battlefield, Judge John Boyd Avis said, "All honor to the Gloucester County Historical Society which has made these things possible; which by its example has inspired all those who have so gladly and willingly taken upon themselves the work of making this historic field a public park, where all may come and enjoy the prospect, the scenery and God's free air and be filled with the spirit of those who fought on this ground, guaranteeing the perpetuation of those ideals for which the Colonists fought as declared in the Declaration of Independence.

June 21, 1906 promised to be "the biggest day ever seen in South Jersey" according to the Woodbury Constitution of June 6. The new monument at Red Bank was to be unveiled to the public. Harry Lewis, the official decorator for the White House, was engaged to decorate the battlefield. Eighty trolley cars on the Camden, Gloucester and Woodbury trolley road and twenty motor cars on the branch line from Washington Park to National Park were in service. The Committee arranged for William J. Thompson to provide a fleet of eight steamers from the South and Arch Street wharves in Philadelphia to the Sanitarium at

Red Bank, about an eight minute walk to the battlefield. The grounds of the National Park Amusement Company were leased and numerous caterers were secured to feed the crowds. Water barrels containing several tons of ice were placed about the battlefield. Hitching grounds and feed for horses was arranged along the Hessian Road leading to the battlefield. In Woodbury and along the parade route on the Hessian Road, businesses and residents were asked to decorate. Businesses were closed. A re-enactment of the battle was performed. Miss Matilda Whitall unfurled the United States flag donated by the Society, with hundreds of smaller flags dropping from its folds as it was raised. Mr. William Snowden of Alexandria, Virginia, presented the Society with a portrait of Ann Cooper Whitall, the heroine of Red Bank.

Before the year was over, the officers and members of the Society embarked on another preservation effort. The Woodbury Burying Ground, on the south side of Woodbury Creek in Thorofare, was in deplorable condition due to a combination of neglect and vandalism. The cemetery was thought to be the first and earliest burial plot in Gloucester County. Names of our earliest and most prominent families were inscribed on the stones: Thackeray, Cooper, Ladd, Hugg, Matlock, Whitall, Howell, Packer, Hillman, Shivers and of course, Wood.

In those early years, there was much interest in the British frigate

Augusta that sank during the Battle of Red Bank. Trustee Dr. Wallace McGeorge wrote a paper concerning the Augusta in 1905. In 1907, the Society proposed to the Board of Freeholders that they could mount the cannon found during the excavation of the battlefield in a carriage made from timbers from the Augusta and display it on the Court House Lawn. (In 1911, this cannon was placed near the monument at Red Bank.) In 1907, there was again discussion among the members of the Board of Trustees concerning preservation of the remnants of the Augusta. It was decided not to pursue the matter. In July 1909, it was reported in the Woodbury Constitution that Society Librarian Miss Ellen L. Matlock had managed to have the New Jersey in the DAR building at Washington furnished with "beautifully wrought wood" from the Augusta. This was one way of preserving the history of the Battle of Red Bank and Gloucester County. The Society did not yet have a permanent home and met in a variety of places. Some of those early meeting places were the Gloucester County Court House, the Woodbury Real Estate Mutual Loan Association, the Whitall House, the Indian King Tavern at Haddonfield, Woodbury Country Club and the Friends Meeting House at Mickleton, to name a few. Pilgrimages were made to historical landmarks such as Princeton, Brandywine Gettysburg and Valley Forge, often attracting two hundred or more guests. Carriages or special railroad cars

were sometimes engaged to accommodate the large number of guests. Other historical societies or patriotic organizations such as the DAR or SAR would sometimes host or join the Society for a meeting. Members were invited to read papers of historical interest. Sometimes several, each covering a different topic, would be read during one meeting. By 1907, these early speeches were being preserved for the Society's archives.

At the annual meeting of 1911, President Whitall announced that \$100 has been subscribed to care for the old burial ground. Later that year, Dr. J. G. Halsey of Swedesboro, collected donations for the purpose of placing a monument made of Barre granite on a solid concrete base inscribed, "Wood Burying Ground, Henry Wood who first settled Woodbury was buried here in 1806. It was used as a burial place by the Indians before that time. Gloucester County Historical Society." On Saturday, June 27, 1912, over one hundred members of the Society met at the old burying ground to participate in the unveiling of the monument. President Whitall urged those present to consider further donations to install a wall to keep the tide from washing away the ground and for some type of protection from squatters.

At the annual meeting in January 1916, Frank H. Stewart was elected to fill a vacancy on the Board of Trustees. This was the beginning of a new era for the

Gloucester County Historical Society. During that year, Stewart had three pamphlets he had written, printed at his own expense, and then sold for fifty cents each with the proceeds going to the Society. He advocated the inauguration of a publications fund. A Publications Committee was formed.

In January 1918, John G. Whitall stepped down as president after serving in that capacity for fifteen years. Frank H. Stewart was elected to that office. Mr. Stewart immediately announced a plan to liquidate the mortgage on the Society building and formed a committee to proceed with his plan. President Stewart explained that the plan was to sell ten memorial memberships at \$100 each and life memberships at \$25 each. The membership drive was a huge success. In the Gloucester County Democrat of March 14, 1918, it was reported, "The two thousand dollars for the Gloucester County Historical Society has been raised and on Monday evening, March 25 at 8: pm at the Courthouse, an open meeting of the Society will be held to which all are invited with their friends to see the mortgage burned."

In early 1919, following the end of the First World War, the Society formed a Scrapbook Committee. This committee solicited information from veterans of the Civil War, Spanish American War and First World War

By 1920, the Society was bursting at the seams. Two rooms of its home were used for its own

purposes. The remainder of the house was let to a resident caretaker. At the January 1921 annual meeting, it was decided, "... that the Society was in need of larger and fireproof quarters for the proper care of its valuable collections." At that same meeting, President Stewart made the challenge that "anyone who will spend \$10,000 on a fireproof building for the Society will be met by him with a like amount either in cash or in valuable historical documents now in his possession to the value of \$10,000."

In the Woodbury Constitution of November 12, 1924, it was reported that the Society had purchased the John S. Jessup property. The article read in part, "when the houses across the street are removed from in front of the new Central school and the new post office completed, the outlook from the new Historical Society home will be greatly improved." Rooms in the new home were dedicated to the contributors and a tablet was placed on the outside of the building with the names of those who donated \$13,000 towards the purchase of the new building.

Finally, on August 6, 1925, after renovations were completed, the Society moved into its new headquarters. The first book to go into the house was the Holy Bible. One of the acquisitions received that year was a desk from the old courthouse. (This desk holds the guest book in our library today.) There were two curators, the

Misses Nellie Thackeray and Sibyl Tatum Jones. There was also a live-in caretaker.

The building was closed in the colder months during the World War II years due to heating oil rationing. Resident Curator Sibyl T. Jones was relocated to the Newton Hotel with the Society paying the weekly rent of \$8 plus the cost of two meals daily. From June to October during the war years, weather permitting, the Society's home was open on Wednesdays and Fridays with Miss Jones in attendance. The Society lacked publicity during this time since the newspapers had both a shortage of linotype operators and paper. The Society's yearly publications were also suspended during these years. Room 202 in the county building was closed to visitors. In 1944, the Society's income was reduced when savings interest rates dropped as low as ½ of 1%.

With the hard times of war over, the Jessup house reopened on June 1, 1945. Interest in the Society had waned and a \$1 membership drive was begun. Mrs. Henry H. Clark was appointed as Resident Curator in April 1946.

The first exhibit ever held in the Jessup house concentrating on just one aspect of the Society's collections (in this case hats and bonnets) was held for one week during March 1948 with a turnout of 269 guests. At the annual meeting in May 1948, it was announced that the Board of Chosen Freeholders had restored the Society's sole use of Room 202

and the vault in the county building.

At the same meeting, it was also recorded that the Society had finally acquired the deed to the Moravian Church property in Woolwich Township. The Society had met and attended services since its beginning in the church, the oldest Moravian building in New Jersey.

Our next president was long-time Bulletin editor, Mrs. Hazel Simpson, who served a one year term from 1953 to 1954. In 1954, Daniel W. Beckley assumed the office, a position he held until his death in 1965. During his tenure, the Society acquired the doorsill from the first Philadelphia mint. (This doorsill today is at the entrance of our library.) In 1960, the Board, in cooperation with the County, participated in designing the first flag of Gloucester County.

In 1969, L. Kepner Gottshalk was elected President. The library rooms of the Society were filled to overflowing. It was decided by the Board to make their dream of a library a reality. A library building fund was started. During the years that followed, the Society hosted many book fairs, bazaars, house tours and sales of commemorative bottles.

After four years of hard work, on October 13, 1973, the new library building was dedicated with Rev. Parker F. Auten officiating as the Society's new president at the library dedication ceremony.

Once again, the library needed additional space and in 1983, an addition to the reading room was

added. In 1986, the early 18th century Schorn (or Mortonson) log cabin was donated by the Schorn family to the Society and was moved to the grounds of Trinity Episcopal Church in Swedesboro. This cabin was probably used by early Swedes as a granary. After moving the cabin piece by piece to the grounds of Trinity Episcopal Church in Swedesboro and much restoration work, the cabin was dedicated on September 30, 1989.

In 1996, due to continuing growth, the Society was facing a storage problem. In that same year, our Annex building on the corner of Hunter and Broad Streets was purchased to be used for much needed storage and office space.

In 2001, through the generous support of our membership, the Museum was equipped with a climate control system to ensure proper preservation of our irreplaceable artifacts. For the first time, the building was open to the public year round.

Today, the Society has a membership of over 1,300 members. We are proud of the ever-growing collections of the Hunter-Lawrence-Jessup House Museum. Our library is nationally known for its wealth of genealogical and historical materials.

As we begin our second century, the Gloucester County Historical Society is still committed to its original purpose: to preserve, promote and protect the history of Gloucester County.



# Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 3 March 2008

MESSAGE FROM  
VICE PRESIDENT  
BARBARA CAPELLI

Dear Members;

This Friday's meeting is sure to be a crowd pleaser and we are expecting a super crowd at that! So, come early and make sure to get your seat! Also be sure to tell your friends and neighbors...bring the kids!

Another matter of importance, the Historical Society is taking a significant role in the creation of a Founder's Day in Wenonah Park on June 5th. We are looking for volunteers and anyone interested in speaking about the history of Wenonah!

Jennie McQuaide and Jack Sheppard are assisting Marjorie Lentz on an updated version of Marjorie's history book "Wenonah". The original edition was published in 1976 and has long since been out of print. When available it is sure to be a fun and informative reading experience.

We have so much to be thankful for here in Wenonah and so many people that work very hard to preserve what Wenonah's founders started.

Wenonah is full of great volunteers, and many of those volunteers are part of our Wenonah Historical Society. How wonderful it is to know that so many of you have been instrumental in keeping our town the reason why people want to live here and we continue to flourish by your examples.

Founder's Day should be a great family experience that the whole town

can enjoy and it will certainly provide a great opportunity to work with the Wenonah Elementary School and additional volunteers to see that this day will be another great reflection on the pride we all share about our town!

## HISTORICAL FACT

Our neighbor to the south, Sewell, NJ was named after William Sewell, a General in the Civil War and President of the West Jersey Railroad. He was substantially involved in the creation of Wenonah.

## WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

## MARCH MEETING PROGRAM

Wenonah resident Larry Ledrich will display his Native American Indian artifacts collection. The collection originated in a site in Harrison Township. He will be joined by professional archaeologist Jack Cresson. Jack has spent a lifetime studying native habitats and will share his knowledge and expertise on the subject. If you have found something unique or unusual while digging in your garden or yard bring it for Jack's

interpretation and analysis. This will be the "Show and Tell" part of the meeting.

## THE HISTORY OF WENONAH BY MARJORIE K. LENTZ

During the mid-1970's the Wenonah Historical Society, wanting to do something for the Bicentennial decided a book about the origins of Wenonah would be an excellent way of both participating in the event, and creating a fund-raiser for the Society. Marjorie Lentz volunteered to author such a book. It was completed and published in 1976. She did a fantastic job, the project was a success, the entire printing sold out and there are few, if any copies available for the public.

Marjorie has graciously agreed to allow parts of her book to be used in subsequent WHS newsletters.

Accordingly, this and future issues will contain parts, or even chapters of her book. Save them up and you will eventually have your own copy of the original "Wenonah" by Marjorie K. Lentz.

For those who want a "whole" book, an updated version is currently being written, available late 2008.

## HISTORICAL FACT

4/17/1883 Dr. George Bailey, on behalf of the Mantua Land and Improvement Company presented to the Borough two "squares" of land for our Park. It was accepted by the Borough and the Deed received and acknowledged September 11, 1883.

## “JUST A RAILROAD STATION” December 1870

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

The new railroad station along the west side of the tracks of the West Jersey Railroad stood incongruous among the fields that surrounded 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 which 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 which led to the busy wharves a-long 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 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 farm houses 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 Vs.

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 Moffett. Moffett either retained or later secured a five-acre plot from the farm on which in 1773 he built a dwelling which 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 stone-house." 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 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 shallops and flatboats were built. To the Philadelphia markets were shipped sweet potatoes, buckwheat, turnips and shad and from Philadelphia were received staples. Another commodity received from Philadelphia was manure which was sold to the farmers in this area. In 1855 shipped out of Philadelphia to the Mantua Creek were 120 loads priced of manure 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 land was 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 Stone House Farm extended southward to the Mantua Creek. Other 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 a proposal.

Five days later on December 19, 1870 the businessmen reassembled in the Camden office and heard the first reading of 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."

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 3 April 2008

MESSAGE FROM

TRUSTEE VICKI MCCALL

Dear Members;

March was designated as National Women's History Month. This recognition of Women in History was established nationally to ensure that the history of American women will be recognized and celebrated in schools, workplaces, and communities throughout the country. The stories of women's historic achievements present an expanded view of the complexity and contradiction of living a full and purposeful life. American women have played a unique role throughout the history of the Nation by providing the majority of the volunteer labor force of the Nation.

In honor of Women's History Month, I want to share memories of moments with some very special Women of Wenonah, who are no longer here with us. My membership in the Historical Society is a result if the influence of these women.

First, I wish to remember Jane Ramsay. Jane took me into this special fold of people when I came back to Wenonah. I wish I could say I remember when I first joined the Historical society, but I do not. What I DO remember are the people, the members. Jane Ramsay took me under her wing and shared with me not only her love for life, but her love for Wenonah and its people. She opened a door to the past that opened my eyes to this town in another dimension.

Her group of friends soon became people I truly admired. Her own family is a prime example of what happens when you are a true "Wenonian".

Not only do you grow up here, but you come back to raise your own families! Jane raised five children and several still live here in Wenonah or close by.

Jane and I served for four years together as officers. Under her leadership, we brought the Display cabinet that is now located in the Wenonah School. This program was implemented to educate and inspire our youth to take a closer look at their history. Many helping hands have served to procure and set up the rotating displays.

### WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

Betty Rose has done a magnificent job over the last several years and has stepped up the program to bring not only local displays, but many unique items the Gloucester County Historical Society.

Another woman having a profound impact on many if us was Lucy Schulz. A life long Wenonah resident, Lucy's knowledge of this town and her contributions to this town are unrivaled. She also served some mean "after Meeting" refreshments! I so enjoyed her stories from her youth

and her escapades regarding the Military Academy Cadets! She was one of the few who remember Cedar Field as a horse racetrack.

Lucy and Jane truly exemplified what our town is about. They volunteered for so many organizations and serve as role models for all to follow! We could all take a lesson from them and their commitment. We thank them and miss them!

### HISTORICAL FACT

Wenonah Women in the News circa 1900 Woodbury Daily Times

"There was much interest manifest in school matters in our borough Tuesday evening. It was rumored no women were to be placed on the board and this aroused the women of our town to action and the result was the highest vote ever cast at a school election. 70 were cast for Mrs. Annie Johnson, 65 for Eldora Hurff and 62 for Ed Farr. 23 of the ballots had written on them "no taxation without representation".

### APRIL MEETING PROGRAM PATTI HRYNENKO GLOUCO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Patti will speak generally about the operations of the very successful County Historical Society, and specifically about an 18th century desk and fireplace, an 1806 sampler, and how the objects are related.

### "WENONAH"

On pages 2 and 3 more of the Marjorie Lentz 1976 book "Wenonah"

For those who want a "whole" book, an updated version is currently being written, available late 2008.

## “A HOTEL, SANDBURRS AND THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY” 1871 - 1872

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

The new railroad station along the west side of the tracks of the West Jersey Railroad stood incongruous among the fields that surrounded 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."

By 1872 the Company had spent \$25,417.94 in the building and furnishing of Wenonah House, \$200.44 on parks, \$62.37 on roads, \$3,000.60 on grading and \$1,751.53 on advertising. The farmhouses and the mill property were rented for \$744.68. Some of the land not allotted for building lots was farmed for the Company. Although the Mantua Land and Improvement Company was making a profit on its lots, it knew less about agriculture. By a special act of the State of New Jersey, the Mantua Land and Improvement Company was incorporated on February 21, 1871. The Company was authorized to lay out building lots as well as boulevards, alleys and parks. It could erect buildings for residences as well as sell and mortgage them and it could make regulations "to prevent the manufacturing or sale of intoxicating liquors" or "the carrying on of offensive trades."

The capital stock of the Company was \$150,000 with permission to increase the stock to \$300,000 if needed and it was to be divided into shares of fifty dollars each.

On March 15, 1871 the first eleven directors were elected. They were Samuel A. Whitney, General William J. Sewell, George Wood and Horatio J. Mulford who had helped formulate the resolution to organize the Company. Also elected were George S. Harris, John F. Starr, Edward Warne, Samuel Hopkins, Thomas P. Carpenter, Stephen Greene and Thomas Jones Yorke, President of the West Jersey Railroad.

In addition to the farm land in the 572-acre tract purchased by the Company, they secured a grist mill with its miller's house, the Stone House Farm dwelling as well as several other farm houses. The entire tract stretched from the Mantua Creek to

Glassboro Road and from Dilk's Pond to Bark Bridge Road. From this tract the company selected one hundred acres to be divided into building lots.

The railroad station was the core of the rectangle, one-half mile in length and one-third mile in width which comprised the original town. West Jersey Avenue bisected the town plot north and south with a seventy-five foot avenue on each side of the railroad tracks "for carriage and driving." Bisecting the plot east and west was Mantua Avenue, one hundred feet wide. All other streets, Jefferson, Monroe, Clinton and Marion extending north and south and Elm, Poplar, Cherry, Willow and Cedar extending east and west were sixty-six feet wide. Traces of Henisey's Landing Road were erased.

The Mantua Land and Improvement Company marked out the town plot into fourteen squares of twelve building lots each measuring seventy-five feet in front and one hundred and fifty feet deep. It was agreed that "only the even numbers of lots should be sold" first and only lots within the one hundred acre boundary. However Joseph D. Bates of Mantua requested a lot outside the town limits and his request was granted. The original sketch of his house with a "French roof, wooden ornamentation and 4 light windows" still exists.

A scrap of paper with jagged edges has been carefully preserved among the earliest Minutes of the Mantua Land and Improvement Company. The scrap is covered with the scribbles of names proposed by members, no doubt as they sat around a table pondering for the right word to name this "new suburban town" The names scrawled on the scrap of paper are Rosedale, Winona and Wenonah. In the Minutes of April 3, 1871 it is recorded that it was "resolved that the name of the town and lake be Winona Wenonah."

Sixteen years before 1871, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, was published. In the poem Nokomis, swinging on a grapevine on the moon fell to earth when a jealous woman severed the vine.

There among the ferns and mosses,  
There among the prairie lilies  
on the Muskoday, the meadow,  
In the moonlight and the starlight  
Fair Nokomis bore a daughter.

And she called her name Wenonah  
As the first-born of her daughters.

The name Wenonah or Winona is derived from a Santee dialect word meaning a first-born daughter. The Santee Indians lived along the shores of Lake Superior where the part legendary, part historic Hiawatha lived. In 1823 Keating in his work, *The Narrative of Long's Expedition to St. Peter's River*, which is in the Lake Superior region, relates the story of a Sioux named Wenonah who committed suicide because her family insisted she marry some one she did not love. Henry Schoolcraft, a geologist and ethnologist who was a prolific writer on Indian lore, wrote *The Myth of Hiawatha and Other Oral Legends* in 1839. In the work he named Wenonah as Hiawatha's mother. Longfellow openly acknowledged he based his *Song of Hiawatha* on Schoolcraft's writings and he too named Wenonah as Hiawatha's mother. In all the stories of Wenonah or Winona her life ended tragically in early womanhood. However the words that are remembered most about Wenonah are the words of Longfellow's poem when he wrote that she;

Grew up like the prairie lilies  
Grew a tall and tender maiden  
With the beauty of the moonlight  
With the beauty of the starlight.

In its first Annual Report in 1871 the Mantua Land and Improvement Company stated that Wenonah's lots had been measured, six hundred shade trees, mostly maples, had been planted along the avenues, streets had been graded, and a hotel was being constructed. There were already a "handsome passenger depot and freight-house and convenient turnout and wagon-sheds" at the railroad station. Also during the same year the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders was contacted concerning building a bridge across the Mantua Creek "on line of the road lately laid out leading from Wenonah to Mantua." William F. Allen, now treasurer of the Company, ordered a special train to transport the Freeholders to inspect the location. Consequently the Board of Freeholders agreed to construct the bridge and plans were developed to build "an elegant roadway" between Mantua and the railroad station. No longer was the station known as the New Mantua Station. It was now the Wenonah Station.

The Wenonah House was opened for guests in the spring of 1872. The forty-room hotel rose three stories and was crowned by a square cupola. Iron Doric columns reaching all the way to the roof surrounded three sides of the hotel and a veranda twelve feet wide provided space for promenades. From the veranda guests could stroll across South Clinton avenue to an open space being developed into parks divided by a lane. Running water and gas were installed in every room and, according to a newspaper article; it was "furnished in elegant style."

A board walk reached Clinton avenue to the railroad station where six trains a day brought guests from Philadelphia to the hotel as well as prospective buyers for Wenonah's building lots. Prospective buyers were offered free round-trip transportation on the railroad and they were personally greeted by DR. J.E. Garrison, the resident agent of the Mantua Land and Improvement Company. His annual salary was \$200 plus three percent commission on every lot he sold. Lots facing West Jersey Avenue, Mantua Avenue and the parks were priced at \$400. All the other lots were \$200. To encourage building on the lots the company loaned "one thousand dollars and the price of the lot upon mortgage for one year without interest."

An advertising brochure issued by the Company noted that Wenonah is a "favorite place for all those who are seeking country fresh air and cheap living combined with the advantage of close proximity to the city. The claims of New Jersey over Pennsylvania in respect to taxes are too well known to need more than passing mention and the notable strictness and impartiality with which the laws are administered cannot fail to recommend it to all peace-loving and law-abiding citizens." Another brochure advises that "before making your arrangements for the summer or for the year" to consider Wenonah, and that there is "no healthier location in the vicinity of Philadelphia, fine rolling country and the best of water." Also there are "boating and fishing." A statement issued by the Mantua Land and Improvement Company foretold that the towns which "hug the railroad" invariably succeed and the towns a mile away from the railroad are doomed to failure.

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 5 May 2008

MESSAGE FROM  
PRESIDENT LOU MCCALL

Dear Members;

The weather is finally getting warmer and Mother Nature is coming back to life. Nature has been closely aligned with Wenonah's history since the very beginning. After all, the original prospectus given to potential homeowners living in the city areas of Philadelphia and its surroundings touted the healthful qualities of Wenonah's natural resources. Since then much has obviously changed. Wally Farr (born 1905 to Edward and Edith Farr in the house I currently try to maintain) spoke to my wife and I of all the wonderful things the youth of Wenonah did in the woods, lakes and streams of Wenonah and beyond. Wally spoke of the annual canoe trips that would start at the lake that was next to my garage and they would canoe out to the Delaware and back again. He said they always chose mid June to do the trip because of the length of daylight then but could only make it back to Woodbury, where upon George Parks would take the Farr's horses and wagon and pick up all the kids and canoes. Wally also spoke of how in Wenonah School many a boy would lean their guns next to their coats in the back of the room so when school was over, they would all go muskrat hunting.

If you have seen the old photographs of Wenonah, especially aerial ones (every member should own the unbelievable aerial photo turned placemat complements of Jack Sheppard Sr.) it is dramatically clear that much of nature has gone asphalt or at least private. Thus we can not appreciate or thank enough the

foreword thinking by previous Council and Environmental Commission members for the resurgence of our natural resources via unique Wenonah trails and the teahouse. Additionally they have gone beyond their usual Herculean efforts by seizing an opportunity to educate many in the region of the benefits of converting the ex-golf course which adjoins Wenonah to a nature park.

### WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

### PROGRAM FOR MAY

Richard Dilks will speak on the current effort to dedicate the former Maple Ridge Golf Course as a nature preserve and/or recreational area for the county.

Rich, a lifelong Wenonah resident, is chairman of the Wenonah Environmental Commission. He is active in the Gloucester County Nature Club and member of the Maple Ridge Preservation Committee

One of the loveliest places in Gloucester County is nestled away on a 112 acre tract just south of Wenonah in Deptford and Mantua Townships. Once site of Tall Pines Golf Course, later known as Ron Jaworski's Eagles' Nest (of

Philadelphia Eagles fame) and finally as Maple Ridge Golf Club. It is a place of gently rolling country-side, meadows, wetlands, and forest patches. The Mantua Creek flows gently through the center of the tract and wildlife abounds there. Many birds make a home there including warblers, a Bald Eagle and a rare albino Red-tailed Hawk. Beautiful trees, both native and exotic, give one the feeling of being in an arboretum. Those walking the paths are struck by the tranquility and natural beauty of this special place.

When Maple Ridge Golf Club closed in December 2006, the land was sold to a developer who had plans approved for 123 homes on the site. A beautiful place was on the verge of being lost forever to commercial development and sprawl. Many were sad to hear that yet another housing development was about to claim a beautiful property, but some good people were motivated to action. A preservation committee, spearheaded by the members of the Wenonah Environmental Commission was formed in January 2008 and an effort to preserve the entire Maple Ridge tract as a county owned nature park was born. In our presentation we will tell why Maple Ridge is special and deserves preservation. Things have begun to happen and we will provide the latest information on the preservation effort.

We will also talk about the mission and projects of the Wenonah Environmental Commission and about the history and natural beauty of our town's special places in our 135 acre conservation area.

Richard Dilks, President

## “A HOTEL, SANDBURRS AND THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY” 1871 - 1872

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

(continued from the April 2008 newsletter)

By 1872 the Company had spent \$25,417.94 in the building and furnishing of Wenonah House, \$200.44 on parks, \$62.37 on roads, \$3,000.60 on grading and \$1,751.53 on advertising. The farmhouses and the mill property were rented for \$744.68. Some of the land not allotted for building lots was farmed for the Company. Although the Mantua Land and Improvement Company was making a profit on its lots, it knew less about agriculture. It lost nine dollars the first year of its farming operations. Also it was noted that “a portion of the land valued at \$260 per acre has been sold for \$650 per acre.”

Dr. George W. Bailey, associated with the Philadelphia real estate brokerage, William T. Bailey Company, built a “cottage” next to the Wenonah House where he was residing during the summer. Across the street from Dr. Bailey’s house, Thomas W. Synnott, nephew of Samuel A. Whitney and prominent in the glass making industry in South Jersey, built a “cottage”. A block up the street on North Clinton Avenue a “cottage” was built by Andrew W. Carey, general manager of the White Dental Manufacturing Company in Philadelphia. These were the first three houses built on the original town plot.

The Fourth of July was celebrated in Wenonah in 1872. A printed program announced that the celebration began at five o’clock in the morning with a thirteen-gun salute. This salute was repeated at noon and at sunset. At five-thirty in the morning there were reveille and roll call. Resuming at eight o’clock after breakfast the flag was raised followed by the Wenonah Silver Cornet Band. The program notes that the flag was a gift of Samuel A. Whitney and the flagpole the gift of George Wood. The remainder of the day was devoted to “general amusement for all, such as croquet, bowling, quoits and the balloon ascensions.” Following fireworks in the evening, refreshments were served in the Wenonah House. The day ended with the singing of Auld Lang Syne and playing of taps. Although modified in format, the celebration has continued to the present.

On September 15, 1872 “the citizens of Wenonah and the guests on the Wenonah House met in Dr. Garrison’s office” for a Sunday School. Twenty adults and twenty-one children arrived the first day with Dr. George W. Bailey as superintendent, Andrew W. Carey as secretary-treasurer and Thomas W. Synnott as librarian. The Minutes of the Presbyterian Sunday School note that “Dr. Bailey was not slow in gathering scholars and arranging classes and in pushing into the work of any and all who had any capacity to act as teachers.” For more adequate facilities the Sunday School soon after moved to the railroad station. Preaching was held at irregular intervals, sometimes in the afternoon following Sunday School. Although the Presbyteries organized the Sunday School, the first sermon preached in Wenonah was by William S. Cattell, a Methodist.

With the influx of guests at the Wenonah House and the Philadelphia commuters who were building “cottages” within the town plot, it cannot be ignored that Wenonah was still a farming community. Surrounding the town plot was land which the Mantua Land and Improvement Company rented for farming. Charles Buckman rented the former Dilks Mill which was now known as the Wenonah Mill and an advertisement notes that he could do “customer work of all kinds with care and despatch at short notice” including “fresh ground wheat and rye flour, corn meal, etc., of all grades.” Benjamin Packard opened a general store.

Newcomers to Wenonah fought sandburrs. Andrew W. Carey wrote that one needs “a good knife blade to shave off the sandburrs before entering a neighbor’s house. The first year on my residence here we had no sidewalks and the sandburrs were so profuse that one was compelled to take the middle of the road to elude the common enemy.”

However, Dr. Bailey reported that “as a community we were of one mind, no friction, each willing to work, no one seeking preferment. We were indeed a happy family”.



## “A CHAPEL, A SCHOOL AND TOMATO CATSUP” 1873 - 1883

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

According to the annual report of the Mantua Land and Improvement Company fifteen residential lots and four business lots had been sold and \$75,000 worth of buildings had been erected by May 8, 1873. During the next ten years fifty “cottages” were built. The new houses bordered the parks, faced the railroad tracks and lined up and down Clinton Avenue and Mantua Avenue. They can be identified by the Mansard roofs, some retaining the original slate, Mansard double doors, campaniles, fish scale shingles at the top of the towers and iron cresting along the rooftops.

Not only were houses built but also a chapel. On September 22, 1873 the Presbyterian Chapel was dedicated and on the same day the First Presbyterian Church of Wenonah was organized. For ten years the Methodists and the Presbyterians worshipped together with the agreement that when there were sufficient Methodists in Wenonah they could form their own congregation. In 1882 the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized and the following year the cornerstone of their church was laid. The silver trowel used for the ceremony is housed in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Children of some of the new residents in Wenonah attended boarding schools in Philadelphia. Other children walked to the Mantua School even though it was not in Deptford Township. However in 1875 parents hired Charles Buckman to drive the school-aged children to the one-room Monongahela School where Sallie Bailey was the teacher. This school was three miles east of Glassboro Road down a lane that passed the former Benjamin Clark brick farm house. The following year Dr. George W. Bailey, district clerk and brother of Sallie Bailey, proposed a school for Wenonah. In a letter to William Milligan, Gloucester County Superintendent of Public Instruction, he outlined a plan. “The school during the months of September and October will meet in a room in a private dwelling. On October 31st we expect to occupy a

part of the Wenonah House. Please send the books and blanks which as I understand the matter are furnished by the state.” Subsequently classes were held in the Howard Building, commonly called Daddy Howard’s Hall and in the winter classes met in the dining room of the hotel. The school budget for the first year was \$605 which included Sallie Bailey’s salary of \$360 and also an allowance for the purchase of a stove to heat the dining room in the Wenonah House.

Two years later Wenonah built a two-storied school on the edge of the town plot just behind the Presbyterian Chapel. By the end of the first year 55 children were registered. The one complaint of the new school is recorded when a neighbor declared the school bell a real nuisance and pleaded it be torn down.

In 1877 a Young Men’s Christian Association was organized by George L. McGill which met in a “cozy room in Daddy Howard’s Hall.” A newspaper commented that the YMCA provided a “comfortable room for the improvement and innocent amusement of the young men of Wenonah.” Books, magazines and games were available for the youth who met four evenings a week.

The Wenonah House dominated the social scene. At first it was opened all year with activities such as a pigeon match followed by a “turtle dinner” which was attended by fifty persons in January 1873. Essentially, however, the Wenonah House was a summer resort hotel. Under various managers including Benjamin Packer, Thomas Clark, Joseph C. Yerkes and Isaac Newton, the hotel season began with a hop in early May followed by a continuous round of activities which kept the town humming until the closing hop in late September. When the resort season ended in Cape May on Labor Day some Philadelphians finished the season at the Wenonah House. A newspaper account stated that those with “weak lungs who cannot stand the heavy salt water air” often preferred the Wenonah House to shore hotels.

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 6 September 2008

### UPDATED WENONAH HISTORY BY MARJORIE LENTZ

I am pleased to announce that our esteemed member/author Marjorie Lentz has spent most of the summer working on the long awaited history update of her book "Wenonah". The original version that was published in 1975 has long been out of print.

Her work consists of additions to the original text as well as new material that was not included in the original version. Should be very interesting and an excellent addition to our fund-raising capability.

### COMMUNITY CENTER GRANT

According to Borough Engineer and grant coordinator David Kreck he has submitted updated plans to the NJ Department of Transportation and hopes to receive approval of that agency yet this month. Once that approval is received funding is assured and bids for the work can be sought, hopefully yet this Fall/Winter. Contracts can then be awarded for work commencing in the Spring of 2009.

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

Progress is being made, albeit more slowly than I would like, however we are somewhat closer to the goal of the "digital museum" completion.

Computer whiz Scott Barnes has been assisting with setting up a new computer program that affords a great deal of flexibility for using digital images. The program permits sorting images into presentations for different interests such as Wenonah's Origins,

Wenonah's Historic Homes, the Wenonah Military Academy, etc.

Julie Ream continues with her necessary and much-valued activity of categorizing and storing the items having Wenonah historical meaning.

Jack Sheppard Sr

### WHS OFFICERS 2008

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Trustee	Vicki McCall

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### SEPTEMBER 1908 WENONAH 100 YEARS AGO

Mayor Lorence gave four boys, who were caught playing crap by Constable Park, a good lecture and told them if he ever caught them again he would fine them \$25.

The Academy opened Tuesday. All the boys have not reported yet, but there will be more than last year. The boys seem very much pleased to get back. That's because demerits haven't commenced.

Notice: I beg to announce to my friends and patients I have opened a branch office for the practice of my profession and am thoroughly equipped for advanced dentistry in all its branches. I have personally administered narcotized air, thirty two thousand times and extracted thousands of diseased teeth without

pain. Chas. H. Lorence DOS (Among his many other talents, he was Mayor of Wenonah)

We hear that Mr. Jorden and Mr. Swartz are going to run for council on the Prohibition ticket.

Our railroad station is well lighted now since the electric company has been cut out and the railroad company is using its own electricity. (This was a problem in the community and gas was still the source of illumination.)

James Carey has just returned from Maine where he has been touring in his 60 horsepower Pierce Arrow car. He had as his guests on the trip Mr. and Mrs. Edward Farr.

Part of the Canoe Club will take their annual Labor Day cruise up the Timber Creek. Mantua Avenue is a fine place to train horses and our people are availing themselves of the opportunity.

The Misses Comey, daughters of Robert H. Comey entertained about twenty five of their young friends at their handsome boat house. Guests were present from Philadelphia, Woodbury and other places and all report a delightful time. The boat house was beautifully decorated and a string orchestra from Philadelphia provided the music for dancing. (The boat house was at the foot of East Willow Street.)

We have no congratulations only regrets for the indifference or willful ignorance of the people of this county of a subject that is vital to them-Temperance.

An Episcopal Church and a bridge across the railroad at Elm Avenue seem to be the next things necessary for a perfect town.

Woodbury Daily Times

## “A CHAPEL, A SCHOOL AND TOMATO CATSUP” 1873 - 1883

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

(continued from the May 2008 newsletter)

*Previously the topic was the Wenonah House that purportedly dominated the social scene. By now the hotel was kept open all year with many interesting activities. However it was still considered to be a summer resort.*

Dinners included such local specialties as reedbirds served on toast and lunches included waffles served with a “dressing of sugar and spices.” Dances included quadrilles, glides and mazurkas. There were maze dances and stair dances. At some dances the women were requested to wear only pink gowns and at a phantom dance they wore white gowns. Orchestras arrived from Philadelphia by train. One account notes that the “company enjoyed themselves without restraint in dancing, promenading, music and conversation until an early morning hour. During intermission terpsichorean exercises were held. Afterwards the company was invited to the dining room where tables were spread with fruit collation, both native and imported.”

However the most talked about entertainments were the amateur theatricals planned sometimes by the hotel staff and sometimes by the guests. Original songs, tableaux, farces with pungent stabs at those in the audience were weekly performances. In one instance the “Philadelphia hotel visitors devised costumes to represent potato bugs which were grotesquely made to promenade and indulge in a comic flirtation. The lampoons evoked peals of laughter especially on one gentleman farmer in the audience who recently purchased a hundred young turnip sprouts for celery sprouts. He gathered his agricultural knowledge in Pennsylvania and only recently has been transplanted into Jersey long enough to represent his district in the Legislature and to serve as chairman of the Committee on Agriculture.” Few guests escaped being caught into a farce.

Other entertainment planned for the hotel guests included a Dime Museum Burlesque complete with barkers, lining skeletons and snake charmers. Often the waiters and bellhops participated in concerts and cakewalks. A Carnival of Venice was staged by the lake with a juju band and pantomimes and at this event the applause was so tremendous that some of

the performers overplayed their roles and fell into the lake.

Private railroad cars for the hotel guests were attached to excursion trains to Atlantic City and upon their return the guests would find the hotel veranda illuminated with Japanese lanterns and a special supper prepared. Guests who traveled the summer resort circuit reported that the festivities at the Wenonah House compared favorably with the best hotels in Cape May and Long Branch.

Some hotel guests brought their teams for the summer season. On one occasion thirty-five turnouts<sup>1</sup> decorated with flags and flowers paraded through Wenonah, Mantua and Woodbury.

Morning card parties, progressive euchre parties, strolls around Wenonah’s lakes, bowling and shuffle board kept the guests busy during the day. In the evenings the men who commuted to their businesses in Philadelphia joined their families at the hotel or at their summer homes. In September when the hotel closed for the season and the commuters closed their summer homes, Wenonah settled down to a slower tempo. However this lasted only a short time because excellent commuter service on the railroad encouraged summer visitors to purchase lots and to become permanent residents. Commutation tickets to Philadelphia were fifty dollars a year.

Much pride centered around the railroad station. Flower beds 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.

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<sup>1</sup>An outfit of a carriage with its horse or horses

Locomotive SPARKS started frequent brush fires, track walkers were killed by on-coming trains and passengers were discouraged from standing on the platform as the trains approached. With the railroad came a deluge of tramps who were blamed for stealing everything from watermelons to trousers from nearby 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 Phila. 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.

Although Philadelphians filled the forty rooms in the Wenonah House, built big houses around the square, spent their evenings driving their teams along the avenues and promenading on the hotel verandas and the parks in front of the hotel, Wenonah was still bordered by farm land. Farmers exhibited prize vegetables at the stores and delivered fresh farm products to the door. Because of the abundant supply of farm products a cannery was established. Located along the Mantua Creek on the northern side of West Mantua Avenue, the cannery occupied a building formerly used by Daniel Brown for a sash factory. Hayes Perry, Chalkley Duell and John Colbert began operations in 1880. However Colbert shortly withdrew to begin his own cannery across the creek. In the first year of operation 50,000 cans of tomatoes were processed and two years later they increased their production to 200,000 cans hiring about one hundred workers. The cannery processed not only tomatoes and catsup, but when the tomato season ended it canned pumpkins and during later years asparagus which was sealed in glass jars.

Other businesses followed. William W. Clark opened the Wenonah Coal Yard<sup>2</sup>, Carre's gardens sold flowers and plants<sup>3</sup>, B.F. Coles opened a general store<sup>4</sup> and Mrs. Lashley had a boarding house<sup>5</sup>.

The new residents from Philadelphia and the farmers who rented land from the Mantua Land and Improvement Company were congenial neighbors. The dances and the amateur entertainments at the Wenonah House were opened to all. A newspaper account notes that "to the Wenonah House guests, the neighboring farmers' dairies are never bolted or melon patches or orchards barred, while the novelty of these summer excursions among the farmers in the height of their work are reciprocally enjoyed."

On the Fourth of July the entire community joined together to celebrate. A new event introduced during this period was the tub race. Contestants paddled tubs with their hands to a stake in the lake and then raced back to shore. The event was boisterous, upsets were expected and the races became so vigorous that complicated rules were enforced by the judges. No ballast was permitted, no water splashed into the tub could be removed until the tub capsized and no assistance could be given "unless the contestant is in dire danger." One account notes that "the staid professionals, thriving merchants and brawny business men engaged in the sport."

During the decade of 1873 to 1883 as the town grew, Thomas W. Synnott continued to receive patents on his inventions in the manufacturing of glass bottles. The Wenonah Advance, a newspaper was published by Milton Pierce and a ferry boat named Wenonah plied across the Delaware River.

Also the Mantua Land and Improvement Company made detailed plans to dam the Mantua Creek along the southern border of Wenonah to create a lake. Drawings, cost of securing necessary land bordering the creek and all details are preserved. However the lake was not created because of the limited height of the railroad bridge.

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<sup>2</sup>In area of South West Ave. And Cherry St.

<sup>3</sup>In area of 205 South Princeton Ave.

<sup>4</sup>3 East Mantua Ave.

<sup>5</sup>1 East Mantua Ave.

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 7 October 2008

OCTOBER 1908  
WENONAH 100 YEARS AGO

Halloween parties will be numerous in this town.

According to the evidence already obtained in the poker gang, there seems to be a baker's dozen and when His Honor brings down the whip of justice there will be some squirming.

Application soon will be made to have gas lamps placed in the new section of Wenonah.

Charles Hopson will move into his new house about November 1st. (100 North West Avenue)

Contractor Brown expects to complete the new firehouse this week. It is quite a building and will be a credit to the borough.

Thomas Wentz has picked over 1700 baskets of pears this fall. He has over a thousand baskets on hand yet, which he will market soon as they yellow up. (His farm was north of Linden Avenue, west of Jericho.)

A girl wishes a position in Wenonah as a child's nurse or as a chambermaid or waitress. Call Bell phone 112-L

The Military Academy has sent invitations out for a big military hop to be given Halloween.

The hinges on the door of our "jug" have not had time to rust the past week. There was much comment over the gent that was arrested at 3:00 o'clock yesterday morning and kept in the jug until one o'clock that some of the citizens furnished him with victuals and cigars and are thinking of asking borough council to put a couch and carpet in the jug.

Rev. R. H. Gage preached one of the best temperance sermons ever heard in the new church.

When some little life is sacrificed probably means will be found to stop the fearful rate at which autos speed along the streets of this borough.

Mayor Lorence is making an effort to have the 8:05 morning north bound express stop here, as since the 8:19 has been taken off there is no other train until 8:34, which makes it late when the passengers arrive in Philadelphia.

### WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of each month at the Community Center except June, July & August

One of Dan Mumford's mules became tangled up in the harness here yesterday and in trying to free itself was severely cut.

The citizens meeting for the arrangement of the election night entertainment will be quite successful and a pleasing entertainment will be given. For men only. The ladies will have to prepare an entertainment for themselves that evening. (They were lucky National Organization for Women didn't exist at that time.)

We received the following this morning, and evidently from one of

the scholars of the public school, who rejoices in the fact that his or her teacher failed to get out of the school house before the janitor locked up the building. "One of the school teachers was locked in the building last night and had to jump out the window. It was a good jump, don't you think. It was more than I would like to do. I bet she will go out sooner the next time, don't you."

Going to Woodbury tomorrow night to see the Boston Bloomers Girls' basketball team play the Woodbury team? Better go; as it is an opportunity which you will never, get again to see the only girls' team in the United States that plays against men. The girls also give fencing exhibitions.

Officer Drummer found two men loitering around town early yesterday morning and as they could not give a good account of themselves he took them to Woodbury and locked them up. They were afterward discharged.

Rev. R. H. Gage and wife had a large reception Monday evening for the congregation of the Presbyterian Church. It was a very large affair. Some of the ladies gowns were imported from Paris for the affair.

Some of the Wenonah Athletic Club who profess themselves to be the best players of Wenonah forget they had to use two pitchers in order to defeat the Methodist team last Saturday. Their first pitcher lasted only six innings for he was knocked all over the field.

*Woodbury Daily Times*  
October 1908

## “A BOROUGH COMMISSION, A FIRE HOSE CARRIAGE AND A FISH FARM” 1873 - 1883

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

(continued from the September 2008 newsletter)

*Previously the topic was Wenonah’s churches, the start of its schools, and the fact that much of the activity in the town centered around the hotel and the railroad. The next chapter is entitled “A Borough Commission, a Fire Hose Carriage and a Fish Farm.”*

When Wenonah had grown to fifty “cottages” and a population of three hundred, the voters chose to be incorporated as a Borough Commission on March 8, 1883. The seven elected commissioners were Dr. George W. Bailey, President who served as secretary-treasurer of the Mantua Land & Improvement Company, Isaac C. Stevenson, treasurer and a director of the Company, and Thomas W. Synnott, a director of the Company. Also elected were Andrew W. Carey, M.H. Perry, J. Frank Shull and Cunningham B. Johnston.

The first item of business as a Borough Commission was the receiving from the Mantua Land and Improvement Company the deed to two squares of parks which faced the Wenonah House. The first purchase was two fire ladders which were stored in the School basement along with twenty-two fire buckets, the trustees of the Wenonah School having granted permission to use one cellar window and one side of the cellar for storage. The first resolution passed by the Borough Commission was one urging property owners to repair their sidewalks. The original wooden sidewalks were being replaced by flagstone walks.

Although the Mantua Land and Improvement Company had laid out streets, planted shade trees, built a hotel, sold lots and houses, a newspaper noted that since the Borough had been incorporated “the spirit of improvement has taken on a strong grip upon the residents and gratifying proofs of it will soon be witnessed.”

Immediately the Borough Commission installed twelve lamps on the streets and William Vogt was hired as a lamplighter at a salary of six dollars a month. As an economy move the lamplighter was cautioned not to permit the lamps to burn too late in the mornings. Poles were erected to connect the Wenonah House to Glassboro Road for telephone service and a post office was placed in the railroad

station with Sallie Ballinger as postmistress.

H. Haynes Perry was appointed Wenonah’s first policeman in 1886. After serving four years with no salary, the Borough Commission granted him an annual salary of twelve dollars. In 1893 a pair of handcuffs was secured for the policeman and his salary was increased to twenty-four dollars a year.

In order that the town be “built up with a creditable class of dwellings,” a resolution was passed by the Borough Commission that “no dwelling should be erected east of the railroad at a less cost than two thousand dollars and that no dwelling should be erected west of the railroad at a less cost than one thousand dollars.” In later years in good humor the eastern section of town was referred to as the silk stocking side and the western section as the cotton stocking side.

The Borough Commission was faced with a myriad of problems. Should dogs be muzzled? What should be done with the farmer’s chickens roving the streets? Should hogs be slaughtered in town? What should be done with the resident who buried his horse in his backyard? How can burglaries be prevented? Should stores be closed early in the evening to discourage loafing? What should be done with the boys who remove the burrs from the wheels of the carriages hitched in front of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Sunday evenings? Should housewives give handouts to gypsies and tramps? And should the farmers unload manure in the middle of Wenonah?

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 unloading of manure in the center of town was declared a nuisance by the commuters and the railroad was requested to build a siding near the 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 mill pond, 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 purchasing the farmers' tomatoes and one progressive farmer succeeded in raising very large potatoes by using chemical fertilizer.

With the increased passenger service on the West Jersey Railroad, a new station was built in 1893 of Pompeian bricks to "harmonize with general improvements and surroundings of the Borough." Also the freight house was enlarged and James Darlington was appointed the gatekeeper.

The Wenonah Water Company was organized in 1885 with Stephen Greene as President, Thomas W. Synnott as Vice-President, Dr. George W. Bailey as secretary-treasurer, Blair Smith, Daniel Brown and J. Frank Shull. Galvanized pipes were laid, a Dover well bored and the first experimental fire hydrant placed at the corner of East Mantua Avenue and North Clinton Avenue, commonly known as Shull's Corner. Two years later twenty-three acres, including the mill property and the two adjoining lakes were purchased, a fourteen-foot wheel as well as a steam pump were installed. As need for water increased, the Wenonah Water Company erected a one hundred foot standpipe, bored five artesian wells and built a steam engine house on the south side of the dam. While digging the foundation for the engine house a vein of marl was uncovered and circular oyster shells measuring a foot across were unearthed.

Concerned with the "decorating and otherwise improving the parks," the Wenonah Park Association was formed in 1886 under the leadership of Stephen Greene, Thomas W. Synnott, Dr. George W. Bailey, Edward L. Farr, Andrew J. Carey and others. The Association's first act was the closing of Park Avenue as a driveway from South Clinton Avenue to the railroad tracks which had created two parks in front of the Wenonah House. There was now one park. Three hundred shade trees were placed along newly surveyed streets and land was cleared on Camel's Back<sup>1</sup> bordering Camel's Back Run, a popular picnic area in the woods on the eastern edge of Wenonah. Picnics were organized "to bring all the people together" in Wenonah and also wagon loads of picnickers came as far as Richwood and Clarksboro for church outings.

Several years prior when the barn at the Wenonah House burned and consideration was given to calling for assistance from as far away as Camden, the community realized the need for fire equipment. The Wenonah Hose Company, NO. 1 was organized in 1888 with E.R. Winship as President and chief engineer. Other officers included Charles Wilkins, Lewis Buzby and Blair Smith. To test their new fire hose carriage, called Mareshanks, a fire was ignited in a pile of barrels on the outskirts of Wenonah and within nine minutes after the alarm was sounded the new hose carriage was at the scene and the fire extinguished. The equipment was housed in the new barn of the Wenonah House and later transferred to Synnott's ice house. For several years the firemen possessed keys to the Methodist Episcopal Church in order to use the church bell for a fire alarm.

A lawn tennis club and baseball team were organized. One baseball game was played against a Philadelphia deaf mute team. In the Mantua Creek boys caught pike weighing three and a half pounds, terrapins, herring and at night they fished for eels. Rail birds were shot in the marshes and in the spring young people hunted for trailing arbutus in the woods.

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<sup>1</sup>In woods bordering South Stockton Ave.

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 8 November 2008

NOVEMBER 1908  
WENONAH 100 YEARS AGO

Mr. Oscar Ogden, Thomas Ritson and Clement Mattson have purchased handsome Waltham-Orient touring cars from H.D. Leap who represents the Waltham Manufacturing Company in this area.

All Saints Episcopal Mission. Service in Noblitt's Hall tomorrow at 10:45 a.m. All welcome.

The town was very lively yesterday. Every train bringing a load of visitors and the beautiful weather kept them on the streets enjoying the air.

The woods were full of gunners here yesterday, but the bags were rather small. Whether due to unskillful marksmanship or lack of rabbits is hard to tell.

Captain Persey is no longer a member of the Campers Union at the Wenonah Military Academy. The union was organized for the special benefit of the bachelors of the academy and lost a very active member when he quietly married Miss Ratcliffe of Camden.

A family passing through town on the way to their Thanksgiving dinner met with an accident on Marion Avenue. The horse they were driving fell and broke a leg and had to be shot.

The epidemic of colds, which almost put a number of cadets in bed, has almost subsided and all were able to eat turkey today.

The Ladies Aid of the M.E. Church particularly requests that you defer buying your Christmas gifts till you come to their supper and bazaar next Tuesday. Beautiful articles, useful and ornamental will be on sale. A table of dressed dolls, at very reasonable prices, presided over by Miss Jessie Baylies' class of little girls will be one of the features. Mrs. Cline's class of young ladies will have a Christmas tree covered with gifts. Ice cream will be on sale, also cakes, bread and pie.

### WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

A travelling Uncle Tom's Cabin Company will entertain our people tonight at Noblitt's Hall.

The public school building has been connected to the sewerage system and sanitary conditions will be much improved.

John L Drummer was elected constable over Thomas J. Savage, who was on both tickets by a 61 vote majority.

There is considerable discussion as to what use the room over the

new fire house should be put other than regular meetings of the Fire Company. There seems to be a desire on the part of some to use it as a smoking room and a place to play cards. Of course there will be no gambling under the new administration.

A ballot was taken this morning at the Academy on the Presidential candidates and the results are as follows. Taft 38, Chafin 3, Bryan 6.

Fine Black Sateen Petticoats \$1.00 Outing Flannel 25 and 50 cents Gingham 25, 50 and 75 cents try a pair of our ladies 25 cent stockings. H. E. Wood 185 So. Broad Street Woodbury.

The painting of the Methodist Church is about to be done and it will be a decided improvement.

A Republican landslide. Taft sweeps the country in the great contest for the nation's next executive. Gloucester County gives Taft 1610 plurality and elects entire county ticket. (Wenonah's vote Taft 138 Bryan 18)

The young ladies of the Embroidery Club which meet at the home of Miss Clara Turner Saturday afternoon proposes to fill a bride's chest for the first member married.

With the streets well scattered with masqueraders and the Academy dance in full swing Saturday evening, Wenonah was quite lively for once.

*Woodbury Daily Times*  
November 1908



## “A BOROUGH COMMISSION, A FIRE HOSE CARRIAGE AND A FISH FARM” 1883 - 1896

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

(continued from the October 2008 newsletter)

*Continuing with the chapter entitled “A Borough Commission, a Fire Hose Carriage and a Fish Farm describing the growth and activities in Wenonah during the waning years of the nineteenth century.*

“To furnish pleasure in the community in the line of outdoor sports” the Wenonah Field Club was started in 1890. The Club used Stephen Greene’s athletic park<sup>1</sup> which was completely enclosed by a high board fence and included a grandstand where he held his private horse shows. A bicycle track, baseball diamond and tennis courts were built and under the grandstand a “commodious room” was built for “storing the wheels of those who ride to the grounds to witness the baseball games.” Sixty-five persons signed for membership at the organizational meeting. Opened to everyone the membership had a sliding scale, an active member holding voting power and paying five dollars annually, an associate member entitled to a voice but no vote and paying \$2.50 a year and an honorary member paying \$1.50.

Wenonah had an organization for everyone. The Wenonah Assembly scheduled hops in the hotel. The Wenonah Singing Class met for regular weekly rehearsals. The Progressive Euchre Club met in the hotel, the Wenonah Outing Club had straw rides and the Wenonah Cycle club ran bicycle trips to Vineland. The Wenonah Branch of the Needlework Guild sewed three hundred garments a year and the Wenonah branch of the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Wenonah Women’s Christian Temperance Union all had activities. A Republican Club was organized as well as a Masonic “club,” the Citizen’s League protested against the evils of the race track and the Lodge of Junior Order of United American Mechanics had a fife and drum corps. The Chautauqua Circle planned free lectures and entertainments ranging from ventriloquists to elocutions, from sciopic views to lectures on physical education.

The Wenonah House was sold in 1883 by the Mantua Land and Improvement Company for \$12,000. During the first years of private ownership,

a newspaper account noted that “comparatively few boarders at the Wenonah House this summer, though why, it is difficult to explain as the town never looked prettier and the Wenonah House never so well conducted.” In 1884 it was sold again this time at auction to General William Sewell for \$6,500 including all the furniture. The following week the newspaper reported that “now that the sale has been made” the people “are cracking their heads because they weren’t on hand to bid. It is said to be the best furnished hotel in South Jersey.”

Immediately Gen. Sewell made improvements. The hotel received a new roof, interior decoration, steam boiler and pump. Again the hotel was opened and filled to capacity. However the Wenonah House soon closed and an account states that the “Wenonah House is of no advantage either to its owner or to the Borough. Every friend of Wenonah has had a feeling of regret that the Borough should be obliged to look at this closed house.”

In 1892 Stephen Greene, Dr. George W. Bailey and Thomas Synnott formed the Wenonah Hotel Company. The hotel was purchased and a tremendous remodeling program was commenced. An annex of 75 rooms was added, the exterior remodeled and a separate building was erected for billiard and pool tables, shuffle board and ten pin alleys. Servants quarters<sup>2</sup> were built in back of the hotel, an ice house was built for summer storage and a sewage system was installed. In May 1894 the hotel was reopened but it was no longer the Wenonah House. It was now the Wenonah In and it again resumed its whirl of concerts, hops, nightly entertainments and daily parade of turnouts.

With the increased population in Wenonah the school had outgrown its capacity and in 1894 a stone school was opened in the section of Wenonah popularly called Sand Town. The original school building was purchased by Joseph Noblitz and it was known as Noblitz Hall where the Wenonah Hall Association produced entertainments, elections were held and any one could present a musical program, an oyster supper, a dance or a lecture for a rental fee.

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<sup>1</sup>Jessica Wood Langston athletic field, East Cedar Street

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<sup>2</sup>Site of 106 E. Mantua Ave.

Mrs. Andrew Carey and Mrs. Edward Farr were the first women in Wenonah to be elected as school trustees and Wenonah was the second school district in Gloucester County to elect women to this post.

The Mantua Land and Improvement Company continued to sell its lots and at one public sale held in the park, 116 lots were sold in one day. Also the Company sold houses it constructed, graded the streets and covered them with gravel and made extensive improvements on the Old Stone Farm house which it subsequently sold to W.J. Ladell. Among the builders who purchased lots and built houses for resale were Daniel Brown, Horatio J. Mulford, Stephen Greene, a. McFarland and Thomas W. Synnott. Double cottages were built facing the railroad tracks and a row of houses on West Willow Street was named Brown Town for the builder. Some builders used the identical plans on various lots and they can be identified throughout Wenonah.

On the eastern edge of town Thomas W. Synnott built a stone house<sup>3</sup>. His barn, greenhouses and caretaker's house covered a large acreage extending to Glassboro Road. Bordering East Mantua Avenue was Synnott's Pond. On the southeastern edge of Wenonah Stephen Greene built his home. His dwelling<sup>4</sup>, the dwelling of John Truncer<sup>5</sup>, his caretaker, the coachman's dwelling<sup>6</sup>, the laundry and living quarters for the cook and laundress<sup>7</sup>, occupied a block long complex. Remaining also are a gazebo from his Dutch garden, a peacock house and a brick wall<sup>8</sup> mortared with flecks of oyster shells which bordered his peacock run. Also Greene developed Marion Avenue at his own expense, lined the neighboring streets with pine trees, built a dam at the foot of Marion Avenue and developed a lake named lake Cornelia<sup>9</sup> for Cornelia Truncer. A two-

storied boathouse and a Japanese-designed bridge were built along the lake front. Arbored walks from his rose gardens<sup>10</sup> led to a glen known as the Hermitage. A Japanese gardener cared for the gardens which included a greenhouse for the growing of carnations<sup>11</sup>.

Residents had pride in their well-cared lawns. Iron fences surrounded property lines, stone walks were laid and nearly all the houses were illuminated.

In the 1890's a monthly newspaper, the Wenonah News, was published by E. Richmond of Philadelphia and William C. Cattell, real estate agents. Articles noted that swings were needed by the Wenonah Park Association for Camel's Back where the Fourth of July was being celebrated, a bridge was needed across the railroad tracks at Elm Street, and an observance was needed for Memorial Day. And, of course, there were advertisements for the sale of lots and houses in Wenonah which was described as the "Germantown of West Jersey, the model home town" with "pure spring water, conveniences, hot and cold water, best schools, established churches and seventeen trains for the city and sixteen trains from the city, and no saloons." The advertisement added that it is "just the place for you and better still for your children."

Businesses increased in Wenonah. Joseph Warner who had a milk, ice and ice cream route, moved into the former Miller's house and the lake became known as Warner's Lake. Sylvester H. Chew and James Chew had a livery stable and coal yard<sup>12</sup>, R.J. Clark and later S.D. Fisler had a general store<sup>13</sup>, James Baylies also sold groceries as well as hay<sup>14</sup> and Jesse English had a general store as well as serving as postmaster<sup>15</sup>. George Poor built an aviary<sup>16</sup> and raised carrier pigeons.

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<sup>3</sup>202 East Mantua Ave.

<sup>4</sup>201 and 203 South Clinton Ave. And also a wing destroyed by fire

<sup>5</sup>204 South Marion Ave.

<sup>6</sup>106 East Willow Street

<sup>7</sup>Rear of 201 South Clinton Ave.

<sup>8</sup>207 South Clinton Ave.

<sup>9</sup>Site of west side of dam on South Marion Ave.

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<sup>10</sup>208 South Marion Ave.

<sup>11</sup>100 East Cedar Street

<sup>12</sup>Site of 6 West Mantua Ave.

<sup>13</sup>3 East Mantua Ave.

<sup>14</sup>Site of 2 West Mantua Ave.

<sup>15</sup>1 East Mantua Ave.

<sup>16</sup>On site at rear of 205 South Marion Ave.

## Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 9 December 2008

### U.S. PRESIDENTS AND WENONAH

With Presidential politics dominating the headlines in recent months, I thought it would be interesting to review the history of U.S. Presidents in Wenonah. In 1910 then Governor of New Jersey, Dr. Woodrow Wilson, attended chapel services at the Wenonah Military Academy and delivered an address to cadets. In 1912 he was elected President. In May 1912, former President Theodore Roosevelt was running for President and made several campaign stops in the area, including Wenonah. He delivered an address in the park. According to deceased local historians Milton Webb and Victor Anderson, Roosevelt slept at the Scargel residence at 109 S. Clinton Avenue. I am not aware of any documentation to substantiate these reports. But if any of you are or if any of you have additional information about these visits, we would love to hear about it.

### BACKGROUND ON 1912 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

For you to appreciate the articles that follow, I thought it would be helpful to present a brief background on the 1912 election. According to PBS, the 1912 Presidential election was one of the most extraordinary stories in our country's political history. The choices facing voters was more diverse than at any other time in the 20th century. Four major candidates were running for President

each with their own specific plan for tackling the nation's problems. Incumbent President William Howard Taft was re-nominated by the Republican party with the support of the conservative wing of the party. After former President Theodore Roosevelt failed to get the Republican nomination, he called his own convention and created a new Progressive Party (nicknamed the

#### WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

"Bull Moose Party"). Woodrow Wilson was the Democratic nominee and Eugene Debbs was the Socialist Party candidate.

Brenda Birkland

WOODBURY DAILY TIMES  
MAY 24, 1912

Col. Roosevelt will be here tomorrow evening about 6 o'clock. The meeting will be held in the park if the weather is fair; should it be stormy it will be held in the drill hall of the Academy. Let everybody turn out and greet the Colonel.

### COL. ROOSEVELT'S BIG RECEPTION WOODBURY DAILY TIMES MAY 25, 1912

Ex-President Warmly Greeted All Along the Line

Col. Roosevelt arrived in Woodbury last evening at 6:30, about fifteen minutes late. He found a crowd of people estimated from 2500 to 5000, who hailed him with a mighty cheer. After the Moose Band had finished playing "Gee But It's Great to Meet a Friend From Your Old Town," the Colonel stood up in his automobile which had stopped in front of the monument and talked for ten minutes. Then he stepped from his automobile into Dr. H. H. Clark's, accompanied by Adon W. Cattell, and they whisked up Broad to Newton avenue, to Euclid, to Cooper, to Broad, down Broad to Glassboro avenue, and down Glassboro avenue to his private car, which immediately pulled out for Camden. It was then 6:45 and the Col. Said that he had to take a bath, eat his supper and be shaved, all by 7:30, when he spoke at the Camden Armory.

The Col. met with a great reception all along the line. He was twenty minutes late in arriving at Glassboro, and his time was so closely scheduled that he could not make it up.

A large crowd greeted him at Glassboro, Pitman, Barnsboro, Wenonah. Flags were displayed at all these places, and at farm houses

along the road. At one farm house a woman was seen holding two small children in her arms and at the same time waving a small flag. The Colonel noticed the woman with her babies and doffed his hat.

The Colonel was accompanied by Hon. John Boyd Avis, Custodian Adon W. Cattell, Dr. H. H. Clark, Former Governors Stokes and Forr, Frank B. Jess, L. L. Hurley, Dr. Hires, Dr. Black and others. During the part of the trip from Glassboro there were seventy automobiles in line. He rode in C A. Hilyard’s new six cylinder Everett car from Glassboro to Woodbury.

The Colonel was more than pleased with his reception here. Our people decorated their houses with flags and bunting.

SPEECH BY GOVERNOR WILSON  
TO THE CADETS OF THE  
WENONAH MILITARY ACADEMY  
OCTOBER 6, 1910

His speech in front of the Court House follows:

“My friends, it is indeed a pleasure to be here be here and see you. I have thoroughly enjoyed myself in New Jersey these two days. I appreciate your feeling and the interest you have given me, and now friends, I feel that I have a peculiar right to appeal to you in this contest if we are to stand by our rights. We are asking only that you yourselves shall see that you have the power and the will to rule yourself: to control you own government. (Indicating) you, you, you and I. There has never been such a springing up of the plain people against the bosses. (The Colonel’s attention is called by ladies on the upper floors of the Merritt Block asking him to face toward them. He turned and waving to them said, “You will hear me in a moment. You shall have a square deal.” I ask you I am only asking for only the right, and claim for ourselves, that we wish to rule ourselves. Each of us wishes to rule himself. You do, I do. I know that I make mistakes, but I want to make them myself. I do not want others to make them for me. So, we have a right to appeal our cause. History shows us that all of the American people have in some time made mistakes in its government. We still make them. The only way we can get real justice is to have the rule of the people and not the rule of the

bosses.” (Stepping into the other auto the Colonel continued) Now friends, I ask in this contest that the people of New Jersey show themselves awake to the issues of the fight as they have in every state where there has been direct primaries and there the people have shown themselves, from Maine to California, wherever we could get a chance against our foes there the people have and can win. I would not be in New Jersey if they did not have the primaries. I did not go into Connecticut because the plain people did not have a chance. I cannot do anything with the politician but I have made my plea straight to the people of New

WENONAH NEWS  
WOODBURY DAILY TIMES  
May 25, 1912

Jersey for you to get in this line-up between the people and the bosses; between the Abraham Lincoln plain people and the powers that be. I ask that you, on Tuesday next put New Jersey beside Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania and Ohio.

About three hundred people greeted Col. Roosevelt here last evening. He was given a rousing reception. One man did not seem to enjoy it as he was seen going home with his family.

“I wish it were possible” said Mr. Wilson “to impress upon fellows at your age the great importance of what you are doing here. I suppose, as most boys do, that school is a necessary evil and few realize it is to equip them for a better battle of life. The men who loaf don’t get anywhere, don’t amount to any thing; it is only the men who achieve who get anywhere.

“It is a question for you to answer whether you are going to be mere tools in the hands of someone else or are going to be masters and take hold of things. Don’t be foolish enough to ask what the sense of this is. You go to the gymnasium and wonder what the use of it all is. You will never perform on the parallel-bars with your business partner. You are expending good muscular strength and wonder what the use of it all is. You are just getting your muscles in shape to answer the call when the time comes for you to use them.

It is just like the piece of structural steel fitted in all its fibers to meet the strain in the steamship when the stress of storm of the Atlantic comes. It is just so with

your books. They are getting you men fully fit when the contingency arises and you are called upon to wrestle with the problems of life; you are mentally fit to meet the stress. Don't lose sight of the fact that you want to play a creditable part in the world to do something in its great work.

"A school like this is a breeding place for men. Some one said, "If you would consider me witty, I must ask you to make a joke. If you would be considered educated, I must ask you to know something. The witty man who preceded me as head of the university (Princeton) once told an anxious mother whose son was about to begin the course: "Madam, we guarantee satisfaction or return the boy". Most men I know, after their years of experience, would like to go back and be schoolboys again and gain the greater profit from the advantages then obtained. Take the advice of one who knows, who has been through it, and lay hold of all that you can here obtain for the building of your bodies and minds, that you may be useful citizens in this great land.

Woodbury Daily Times  
Letter to the Editor  
May 24, 1912

Dear Sir – There are times in the life of every man, whether he be rich or poor, that he should take time and thought enough to thoroughly resolve in his own mind, to cast the ballot for what he thinks the best candidate who will represent the people regardless of politicians who enter into politics so often for their own benefit.

At the present time, we are confronted with our President and Ex-President, touring the country, telling the people of each others short-comings, in which we, the people, are not interested, but what we are interested in is having a God fearing man s President our United Country – one that gives his very best talents and who is guided by the Supreme Power above in all of his official actions.

In my opinion, we have such a man in the Presidential chair, in our President, Wm. H. Taft, who unfortunately has been driven to make answer to the attacks of the Ex-President in his speeches throughout the states.

I shall just say this much as to Theodore Roosevelt. In my humble opinion, Roosevelt of today is not the Roosevelt who succeeded our beloved Ex-President, Wm. B. McKinley. From his present actions and expressions, he seems to want to make it appear that he is the only man in the United States fit to become President, and that "I am the Saviour of the Country." From his actions and remarks one might think that he feels like the remark credited to the present Emperor of German – "Me and God."

Now just the reverse of this is what we, the people want, and as one of the people, and a Republican, because I believe in the principles, I feel it my duty to vote for Wm. Taft, as President of the United States for four years more, so that the experience that he has had in the past may be a help to him to correct any mistakes in the future, if any have been made.

He like ourselves is mortal and cannot please all.

I hear so much of our President conferring with such men as Senator Penrose, of Pennsylvania. Do they forget the same Senators are not there to represent the people, but the Legislators, a chosen few selected and sent to the Legislative bodies by political leaders or bosses, who control these men for their own gain and influence.

The time is ripe for the people to use their own good judgment, and have the U.S. Senators elected by the people who would be guided by the majority of the citizens of the sections of the country which he represents.

This would bring the President of the United States in closer touch with the people, through the Senator, whom they elect to represent them.

Look at the Grand Old Man, Major of Philadelphia, Rudolph Blankenburg, standing like a rock, doing what is right for the best interests of the whole people, regardless of politicians.

The people arose in their might and threw off the yoke with which they had been girdles so long and elected the right man in the right place.

Go thou and do likewise.

RICHARD C. BALLINGER,  
Wenonah, NJ