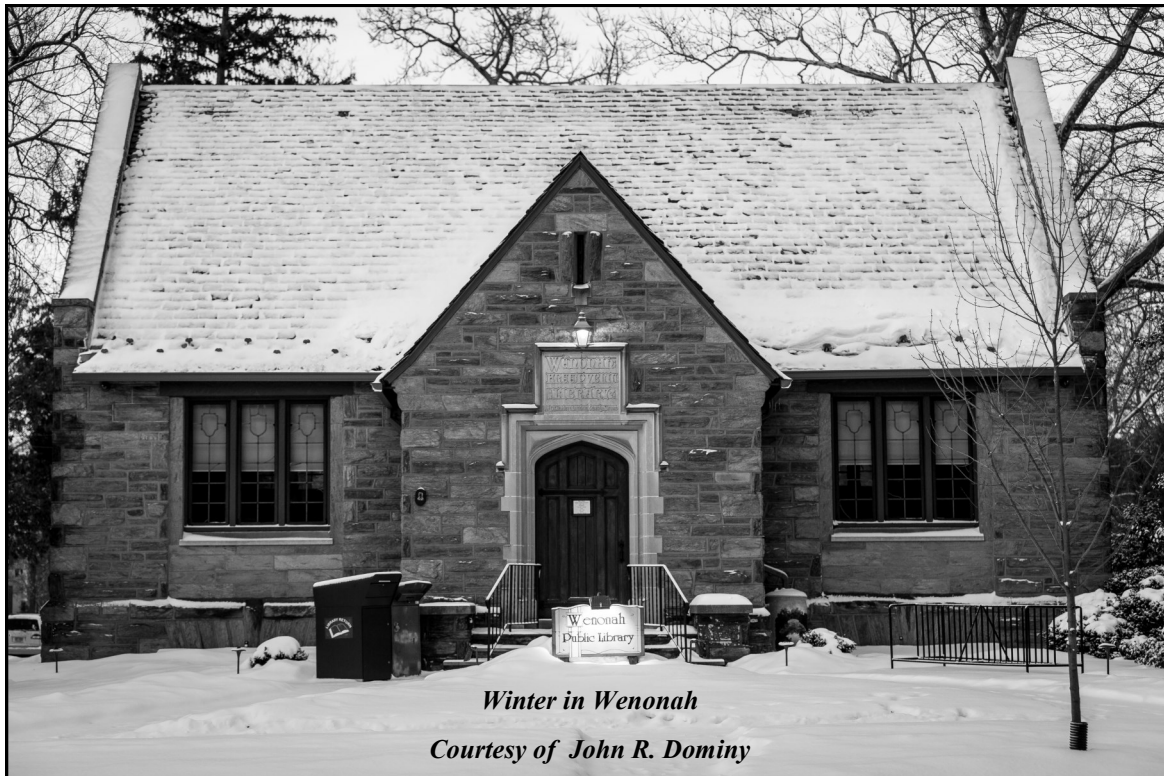


Wenonah Historical Society Newsletter

Next Meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Friday, March 14, 2014
Volume 12, Issue 3, March 2014



The Blizzard of '88

With all of the snow we've experienced this winter, the famous "Blizzard of '88" comes to mind. March 11, 1888, started out as a balmy spring-like day with a steady rain in Gloucester County. Long before computer-model weather forecasting, unsuspecting residents went to bed on that evening, less than two weeks from the official start of Spring, only to wake up to what was to become a three-day blizzard. Only ten inches of snow fell, but high winds piled drifts up to second-floor windows.

Trains were the mode of transportation at that time. Train as well as trolley tracks were completely covered. Telegraph poles and wires were blown across the tracks in some places. Trains on the Bridgeton branch of the West Jersey Railroad were blockaded for days. At Monroeville on Monday, passengers trapped on the train were kept in the car and provided food by the station agent. By Tuesday, the train had worked its way up as far as Unionville (Aura), where the residents there furnished more supplies for the stranded passengers. By Wednesday, the train's engine was no longer working. The sixteen passengers had eaten all of the provisions and burned all of the coal available. They then began burning the soft coal from the locomotive tenders. This proved to be suffocating and had to be put out. Passengers dug down through snow to remove fence rails in order to use them for firewood. With their fuel and food gone, two passengers trekked six miles to Vineland, sometimes encountering snow drifts ten feet deep. Help was summoned from Camden and late on Wednesday morning, the passengers were finally taken out of the train and brought to Camden. Wednesday afternoon, three engines were linked together to clear the snow from the Bridgeton branch.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Charles Horan

2014 WHS OFFICERS

President	Charles Horan
Vice President	Paul Lader
Secretary	Vicki McCall
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Louis McCall

**Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month
(except June, July and August)
at the Train Station Community Center**

Our March meeting will wrap-up our "How I Came to Live in Wenonah" series of presentations. In my opinion, it has been an informative and entertaining few months. This month will feature a presentation by Larry Smith entitled "The Smiths in Wenonah" which dates back to 1903. Following Larry's dissertation we will be open to additional Wenonah back stories from anyone who has yet to present and feels the desire to share their story with our group.

On the agenda this Friday evening will be the status and future of the WHS web site. We have a good start with some very knowledgeable people involved. I feel that a successful web site will be an important facet of the Wenonah Historical Society going forward. Bring your ideas and opinions.

Please make an effort to come out this Friday at 7:30. Dare I say it? Hopefully that ugly white stuff is finished for the season.

The Salem Railroad was also totally blocked for three days. On the Swedesboro branch, one of Monday's trains became stuck in a snow bank at Harrisonville and another at Rulon's Road above Swedesboro. A number of the passengers were kept at area hotels at company expense. After being detained in the train for a day and night, other passengers walked home. By Friday morning, the tracks had been cleared enough to allow the first train through, but another day or two was needed to totally clear the track.

In his diary, Charles H. Pancoast, Station Agent at Harrisonville Station, writes that he was almost blinded by the fierce snowstorm during his 2-1/2 mile walk to the station on Monday, March 12. On Tuesday, he reported that, "...the train on the Elmer and Salem road got fast with 7 feet of snow about her." The southbound track of the West Jersey Railroad was closed. The only alternative was to run the south bound trains on the north bound track.

Meanwhile, there were other problems. Tuesday, March 13, was Election Day. Very few voters were able to travel to the polls in their respective districts. Some townships and boroughs were not able to hold

elections at all.

Some enterprising residents saw the blizzard as an economic opportunity. A farmer near Florence in Burlington County sold bread and butter for 50 cents per slice to stranded commuters, making a \$50 profit.

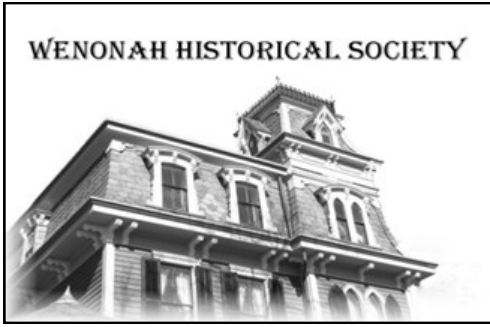
Trains were not the only mode of transportation that was affected. The ferry running between Cooper's Point in Camden and Philadelphia was disabled when the shifting winds formed sandbars causing the ferry to become stranded. Horses on the ferry had to be put into cabins to spare them from freezing. Tug boats carried stranded passengers back to shore.

Horse-drawn plows were used to clear the roads. In Westville, a twelve-foot drift prevented trains from passing through. Businesses were shut down. Lack of supplies at glass and iron factories forced workers to remain idle. Up and down the coast from Maine to New Jersey, wires were down and dispatchers were unable to ascertain where trains were halted. Almost all communication between Philadelphia and New York was cut.

Even after 126 years, the Blizzard of '88 has not been forgotten in South Jersey.

WENONAH
MARCH 1914

- ◇ Mr. George Grosscup has sold his house, formerly occupied by William Spedden, to William Bell, a P.R.R. man, and has purchased the Adamson house on West Jersey Avenue, formerly occupied by Jesse Pinder and after repairs are made will move his family there.
- ◇ Through the kindness of Mr. Edw. Sapp, the Boy Scouts of our borough witnessed the launching of the Oklahoma at the New York Shipyard on Monday morning.
- ◇ Mr. Edward Grosscup, State Treasurer, and whose engagement was recently announced to Miss Florence Steel, his private secretary, spent the week end with his fiancée at Mr. Grosscup's home in our borough.
- ◇ Mr. Aaron Knisell is building an addition to his bungalow on Monroe Avenue and Mr. Harris is building a new milk house at his house on the same street.
- ◇ Dr. Harry Schelcer will break ground for a new house on Jefferson Avenue in the near future, Wm. Borg being the contractor.
- ◇ Our milk business has again exchanged hands. F.H. Harris of Pitman will take charge on Monday.
- ◇ Our new milk man, Mr. Harris, of Pitman, will occupy Mrs. Sara Scott's property at Monroe and Willow St. in the near future.
- ◇ "Safety First" pleas are being used by Wenonah parents to try to persuade Council to make provision for the construction of a safe bathing beach in contracting for repairs to the dam at Wenonah Lake.
- ◇ Engineer William C. Cattell has estimated that will cost \$350 to make improvements to the dam at the water works including the work of sloping of the sides to make a safe place for bathing.
- ◇ Walter A. Wentzell, who opened a news bureau this week, reports business rushing.
- ◇ Borough Marshall Murry, who tendered his resignation some weeks ago, has reconsidered and will continue his duties.
- ◇ Contractor William Borg is putting a new roof on the residence of Jos. Chew.
- ◇ The Green residence, corner Mantua and Marion avenues, is in the hands of John L. Drunier, and will be thoroughly overhauled prior to the occupancy of Dr. Green and his family this summer.
- ◇ Wenonah, like other South Jersey towns, was snowbound on Monday morning, drifts in some places being eight or ten feet high. All trains were an hour or more late.
- ◇ The Equal Rights League here has made substantial cash contributions to the National Woman Suffrage Association and the Women's Journal of New Jersey. A canvass of the county will be made to ascertain the number of suffragists and a report forwarded to the Legislature at Trenton.
- ◇ Captain Hamilton, the new commandant at the Military Academy, is expected to arrive within a few days. He will occupy the residence at the corner of Mantua and Marion Aves., formerly occupied by William Ekey and family.
- ◇ Mr. F.H. Preble and family have moved into their new home which Mr. Preble recently bought from Mr. Harry Heal, who moved to California.
- ◇ John Moore has rented his house on Monroe Avenue, formerly occupied by Captain Miller and wife, to parties from Philadelphia. He will have charge of Bayley's green houses.



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Here

PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2014

Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
- 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 _____

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

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

WHS PO Box 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090