

# Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 2 February 2009

A MESSAGE FROM  
PRESIDENT BARB CAPELLI

Dear Members;

We are looking forward to seeing all of you this next meeting to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. This Friday's meeting is sure to be a HUGE crowd pleaser with our guest speaker Frank Colburn.

So much has been written on our 44<sup>th</sup> president and in his honor, this recent Inauguration of President Obama, the President used Abraham Lincoln's bible as he was sworn into office...twice!!

Even during this current time of economic woes and foreign wars, in a message to Congress in December of 1862, President Lincoln was quoted, "The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the storm present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

How similar are the times?? We celebrate this 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday with our local Lincoln Historian, Frank Colburn and welcome all of you and your guests this week. Frank is the former curator and director of the museum at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrowgate, TN. He was most inspired by the great man's writing on the promise of the Declaration of Independence, which Lincoln felt granted all men the "right to rise" to their full potential, regardless of their origins.

Please join us this Valentines weekend, bring your friends --Vicki and I are in charge of the snacks and

beverages so no dieting this weekend!!

MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER  
AND EMAIL OPTION

As many of you may know, our membership dues run from January to January. Please either mail your dues using the attached form or bring the form and payment to the next meeting. In an effort to save money, we are providing the option of receiving the newsletter by email. If only half of you participate, we can save nearly \$500 a year! Circle either yes or no on the form about receiving the newsletter by email. You may also email me at [sbbirkland@verizon.net](mailto:sbbirkland@verizon.net) to let me know your preference. We realize some of you may not have email or do not wish to participate. We will still send the newsletter to you by U.S. mail. We are also interested in knowing your email for special announcements and reminders.

WHS OFFICERS 2009

President	Barbara Capelli
Vice Pres.	Brenda Birkland
Secretary	Vicki McCall
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

FOUNDERS' DAY CELEBRATION  
SATURDAY APRIL 18, 2009

Building upon the success of the first Founders' Day, a borough wide committee has chosen the theme "Celebrating the Train Station." The date was moved to April this year to coincide with the original Founders' Day in April as noted on your borough calendar. You may contact either Stephanie Berenato at 464-8686 or Brenda Birkland at 609-504-6917 if you are interested in helping. Rain date is Sunday, April 19.

TRAIN STATION REHABILITATION

According to Borough Engineer Dave Kreck, an informational meeting for prospective bidders will be held on February 10 at 2:00 p.m. at Borough Hall. Bids will be received February 20. An award could be made as early as February 26 and work could start in April.

RECALLING CHILDHOOD DAYS  
IN WENONAH

Have you ever found a treasure while yard selling in town? Several years ago, I was at a yard sale and purchased a book. I later found inside the book an old newspaper article entitled "Former Resident of Wenonah Recalls Childhood Days of 1890s." Although I have shared some of the article with you before, I wanted to reprint it here in its entirety. I also recently obtained a document written by the late Milton Webb that describes his childhood memories of Wenonah from 1938-1944. I thought it would fun to read these two articles together. Milton's piece will be continued next month.

Brenda Birkland

To the Editor:

It was a nice little village, bearing an Indian name "Wenonah"; a quiet, safe country town, ideal for bringing up children.

I was born in Philadelphia in 1885, but my first recollection of being alive would be 1890 in Wenonah where both my sisters were born. There was ravine called "The Glen" in that part of the town then known as Frogtown. The glen was a shady, cool place, containing a spring with good pure, clear water. The outflow from the spring had been dammed up to form a very small pond in which I remember seeing catfish, probably placed there by some neighborhood men for future use in a frying pan. Many a drink we boys enjoyed from that spring, returning home from swimming in the railroad culvert, the outlet from upper lakes.

The house nearest the glen was occupied by a crippled Civil War veteran named Jennings and our generous government at that time probably gave him \$8-\$10 per month pension. I remember hearing some of his war experiences as he told them to my father.

Over Mantua Creek was an old wooden bridge, a spot that appealed to smaller boys as we climbed over the framework or maybe fished in the creek, which at that time was a fairly good sized stream. On the Wenonah side of

the creek there stood a canning factory for a few years, which eventually went out of business and to ruin. A short walk down from the factory was a sandy spot in the creek, this being the place where younger boys learned to swim, as the water was never over our shoulders and as we learned, we graduated to Warner's Pond. Didn't need school taxes for pools to teach boys how to keep their heads above water in those days. Of course, we went in skinny – not exactly Atlantic City style of that period.

During the early nineties, from Mantua Pike, then a toll road to the W.J.R.R., the creek was bordered with woods, making a pleasant place to roam during summer school vacations. There are two lakes, upper and lower. The lower lake was called "Warner's Pond. The upper lake served the borough for its water supply, pumped by a small engine used in a kind of shanty. The water was pumped to a wooden tank which stood on stilts, situated where the present standpipe is now located, I guess, as I haven't been there for 70 years. The old tank leaked and ferns and grasses grew under it.

The lower lake, as I first remember it, had an icehouse, which was filled each winter with ice, packed in sawdust, for summer months. Also there was an old broken down grist mill and I really believe if someone would

dig down in the sand they would find the old grinding stones covered at the time the lake's outlet was moved to its present site, at the time the new pumping station was installed rising artesian water. Of course, we boys had to supervise both the building of the standpipe and the pumping station, which was quite an event.

I first went to school in what was Noblitt's Hall. The next year our new school was ready for occupancy. Teachers were Miss Bugbee, Miss Taylor and Mrs. Talman, all wonderful teachers and strict disciplinarians – and you present kids need not think they were not.

Let's not overlook Clark's store. Mr. Clark was there in 1890 and I don't know how many years before that time. He carried groceries, hardware, horse feed, pots, brooms, buckets, apparently all the necessities of life. He had a clerk who went around in the morning collecting orders, making delivery in the afternoon by horse and wagon. In the store was a pot belly stove and a couple of chairs for a few old-timers to pass the time, gossip and at the same time, sample the big round cheese – free. Wish I had some of the things from the old store – they would now be valuable, especially the wooden Indian which stood on the porch of the store.

We had an Italian shoe repair man who lived in the old railroad station and in the fall made his

own wine, pressing the fruit in his bare feet. Also a barber shop with its row of shaving mugs, and a livery stable (Chews). When President McKinley was elected in 1896, Sumner Dawson and I made a nickel a run from Noblitt's Hall, the voting booth, to the telegraph office located in the R.R. Station run by Mr. Tuft, for interested Republicans.

I could go on reminiscing back to our Christmases', Fourth of Julys, church entertainments, etc., and I just wonder if the present generation of youngsters will be able to look back to such a happy period in their childhoods.

John C. Holinger

Milton Webb's childhood memories, Time period around 1938 to 1944

The town was much smaller in number of houses and population. There were many lots in which to play football, baseball etc. On our side of the tracks there were the Academy lots where there was the Academy tennis court maintained for a while and the kids put up a basketball standard. This was after the drill hall was torn down. Up where Eddie Fredricks lives there was a good tennis court but this was pretty well closed to us kids as there was a tennis club made up of adults. I believe Evan Woodward ran this. Of course there was the ball field now called the Cedar Avenue field.

More organized sports were run there. Lots of time the big kids

would throw us out. At that time there was a full cinder track going around the field. A lot of people used this for track and also bicycles. There was a big grandstand which I witnessed burning down. The kids built a lot of model airplanes and that was the launching spot. Bob Nicholls built the best models unfortunately he died in the polio epidemic in 1949 or 50. Behind the ball field there was a persimmon grove and at times people used the old academy rifle range there (Harry Simmerman might remember this). A lot of the kids had 22 rifles. Below that was Greens boat house which we used until Joe Truncer, the guardian of the Greene estate would throw us out. That also burned dow'n. Greens lake was full of turtles which we would shot with our 22's. Martin Dipper was the ace on this. This was a good fishing lake particularly for calico bass.. This was a great place until Elliot built the house that Dewey Parker lives in today -he threw us out but we had our revenge when he ended up bankrupt, lived in a trailer where the Jonas Barrel Co was located and Knapp took over and opened up the lake again. Unfortunately, on our side of the tracks a large area was closed to us-This was Hassricks or Royals. They erected a cyclone fence around the lake which partially closed this off to us. However, we fished by concealing ourselves in the bushes. On the west side of the lake was a boat house. It was filled

with phonograph records which we skimmed across the lake. If the lake is dredged there will be a wealth of Victor Talking Machine discs uncovered. Diana Hassrick had beautiful horses and they were stabled in the huge barn where Bob and Jane Kitz live. There were also cows which were Jerseys imported from Europe. Mr. Hess ran the farm and we started working for him in the summer. We had quite a team- Earl Cox. Lewis Fink, Jimmy Gill, Joan Hill and Ruby May Dewitt. This gave us fishing privileges as a fringe benefit. Where the Lutheran Church is sited there was an orchard but the big farming was done out across from the Tall Pines Inn in what is now the Woods at Wenonah. This was planted with rye, oats and barley for the horses. But greater opportunities arose when Tommy Synnott opened up the chicken farm the day the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Mr. Hendrickson built the chicken house which later became the site of many police and fireman's banquets There were many fond memories there. In the barn there was large carriage which was a beauty, a sleigh and a little sulky. Also there were two horses, one of which Tom shot when he was trying to eliminate rats in .the barn. Also he had a 1904 Chalmers automobile which I believe was bought from George Fredrick.



Stamp  
Here

PO Box 32  
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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# Wenonah Historical Society

## Membership APPLICATION 2009

### Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAILED TO YOUR HOME
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INTERESTING PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- INFORMATION BY KNOWLEDGEABLE WENONAHIANS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL: YES OR NO

AMOUNT PAID \$ \_\_\_\_\_ CHECK \_\_\_\_\_ CASH \_\_\_\_\_

BRING FORM AND PAYMENT TO MEETING, OR MAIL. THANK YOU

WHS PO Box 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER

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