

Wenonah Historical Society Newsletter

Next Meeting at 7:30 P.M. on
Friday, November 11, 2011

Volume 9, Issue 8, November 2011

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Charles Horan*

Dear Members,

I hope our members found last month's presentation by Karl Anderson on the history of metals and mining interesting and informative. Our program for this month stems from an article by Bob Shryock in the Gloucester County Times on October 24, 2011

(http://www.nj.com/gloucester/voices/index.ssf/2011/10/bob_shryock_glass_book_a_hefty.html). He wrote about Tom C. Haunton, a Pitman native who has written a 438-page book (800+

photos) on the Clevenger Brothers of Clayton and their unique glass

products produced from 1930 to 1999. Mr. Haunton will feature a 30-minute slide show and a "show and tell" of some unique glass artifacts. His book—*Last Links to the Past: 20th Century South Jersey Glass*—will be available for purchase (\$110 for hardbound; \$80 for softbound; plus NJ sales tax). Tom lives in Massachusetts. As luck would have it, he will be in the area next weekend for a presentation at the

Heritage Glass Museum in Glassboro and has agreed to visit our group this coming Friday evening.

I look forward to seeing you Friday, November 11th at 7:30 PM. We should have a good turnout and an interesting presentation.

MARJORIE LENTZ AND RACHEL KNISSEL

Marjorie Lentz has joined Rachel Knissel at Pitman Manor. Their address is:

Pitman Manor
535 N. Oak Ave.
Pitman, NJ 08071

Marjorie is in Room #314-C. Rachel is in Room #HC-304-B.

CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 9, 2011

Pat Sole is again organizing the WHS Christmas Party. This popular event will be held the evening of Friday, December 9th. Social hour will be from 5 to 6 PM, and dinner will start at 6 PM. As in previous years, the Telford Inn will cater and we will have an optional gift exchange. The cost remains at \$20 per person. Pat needs to know who will be attending by the middle of November. Please let her know this Friday at our November meeting or call her at 856-468-6661.

2011 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 second Friday of each month (except June, July and August) at the Train Station Community Center.

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER?

If you would like to receive an electronic version of the newsletter instead of a copy delivered by the U.S. Postal Service, please let Larry Smith know at smithlr@att.net.

WENONAH AND THE MILITARY ACADEMY

By Marjorie Lentz

It all started with a meeting of businessmen at the "New Mantua Station" of the West Jersey Railroad Company.

This station was built about 1866 when the railroad company straightened the tracks which at that time were on a track bed running past Wenonah Lake, south on what is now Jefferson Avenue, crossing the Mantua Creek on a bridge at a point now known by most kids in town as "Clay Hill".

At a meeting during 1869 in the New Mantua Station the men agreed to pool their money and buy 5 farms surrounding the station. These are the lands on which they intended to build a town. The Historical Society has a scrap of paper dated 1869 on which it is noted "we will name the town "Winona". That name is crossed out and the word "Wenonah" substituted for it. For those who may not know, Wenonah is a Santee Indian name meaning a first-born daughter.

The men formed a company named the "Mantua Land and Improvement Company" which was authorized to lay out streets and roads, build a hotel and start selling building lots.

The first building constructed was the Wenonah Inn hotel, built in 1870-71 and opened in the spring of 1872. From that time forward many people from Camden and Philadelphia came to the hotel by train and Wenonah was considered to be a summer resort.

In the interests of time I will skip ahead about 30 years to the year 1903. By this time Wenonah was able to exist on its own with a fairly sizable population, a permanent government, stores, a school, and the hotel. But the hotel was having financial trouble and was forced to close. Some said it was the automobile that allowed people to go where they wanted to, much more conveniently than on the train.

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

On September 20, 1904 the Wenonah Military Academy opened.

In the rooms that formerly accommodated hotel guests who were mainly interested in dances and fine food, the rooms now accommodated cadets interested in horsemanship and higher education. Hotel rooms were converted to classrooms, dormitories, a library, a chapel and an infirmary, although a communication to parents hinted the infirmary would rarely be used.

The first officers of the Wenonah Military Academy were Stephen Greene, President and owner, Dr. William H. Greene, Vice-President, son of Stephen Greene and known internationally as a scientist, Dr. H.A. Stout, treasurer and Major J.R. Jones, secretary. On the Board of Counsel were the Rev. Raymond H. Gage and Thomas W. Synnott. Captain Percy C. Jones was commander of the cadets.

Although Wenonah was accustomed to the social activities of the Wenonah Inn during the summer, the Wenonah Military Academy kept the town hopping during the school term. The first month the Academy was opened, there were a reception and dance for two hundred people, a skating carnival on Warner's Lake with hundreds of lighted lanterns, a minstrel show, a house party and numerous football games. This was the beginning of a social whirl that kept Wenonah spinning for the next thirty years. Wenonah residents were invited to band concerts, glee club performances, drama productions, and horsemanship exhibitions. Local girls vied for invitations to dances and on Sunday the whole town turned out for full-dress parades and cadet drill demonstrations.

During the presidency of Dr. Charles H. Lorence, the Wenonah Military Academy reached its peak with an enrollment of 200 cadets who came from as far away as California and Cuba. Upon the death of Dr. Lorence, Major Clayton A. Snyder assumed the presidency. For 23 years Major Lloyd L. Lammert was headmaster and athletic director. Other key members of the faculty included Captain Thomas A. Clingan, instructor in mathematics and Mary Bilderback, instructor in instrumental music. Dr. Thomas J. Mulvey was director of advertising. Cadets enrolled in the classical, Latin-scientific, or English-commercial courses. Military science included instruction in rifle practice, infantry drills,

horsemanship and military discipline. Horsemanship instruction was \$100 extra, but it included the rental of the horse.

In an advertising brochure, the Wenonah Military Academy emphasized that it had “. . . established as its guiding principle the formation of moral character, the teaching of respect for authority and the strict adherence to the fundamentals of a sound academic and business education.” The brochure emphasized also that Wenonah has a “quiet seclusion” and is “sufficiently removed from the dangerous enticements of the city” and yet is “within easy reach of Camden and Philadelphia on the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad.”

Also “Wenonah is an entirely residential town with no factories. It has its own entirely independent sanitary drainage system.”

And especially directed to parents the Academy advised that “the sale of intoxicants within a mile of the Academy is absolutely prohibited by law” and “the town has a marked freedom from sickness and disease.”

In 1913 the annual charges of \$600 included “tuition, board, heat light, twelve pieces of laundry and mending of underclothing.” Tuition doubled during the years but included “table linen, pressing and use of firearms.” However this charge did not include the \$250 cost for a uniform. During the 30 years of Academy existence the uniforms changed from time to time but typically the cadet wore a uniform of grey with various kinds of adornments. The dress uniform worn by cadet Le Grand Reeves was the first style as he was in the first graduating class in 1906. Another style was worn by the school teaching staff and they were similar to U.S. Army uniforms. The cadet officers’ full dress uniform included a sword, sash and shako. By 1916 there was a waiting list as every available space is filled.”

Although military discipline soon earned the Academy the name of “The West Point of South Jersey,” athletics brought fame to the school. On Stephen Greene’s athletic field where the

grandstand held 500 spectators, cadets ran a quarter-mile cinder track, played football with prep schools like Malvern, Seton Hall and Pennington, played baseball and practiced horsemanship and military tactics. A twelve-acre field along Glassboro Road was used for polo and lacrosse. Golf was played at the Oak Valley Country Club, sometimes referred to as the Wenonah Country Club or, originally Altwald Golf Links, which was situated in a wooded area off Ogden Road. The word “ogden” is derived from the Swedish word meaning “valley of oaks.”

On the Wenonah polo field along Woodbury-Glassboro Road one polo team defeated a team from the West Point Military Academy. Many graduating cadets gained recognition on college teams and Herbert J. Pennock, who became a major league pitcher, is named in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

In addition to the former Wenonah Inn, the Wenonah Military Academy occupied the Charles H. Lorence Cottage which housed senior cadets and the Clayton A. Snyder Cottage which housed junior cadets. A drill hall was built behind the Academy



and it was claimed to have the largest floor space of any gymnasium in South Jersey. It was large enough to drill an entire battalion, and of course, to accommodate the dances. At one mid-term reception six hundred people attended and danced. A stone wall was added

fronting the academy (still there) and in 1916 the building formerly housing the Wenonah Inn’s bowling alley was converted to a science laboratory.

After the games and dances the cadets escorted their guests to the Wenonah Drug Store and to Walter Wentzell’s store for sandwiches and ice cream.

In September 1935 Dr. Charles H. Lorence announced that the Wenonah Military Academy would not be open “because of economic reasons.”

And now all we have are written records, photographs, some uniforms and swords, and many fond memories.

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

Stamp
Here

Wenonah Historical Society

Membership APPLICATION 2011

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
