

WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



Published by the
Historical Society
of Wenonah, NJ

PRESIDENT' S LETTER

As we head into spring, this is a great time to walk our historic streets and really take notice of the beautiful architecture in our town. Many of our own members have been working diligently (and I'm sure the task seems UNENDING) to restore their homes to the charm of another century. Their efforts have not gone unappreciated! Our small town is a truly an example of historic integrity. Our Goal as Historic Society members is to keep striving in our efforts to keep it that way!

As members of the Wenonah Historical Society, we are all proud of our heritage and we value the things that reflect this community's history. It has come to my attention that as citizens, there are tools available to us to help us in our efforts to preserve the historical significance of our town. One of these tools is a Section 106 review, which is a law that can be utilized to influence Federal decisions. By law, we are entitled to a voice when Federal actions will affect properties or districts that qualify for the National Registrar of Historic Places.

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was established by Congress to preserve historical foundations of the Nation as a part of community life. Section 106 of NHPA requires Federal Agencies or Agents licensed under Federal Regulations to consider the effect of their actions or undertakings on historic properties. Part of the section 106 process involves identifying and consulting with interested public parties prior to implementation of any Federal undertaking. This section gives us a voice in determining how Federal projects may effect our town!

In speaking with the State of New Jersey Historic Preservation Office it was determined that our town, while not registered as a Historic District, is RECOGNIZED as a Historic District. This is important on many levels. As to current undertakings in our town, as many are aware, there is an approved site for a cell tower on our water tower in Wenonah. This application by AT & T, a Federally licensed company that would be required to follow the Section 106 guidelines, was approved at State of New Jersey Historic Preservation Office based upon AT & T's representation under Section 106 that there would not be an adverse effect on the town. The Historic Society was not consulted by AT & T on that site or on that undertaking, and accordingly, there remains a question as to the due diligence followed under Section 106. There is another application coming before Planning Board to approve an alternate site for a Cell Tower. The Agency requesting this approval (AT & T) is required under the National Historic Preservation Act to initiate a Section 106 process. This should entail AT&T identifying the Historical Society as an interested party and consulting with us on this matter. This affords us the opportunity to discuss and determine whether we feel that a cell tower at this site or any site requested will be an adverse effect on this historic community.

The State of New Jersey Historic Preservation Office recognizes that wireless communication towers can have adverse effects on the view sheds of historic districts, sites, and landscapes. Knowledge about the New Jersey State Register Review and the Section 106 review and the Telecommunications Act is critical to understanding the regulation behind the placement of these towers.

This process is an important means of giving us the right and opportunity to give input on maintaining the Historic integrity of this town. We as members need to be aware of this and to speak up on our behalf to responsible parties that we do wish to have a voice and be considered in any Federal undertaking, whether it be a telecommunications issue, or how federal money will be used on any projects within our town.

I will have available at the meeting information on The National Historic Preservation Act section 106 Review. Please take a moment to read it and bring comments and suggestions to our meeting. I will be unable to attend the April meeting but am available to any who wish to call me on this matter.

Information about these regulations can be found at www.achp.gov/regs.html.

WENONAH 100 YEARS AGO-APRIL 1901

Misses Florence and Anna Greenig are ill with quinsy.

Palmer Finch is now employed at the Blasius Piano Works in Woodbury.

A large stock of Easter hams and fresh jersey eggs and all other necessities will be found at Turner and McCormick. (Corner of West Mantua and South West Avenue)

Irwin Middleton was remembered with a large box of rockfish from a friend in Port Norris.

The topographical work on the new cemetery is nearly complete and the landscape work will soon commence.

Our people are pleased with the new platform at the train depot.

George Greenig and Howard Holt caught 45 sunfish in the Mantua Creek yesterday.

Pretty lawns are all ready in evidence here.

A number of children are out of school with the chicken pox.

It is confidently asserted that we are going to have a dramatic association organized here in a short time.

The pleasant weather no doubt will have a tendency to fill out churches tomorrow. It is thought in proportion this town has actually the largest attendance in churches on Sunday of any other place in this part of the state.

The funeral of Isaac Stevenson will be held Thursday morning, internment at Blackwoodtown. He was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. At one time he was the owner of nearly all of the land that is now Wenonah. It is reported he is nearly a millionaire.

Edward L. Farr is on an extended trip through the west.

Dominee Cobb is enjoying his new wheel in this fine weather.

Woodbury Daily Times

Woodbury, New Jersey

Milton webb

THE FIRE HOUSE

In the beginning fire protection was very sporadic. Efforts to create a hose company started in 1888 and indeed were partially successful with the acquisition of a hose cart and organized manpower. Storage of the hose cart was in the barn of the Wenonah House, later moved to Thomas Synnott's icehouse on East Mantua Avenue. Two more carts were acquired and the need became apparent that a centralized location of equipment was needed. In 1902 this was expressed in the Woodbury Times-*the fireman again are agitating the removal of the fire station to a more central location somewhere near the depot would be most preferable*. At this time the fire company consisted of 22 members, three hose carts, 1000 feet of hose, axes, lanterns, ladders and fire buckets.

A building committee was formed consisting of George L. Dilks, Hon. William C. Cattell and Joseph Truncer. These men, held in great respect in the community, gave momentum to the realization that the town would have a fire station. Several sites were considered and the Harris Estate lot on South West and West Cherry Streets was purchased for \$150. Bids were solicited for a two story concrete block building, the low bidder being Daniel Brown. He was President of the fire company and the largest builder of dwellings in Wenonah. His bid was \$1475. Additional costs were \$60 for paving and \$39 for grading. It is interesting to note the architectural style was very basic, the same replicated in Mantua, Mount Royal and Clarksboro. The structure was to be *nicely heated* and illuminated with electricity and gas. On January 24th 1909 there was a housing of the apparatus. *The members of the borough council were present to witness the event*. At this time there was no motorized equipment. The fire bell was moved to the new building from McCormick and Turner's store on Mantua and South West Avenue. Out front, a gas lamp with a glass sign marked Wenonah Fire Co. was installed.

There was much discussion about the uses of the second floor. It was agreed that it could be used as a smoking room and to play cards but, of course, there would be no gambling. Dick Ballinger who lived across the street in the Stone Farm House provided furniture. A slate topped pool table was installed. Borough council who had previously met in the offices of the Wenonah Realty Company started meeting there as well as the Gloucester County Poultry Association. When the Wenonah Building and Loan was formed this was their regular meeting place. The new fire station became the town hall as well as the barn for housing the equipment.

The first piece of motorize equipment housed in the barn ~~was~~ a 1915 Model C Auto Fire Truck. It was a dual-purpose vehicle as it was used to tow the hose cart and in the case of large fires the ladder wagon, which was, previously horse drawn. The second truck to be housed was a 500-gallon pumper and hose car made by the Stutz Fire Engine Company. This was at the time the ultimate pumper and it was commented in the paper that *they (the fireman) all think we have the best lot of councilmen in the state*. The cost was \$9,500 a considerable amount of money for the period. In 1928 a Seagraves pumper was purchased to replace the 1915 Ford. The cost was \$6,000.

Housing of the new pumper created a problem and it was determined to build an addition on the back of the barn. The addition was made of concrete block one story high. Part of the addition was a vault to store borough records, a new heating boiler and a jail. The jail replaced the one in the barn at 1 East Mantua Avenue. In order to finance the new addition carnivals were held in the park starting in 1921. This did not set too well with some of the citizens. One such person was Rev. Elbert M. Conover who was quoted in the Woodbury Times-

The writer has just learned with surprise and disappointment that gambling devises, chance selling etc are to be used at the Wenonah Fireman's Carnival. We had thought that the members of the Wenonah Fire Company and Women's Auxiliary were upholders of the law, order and decency. Evidently such members are in the silent minority. Is Wenonah so poverty stricken that we must resort to such low-grade methods of securing fire protection? Wenonah has gotten along without such degrading projects and should continue to do so. As much as the zeal of the workers for the carnival is to be recommended their effort is badly misdirected and entirely unnecessary. Wenonah has gotten along without such degrading projects and can continue to do so.

To which the Ladies Auxiliary of the Wenonah Fire Company replied to him in the same newspaper-

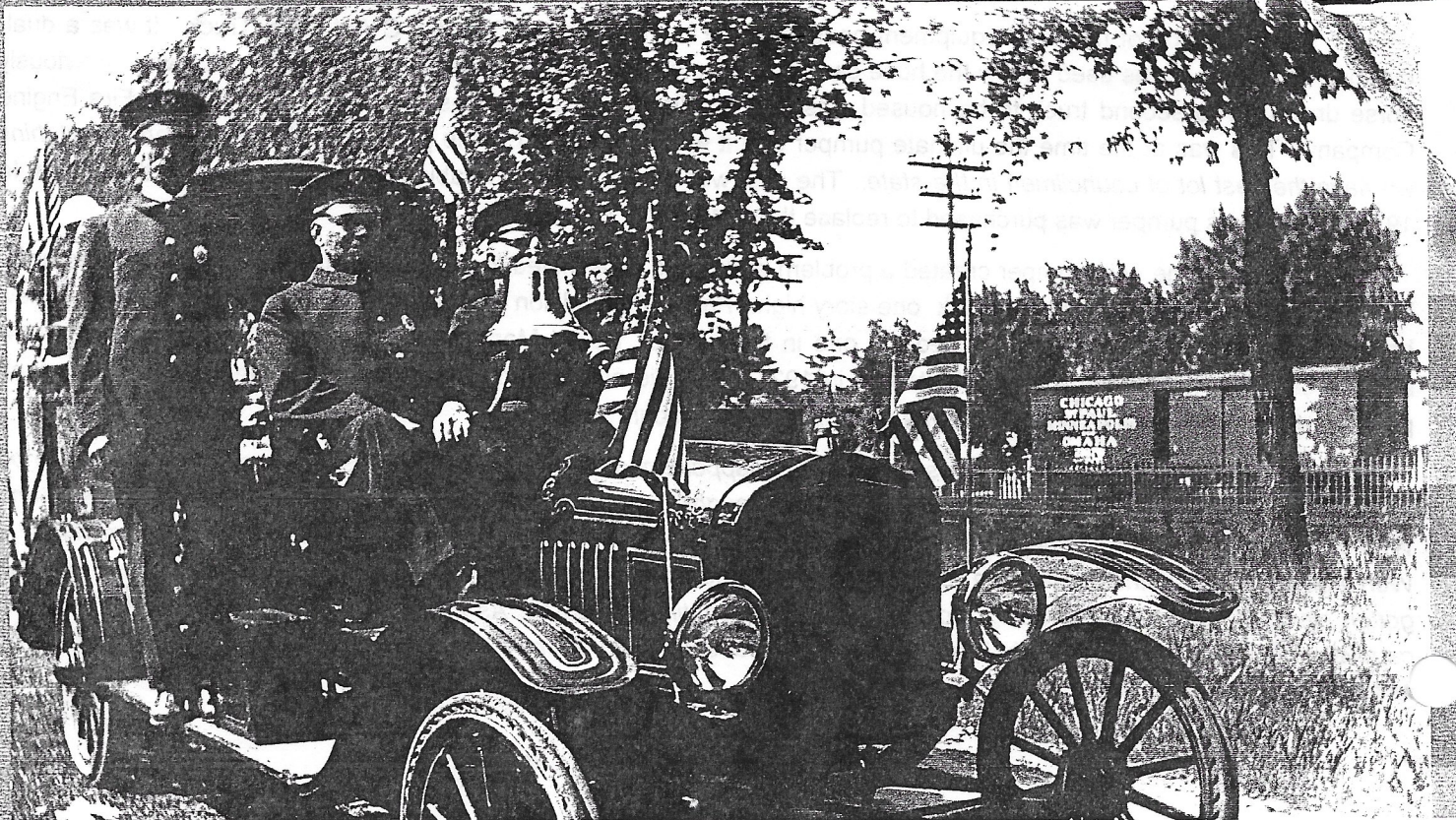
We are free to admit that we lack his evident knowledge of "rowdyism", "roughneck affairs" and "leg shows". Traveling about from place to place has its advantages for good or evil, of course, and if one seeks baseness and roguery he can easily find it. We stay-at-homes in this sleepy hamlet of Wenonah having little opportunity of learning the trickery of the outside world are content to jog along, getting a little mild amusement here and there, believe the best of our fellow man and keep in mind the old adage-Evil to him who evil thinks. . Mr. Conover asks that Wenonah wake up. We think that is a good idea also. Let it wake up to the fact that we have some red blooded men and women in our midst who scorn the saintly contenance and nasty mind. Their respectability is beyond question and they will not tolerate the language of the red light district. He must realize he is not addressing a gutter gang.

The town was polarized on this issue as it would in many other issues in the future. Public discussion and concern has always been one of the beautiful benchmarks of our community. The firemen's carnival was successful as a fundraiser and was held for annually in the park. It became one of the casualties of the Second World War and never revived afterward.

To be continued next month

The new fire house, picture taken in 1909

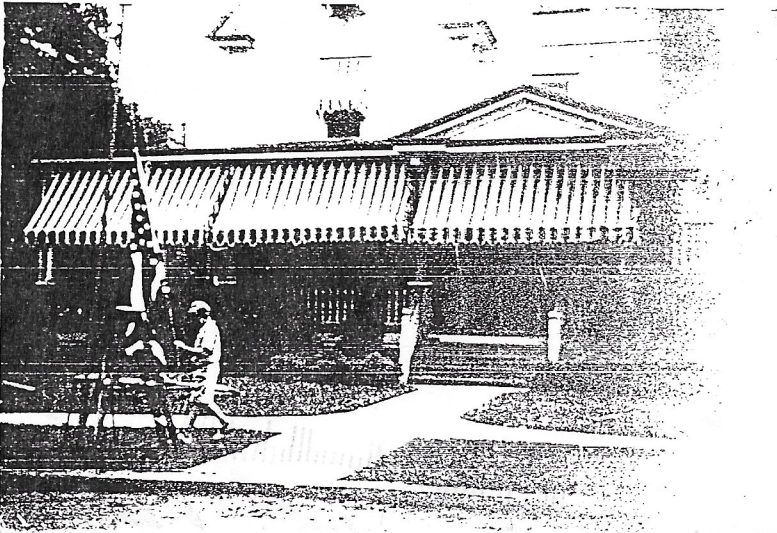
1915 Model C auto fire truck in service until 1928



John Viereck

DO YOU REMEMBER?

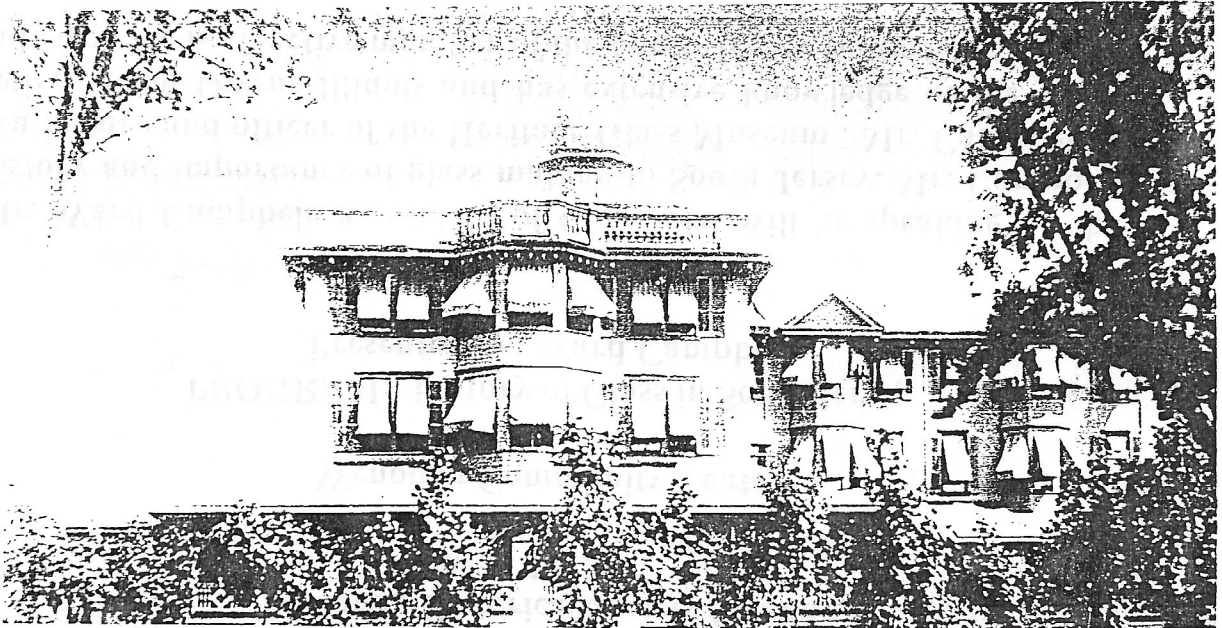
In the late spring workmen arrived in Wenonah to put up the awnings which had been stored for the winter on the houses of Wenonah. This was a big occasion. The whole appearance of the house changed with the new additional coloration. It was a welcome sign that summer was coming. Sitting on the porch was enhanced by the shade afforded by the awnings. It added a certain comfort to the house and served as a canopy to the entry area. In the fall the process was reversed and we knew that winter was on its way. Wouldn't it be grand if this tradition came back?



Typical configuration of awnings.

-101 South Marion Avenue C1930

The Wenonah Inn C.1890 In the Victorian period there was large use of awnings



Wenonah Historical Society Meeting
May 11, 2001
7:30 pm
Wenonah Community Center

PROGRAM: History of Glass in South Jersey
Presented by: Ward Campbell

Mr. Ward Campbell, a resident of Glassboro, will be speaking on the history and importance of glass making to South Jersey. Mr. Campbell is a trustee and officer of the Heritage Glass Museum . Mr. Campbell is retired from Owens Illinois and has extensive knowledge of the Glass industry. He is an active member of the South Jersey Bottle Club.

Please join us for an informative and hands on evening. Feel free to bring in any bottles that you would like Mr. Campbell to comment upon.

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