

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 2 February, 2010

GREETINGS FROM THE WHS OFFICERS

I am happy to report that Carol Wiltsee continues as Treasurer and Vicki McCall as Secretary.

Brenda Birkland has resigned as Vice President and we will seek someone to replace her at the February meeting. Also, much thanks to everyone who helps us throughout the year with membership and hosting our meetings and making our special events "Special" and assisting with fund-raising materials. Working together is what always has made the WHS successful and I look forward to continuing that tradition. The "Friends of Wenonah Train Station Committee" with Charlie Horan and Barb Conway as Chairs has been active. They will give us an update at the meeting.

I also want to remind our membership that while although the Borough of Wenonah is the actual Train Station owner; it is our great pleasure to continue the work to keep this historical building and its contents of valuable artifacts in the best condition and preservation that we can achieve. I look forward to working with our Council and Mayor to continue this objective.

The Objectives of the Wenonah Historical Society Constitution and bylaws, according to Article II.

Section 1. To acquire and preserve historic documents, records, artifacts and memorabilia of the Borough of Wenonah.

Section 2. To locate and acquire a suitable place for the storage and display of such materials.

Section 3. To encourage the protection and preservation of historical landmarks and points of interest within the Borough of Wenonah.

Section 4. To encourage historical and genealogical research, and publication of its results.

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Section 5. To encourage interest in history generally, and in Wenonah history in particular, among the youth of Wenonah.

Section 6. To make all information and acquisitions of the Society available to the public.

The executive committee with coordination of the WHS membership and the borough will work together to encourage as always, more of these objectives this year. As always we appreciate your support.

Barb, Vicki and Carol

HISTORY OF THE WENONAH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNE ZUBER

The program for the February meeting will be the history of the Wenonah Public Library from its origin as the Wenonah Library Association in 1900, including some information on the building we use now, the evolution of our shared borrowing arrangement, LOGIN, and how technological advances have played such a strong part in that.

Speaker Anne Zuber grew up in West Deptford, attended Gloucester Catholic High School, and graduated from Glassboro State College (Rowan University) with a degree in English Language and Literature and a Secondary Education Teaching Certificate.

When her parents purchased a set of World Book Encyclopedias in 1969, Anne's mother answered all questions with, "Look it up!"

After moving to California in 1985 with her husband Ron and 3 stepchildren, Anne spent more than 7 years "looking up" information at the library on parenting teenagers, while learning customer service and bookkeeping skills at various office jobs. A few years after returning to the area with Ron, daughter Chelsea, and son Brian, the position of school librarian became available at Wenonah Elementary School. The work there is three days per week and allowed for Anne to take on the part time director position at Wenonah Public Library as well.

THE STONE HOUSE FARM CIRCA 1773

In the early days of the New Jersey colony the Mantua Creek valley was quickly found to be one of the most fertile and attractive localities in Gloucester County. The creek itself was the main avenue of transportation and communication with other settlements along the river and creeks.

The western portion of the attractive village of Wenonah stands on a farm of 180 acres, which for a century and more was known as the "stone-house farm". It remained a farm until Wenonah was plotted and successfully promoted in 1871.

Mantua Creek forms the southwestern boundary of the farm, and before the coming of the railroad there were numerous wharves or landing places along its banks, each identified by the name of its owner. On the north side were Hennessey's Landing, on the stone house farm, with extensive warehouses, and Chews Landing where the Woodbury – Mullica Hill road now crosses the bridge. On the south side were Smith's Landing, near the foot of the present Norris Street; Carpenter's Landing and others, also several thriving shipyards including Eastlack's and Norris's where small sailing vessels called flats and shallops were built to carry to Philadelphia cordwood, produce and glass ware from the Stanger glassworks at Glassboro, and from its successors Heston and Carpenter, and the Whitney Glass Works.

Prior to the closing of the eighteenth century there was no bridge across the creek in the vicinity of the present villages Mantua and Wenonah. The nearest bridge was that of the King's Highway, near the present village of Mount Royal. Beyond that point, the creek could be crossed only by a ford located on the stone-house farm, about a half mile southeast of the present bridge from Wenonah to Mantua.

Nathaniel Chew was one of the earliest settlers in Gloucester County. He died 1731 and lies buried in the old Chew Burying Ground near the late famous Mantua Oak. In his will he left land to his sons Richard, Jeffery, Joseph and Nathaniel.

His son Jeffery Chew (1714 – 1774) became a large owner of additional land along Mantua Creek, which he distributed among his sons. To his son Jonathon he gave 100 acres, "being part of the land I bought of Hannah Robinson, along the line of Abraham Dilks and that of James Cooper." This tract of 180 acres, later to become the stone house farm, was purchased by Robert Sparks for \$2,000.

Robert Sparks died, his sole heirs being the two children of his deceased son Robert Sparks, Jr. Thomas Taber Sparks and Robert Ure Sparks who became the owners of the farm. Thomas Taber Sparks purchased the interest of his brother and became sole owner.

On January 1, 1855, Joseph Saunders, executor of Joseph Dilks, conveyed the "Stone-House farm" of 180 acres; 75 ½ acres to Isaac C. Stevenson for \$3,510.75 and 100 ½ acres to Hiram Morgan for \$5,700.

The deed mentions "the contemplated West Jersey Railroad." There are doubtless many who may not know that the course of the railroad through Wenonah was originally much nearer to Mantua Creek than it is now. It crossed the creek at a point much nearer to the present Mantua Creek bridge, and a station called Mantua Station was located on the south side of the creek. Remains of the original embankments (Clay Hill) may be seen both north and south of Wenonah.

The railroad may have benefited some residents of Mantua, but it caused the immediate decay of the shipping and the shipbuilding business on Mantua Creek. One of the leading ship builders, John C. Eastlack, closed his plant soon thereafter, and engaged in the manufacture of pumps.

The late Mr. Howard C. Hendrickson, who lived in Wenonah, then at the ripe age of eighty-eight, told that five acres of ground is mentioned as being in the occupation of his grandfather Jonathan Hendrickson (1784 – 1875) and that his father was born in the old stone-house in 1825. He stated that the house was built as a tavern in 1773 by Samuel Maffett, and that it was long known as the Samuel Maffett house. It was then on the main road leading to the ford across Mantua Creek, near its junction with the road leading down to Hennessey's Landing and provided accommodations for travelers north and south.

It is possible that this five acre tract may have been separated from the rest of the farm at the time of its traditional occupancy by Samuel Maffett, and subsequently, reincorporated in the farm. Henry Roe in his pension papers stated that the militia met in a field here in 1777 to practice, hold meeting and elect officers at the "stone-house" which he also stated was kept by a Mr. Sparks.

In later years the house was the home of Mr. Richard C. Ballinger, from 1891 until his death in 1934, when it passed to his son Edwin. The latter sold it in 1939 to Mr. and Mrs. William E. Manners, who have restored it to its original condition and who are very proud of it. It is now known as 100 South West Avenue.

Source: Glouco Hist. Soc. Bulletin March 1954

Eight and nine inch ice is reported about here.

Mrs. John Holton held an "at home" at her Clinton Avenue residence yesterday afternoon, which was attended by a number of ladies of the place, and all enjoyed the pleasant occasion.

It is reported that Paul deSanto is to embark in the poultry business on the Burris Turner farm recently purchased. (This is now the site of the Gloucester County College.)

Joseph Truncer is filling Stephan Green's 30-ton icehouse. (This was at the southwest corner of Marion Avenue and Willow Street.)

It is said that George Green so enjoys the company of his teacher that he is known to remain for one or two hours after school.

The matter of an organized fire company was before the council on Thursday night and steps are being taken towards its formation. We have the water pressure, the fireplugs, and two sections of hose, but no one in authority to order it into use.

The ladies of the "Monday Club" gave a social at the residence of Rev. M. C. Stokes last night. The entertainment consisted of a piano duet by Mrs. Mc Cowen and Miss M. P. Gilmour and solos by Mrs. Mrs. J. K. Schultz and Miss Gilmour after which some very interesting games were played. The party was then invited to the dining room and all did justice to the ice cream and other good things with which the table was well supplied.

Euchre parties are quite the fad here now one or two being held each evening. We think we have some crack players, too. The checker mania does not seem to have yet struck the place.

Had not John Lyons team been a gentle one this morning, he might have had some damage done as he put the halter around one horses neck, through the bridle ring and left the halter loose, and went off believing the team was tied. They were-tied loose.

Since Harold McKey was struck over the eye with a shinny ball that game has been forbidden at the school grounds and the boys complain that they have nothing to do but sit and suck their thumbs. McKey was rendered unconscious and had to be removed to his home.

The electric lights are burning much brighter since council paid the bill of the company. Money talks in more ways than one.

Edward Glenn attended the battalion drill with Company I, of Woodbury, in Camden Third Regiment Armory last night.

Fire Chief Savage will have a bicycle presented to him shortly by council. Look out Tom for punctures.

Our townsman H. Lake Gilmour has been elected Second Vice President of American Carbide Lamp Company of Philadelphia. (This became a large company with the advent of the "Prestolite" headlamp on the automobile.)

Grocer Clark was quite much excited a night or so ago, when he discovered a light burning in the room of his clerk, William Park, as he knew Park hardly ever kept a light burning. Going to the door of Park's room, he noticed something lying in his mouth, and with the idea that his clerk had committed suicide, he is said to have leaped over the foot of the bed and began shaking Park like a rat. Park finally woke up, and explanations followed, which showed that he had fallen into the arms of Morpheus while amusing himself with the sweet strains of a harmonica.

Dr. H.Lake Gilmour had a narrow escape from being crushed under the wheels of the locomotive of the 8:50 northbound train this morning. He was late and came running on the platform which was covered with ice, and as he struck the ice, both feet slipped from under him, and it was with difficulty that he kept from going under the engine. The depot lights were used last night for the first time and the appearance of it was helped 50 per cent. The lights burned all right except on the west side, and when the wind was blowing the hardest Agent Tuft had to light his oil lamps on that side. He hopes they will all burn tonight.

Two churches and not a saloon is the proud record of our lovely community.

It is reported that the borough council are contemplating the purchase of a flying machine or a balloon for George Voigt so he can see whether the street lights are burning or not.

Dr. Sickler, who recently returned from the Klondike regions, presented Dr. Lorence with the upper jaw of a moose he killed while up north last winter. The Doctor is an engaging conversationalist and says he has about 400 good views of that part of the country which give a good idea of the character of the location and the hardships to be endured in the thousands of miles to be walked to reach the gold fields. He denies the trip can be made from Philadelphia in 12 days, as is reported. The doctor has several bottles of gold dust, the form of currency in used in that part of the country. The miners there take their diggings to bank and can get coined money in exchange. (The gift of a moose jaw was appropriate as Dr. Lorence was a dentist.)

Source: Woodbury Daily Times – via Milt Webb

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 3 March, 2010

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT BARBARA CAPELLI

Hello All,

We have a super presentation this next meeting at the Train Station thanks to Vicki McCall with "The Victorian Lady".

And just to keep it in the "family" Lou McCall is sponsoring the presentation for April about the Farr Family in relation to his home and the town of Wenonah. Both March and April presentations are a real treat! Bring your friends!!

Let's hope spring is close to arriving and don't forget to also support the Women's Club and the Women's Fire Auxiliary by attending the Wine and Cheese Event on Saturday March 13th.

WHS MUSEUM MUSINGS

This would seem to be a good time to explain to the membership just exactly what our Museum is, what it is not, and ask for some help.

Volunteer "archivist" Julia Ream and I have spent a great many Saturday mornings in the museum space on the second floor of our former train station identifying, photographing, cataloging and storing the historic objects we have received thus far.

By far the largest part of the collection are the Wenonah Military Academy artifacts received from the Gloucester County Historical Society when they decided they no longer could spare the space for the material.

Due to the severe limitations of access to the upstairs space and the obvious fire safety concerns we cannot permit unlimited public access to the stored materials. At this time our thinking is to create a "virtual" museum whereby materials can be accessed via computerized means.

I photograph the materials prior to Julia entering the pictures and other pertinent information into the museum software program called

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"PastPerfect". Once in the computer the information can be distributed and shown by means of CD's and emails or projected as Power Point programs.

At this time most of the larger items of the Military Academy collection have been entered and stored. The smaller items such as school activity and sports photographs and brochures used to attract students remain to be stored after the names; pictures, etc. are entered in some fashion making retrieval possible. It is a tricky and time consuming process that is just a lot more than Julia and I want to handle alone. Can you sense the word "volunteers" coming?

If you did, you were right. We do need help if the museum is to be completed within an acceptable time frame (my lifetime for example).

The work is not very difficult, just tedious and time consuming. Some computer skills are needed but you don't have to be an expert. What is necessary is commitment of a small amount of time on a fairly frequent basis. Say 2 or 3 hours a week. We could also use the loan of a flatbed scanner that can handle a little larger than letter and legal size.

Should you have the time and the inclination please let us know.

Jack Sheppard Sr.

MARCH MEETING PROGRAM *"Unlacing the Victorian Woman"*

Join the Wenonah Historical Society on March 12, 2010 at 8:00 pm at the Train Station Community Center for a delightful living history program. Presenter Barbara Meyer Darlin combines her talents as a historian, seamstress, designer, and performer to bring us "Unlacing the Victorian Woman". Her live performance delights audiences revealing a day in the life of a Victorian lady, complete with on stage costume changes. Audience participation is welcome! Daily routines, customs, and social etiquette are also discussed. This program is perfect for National Women's History month. We hope to see you there! The program is complimentary but seating is limited so please RSVP to Vicki McCall at vmccallpc@comcast.net or phone at (856)-304-8823.

There were nearly a hundred people assembled in the M.E. Church last night to welcome their new pastor, Rev. Mr. Cobb and family. The evening was exceedingly pleasant with music, and the sociability of the people made the new pastor feel as if he were among friends. After partaking of ice cream and cake the people left, all wishing the new "Dominie" and his family a pleasant happy year.

Both our stores have fine stocks of garden seeds etc on hand for early spring planting.

Our people who have been residing out of town during the winter months are returning to their residences here. (Wenonah was still considered a summer resort, by many, at this late period. They resided in Camden and Philadelphia in the winter.)

It is said there was a lively time at the annual school meeting held at Noblitt's Hall last night. There were five candidates. The appropriation of \$2,300 to operate the school for a the year, which has been asked for the past few years, was endorsed.

R. H. Clark has erected a new grape arbor at his home in "Browntown" and expects to erect a new shed when the weather settles. (Browntown was the first block on West Willow Street.)

The grounds of the Inn are being put in shape for the coming season. (The Inn was the Wenonah Inn, east of the Borough Park.)

Turner and McCormick's store was a pleasing sight on Saturday filled with a fine line of fresh southern fruit.

Constable Drummer captured two suspicious characters loitering about town about 12:30 last night, and locked them up until morning. They made the excuse that they were looking for a friend.

After months of agitation enough interest in the Fire Company has been aroused to form such an organization, which was effected last night. A number of representative citizens meet and after weighing the matter well, elected councilman W. B. Oat, President; Lewis Buzby, Secretary and Treasurer; T. W. Savage, Chief, and Joseph Truncer, foreman.

What is everybody's business is nobodies business and for years all have been fireman and though we have been very free from disastrous fires, the lack of organization, so that each one would know his place and fill it in the least possible time, would have been seriously felt had a conflagration broken out. Now all will lend their assistance as before but there will be someone in authority to direct and use the brain and muscle of our stalwarts to the best advantage.

The decision of the Democrats to put a ticket in the field this spring has put the Republicans on the anxious bench as to who the nominees will be. No one seems to know until Saturday night, when the citizen's caucus will be held.

That our borough is a healthy place is proven by the fact that nearly all our doctors are dentists. The death rate is hardly mentionable and there is very little sickness. The population is increasing all the time.

Officer Drummer was not so successful in capturing the last man he went after. In company with officer Dopson and Deputy Savage, he started after John Tilden at Jericho wanted for resisting an officer in Woodbury about a year ago. The two officers entered the house but Tilden's father denied that his son was in the house. One started up the stairs and the other, it is said, looked in the room where the son was hiding but did not see him, when Savage called out "there he goes" and heard some one drop from the window. A hot chase ensued in which the officers shot at the fleeing darky nine times but he waded through a large pond, nearly to his waist, and escaped while they were groping around.

Bachelors and old maids, those very necessary adjuncts to all properly managed towns, as they always know the theory of bringing up children and other duties are remarkable for their scarcity in our borough. We have, though, some comely widows and the prettiest young girls in the State - this is a fact strongly attested by the young men thereabouts.

The borough's nomination election will be held Saturday at the land office, tomorrow evening to name a Mayor for two years, two members of council for three years, one commissioner of appeal for three years, a pound keeper and Justice of the Peace.

L. F. Feitner, a clerk for Job Scott, is nursing a gathering on his finger from a large splinter in it.

The most unique form of entertainment provided for our people for some time was a "Stocking Social" held at the residence of Mrs. Cookson last evening. It was in charge of one of the Missionary Committees of the Presbyterian Church and was most successful. The Orchestra and Mandolin Club furnished entertainment for a while and refreshments took up the remainder of the evening. Each person who attended was supplied with a small silk hose into, which was placed two pennies for each size of stockings worn. The receipts amounted to about \$22.50. The inference is very small hosiery worn.

Source: Woodbury Daily Times – via Milt Webb

OBITUARY
J. FRANK SHULL
1843 - 1910

August 8, 1910

Passed away at Rangeley Lake, Maine wither he had gone for his health, at 6: p.m. last Monday the 8th inst. Mr. Shull had not been in good health for some months, being afflicted with a dropsical affection. He was accompanied by his wife and Mr. and Mrs. W. J. McCahan and arrived at Rangeley at noon on the 7th. He stood the journey well and seemed to improve. Monday a.m. a change took place and his daughter, Mrs. H. G. Peddle, at home, was summoned by wire. At Jersey City a telegram announcing his death met them. The body reached Wenonah Wednesday morning and the funeral will be held from his late home on Friday, the 12th inst., at 2:30 p.m. Interment in Wenonah cemetery.

Mr. Shull was born in Deerfield, Cumberland County July 25, 1843. His elementary education was acquired in the district schools. Later he was a student at Eastman's Business College in Poughkeepsie, New York, after which he became a traveling salesman for a tobacco firm. Later he was

employed as a salesman for Jacoby Wirebock & Co. He traveled for twelve years more for this enterprise finally being admitted to the firm.

Soon after the death of Mr. Jacoby the new firm of Shull, Wirebock & Co. was organized. In 1892 Mr. Shull became the sole owner of the business which he conducted on a much broader plan than heretofore.



In 1875 he built the beautiful modern house at Wenonah in which he has resided with his family ever since.

Mr. Shull has been vice-president of the First National Bank, Glassboro ever since its organization. He was a member of the Baptist Church and for many years an influential Deacon in the First Baptist Church of this city, and a trustee of the South Jersey Institute at Bridgeton, a Baptist institution.

Fraternally he was a member of the Ionic Lodge, Siloam Chapter and Cyrene Commandary, all of Camden, N.J. and Guarantee Lodge, A.O.U.W of this city.

On Nov. 8, 1867 Mr. Shull married Miss Amelia Burdsall of Kentucky, who with two daughters, Mrs. H. G. Peddle of Wenonah, and Mrs. W. J. McCahan, Jr., of Philadelphia survive him.

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 4 April, 2010

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT BARBARA CAPELLI

Hello All,

This coming spring reminds me that I have some housekeeping to do. With that being said, I have some reminders and some thoughts to share with you about our Historical Society.

Please, don't forget the Membership dues are past due now...so please, be sure to fill out your membership forms for us. We are updating our current dues list and hope that we all are up to date!

Our March meeting was a HUGE success with The Victorian Lady, what a great program and big thanks again to Vicki for bringing her to Wenonah. This month we have a very much anticipated presentation by Lou McCall who will speak about the history of the Farr family in Wenonah, Vicki's childhood home and currently the McCall's residence. Lou has researched and found many interesting stories and lots of amazing historical facts he will discuss at our April 9th meeting. In May, we will have Heritage Station Winery of Mullica Hill give a presentation on the history of wine and provide a few sips of their best sellers for us.

We continue to have new friends join our membership and look forward to meeting new guests at each meeting. Bring a friend or neighbor to our next meeting and learn about one of the most historical homes in Wenonah.

APRIL MEETING PROGRAM

At our next meeting you will hear about the life and times of a local Wenonah man, a Quaker like many then in our town, but also a father who

raised ELEVEN children in Wenonah. You will hear about his then secret financial generosity to others, how he developed one of the largest hospitals in Delaware Valley and as president ran the largest and oldest financial institution in New Jersey south of Trenton. Come and hear about Edward Lincoln Farr and I assure you that you will come away being truly amazed how a local relatively unassuming man has had such an impact on Wenonah, New Jersey and even on people in other parts of the of the world.

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You will also hear about Edward Farr from his son Wally, who my wife Vicki and I visited and videoed during the early 1990's who will also speak about growing up in Wenonah in the early part of the last century. For example, you should come to hear about at what age the children of Wenonah were allowed to bring to Wenonah Schools something that would cause no less than an international news story today... but do also come to also hear what hasn't changed since way back then.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.
Lou McCall

LITTLEGRANGE 1897 - 2010

Edward L. Farr's eighth child was Edith Farr by his second wife Bertha Wallace Farr.

The story in this issue relates Edith's childhood memories of growing up during the early 1900's in Littlegrange, the Farr home in Wenonah built in 1897.

Littlegrange was sold by the Braun family in 1986. In November, 1989 while under the new ownership it was badly damaged by fire of "suspicious origin".

It was subsequently acquired by Lou and Vicki (Braun) McCall. Vicki Braun grew up in the house with brothers George Jr. and Todd so her childhood memories are of Littlegrange.

Now history has repeated for a third time and Littlegrange has once again become a place of childhood memories, this time for the McCall children.

Edward L. Farr was good for Wenonah in a great many ways and his legacy continues on.

Jack Sheppard Sr.

WHS MUSEUM MUSINGS

For all intents and purposes we have sorted, categorized and stored most, if not all of the historical materials that are related to the history of Wenonah.

We are now interested in acquiring "stuff" you may have such as photographs, objects, stories, or anything else that helps explain and/or memorialize Wenonah. You may donate it if you wish, or simply loan it so we can copy, scan or photograph it, your choice.

GROWING UP IN "LITTLEGRANGE"
RECOLLECTIONS OF EDITH URSULA FARR

First, a little background; Edward Lincoln Farr, the son of Lincoln D. and Hannah Bailey Farr, was born in the year 1861 in the town of Manchester, Maine and died in Wenonah in 1924. The father, Lincoln D. Farr, was engaged in the manufacture of floor covering oil-cloth in the state of Maine and in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and in 1889 created the Fair & Bailey Manufacturing Company in Camden.

Edward L. Farr was educated at the Friends' School in Providence, Rhode Island, and for many years was a member of the Society of Friends before moving into Wenonah and joining the First Presbyterian church there. He was a trustee of that organization. He also served as clerk of the Wenonah board of education for many years.

Responsible for many philanthropic activities Mr. Farr constructed Wenonah's public library which he then donated to the town. He also donated a pipe organ to the Presbyterian Church. In 1883, along with Dr. George W. Bailey and Mayor Wilkins, Mr. Farr assisted in gaining "Borough" status for the town thereby separating it from Deptford Township.

In 1885 Edward L. Farr married Miss Mabel R. Greene, who died in 1899. He and Mabel Greene had five children together. He then married Bertha Wallace in 1901 and had six more children.

In 1897 Mr. Farr completed construction and moved into a mansion that he named "Littlegrange". It was in this beautiful structure that many of his eleven children grew up.

One of the children, Edith Ursula Farr (1861 – 1924). related to her daughter Candace Elizabeth Ridington (married to Dr. William Ridington June 20, 1936), her memories of what it was like growing up in Littlegrange, in the small town of Wenonah, in

the early 1900's. Edith was the daughter of Bertha Wallace (1878 – 1952), the second wife of Edward L. Farr. The time period covered by the story is not noted but probably the 1950s. This is her story.

"For me, Littlegrange, my mother's home in Wenonah, New Jersey, was the prototype, the pattern, the source, for nearly all future dreams of lost paradises, and of yearnings to regain them. It's difficult to express adequately what the Littlegrange milieu meant to me then and now. I can only try to evoke the place in scenes, little bites of the golden apple, and to let you try to taste its remaining flavors second hand.

Littlegrange, named after William Morris's home in the Cotswolds, was an enormous house, but especially so to a child. I used to count the



bathrooms, alone there were five plus two lavatories, to impress my friends. Built in 1897 it had indeed to be a large house for the eleven children who would live there, though not all at the same time. There were magic places all over the house, places like no others I'd seen, except in books, where houses could take on mythical glows.

All of Littlegrange was special, sacred; but some spots were much, more so than others. Still others were scary, yet never in a really unpleasant way.

One special spot, different from the others because it was so excitingly spooky, was the attic. Or rather, the boarded shallow barrier to the attic at the top of the nursery stairs, for you could not enter the attic there. The door had been boarded up to save heat during the war, but we children liked to imagine some other sinister reason.

We'd tiptoe up the dark stairs and tap on the hollow wall, listen, "" and then run squealing down. Robin may have been the leader in this game, for he used to enjoy being afraid of attics and basements. Often at Westminster, he would insist on having one

Growing up in Wenonah

of us accompany him to the cellar, though he never told us exactly what he was afraid of.

I had, however, entered the servants' quarters at Littlegrange on the third floor via another stairway. There I saw fascinating rooms, starkly neat under the eaves, outfitted with brass beds. I thought of these rooms when on Masterpiece Theater's "Upstairs, Downstairs", a few scenes revealed the downstairs peoples' bedrooms. Though their quarters were smaller than those at Littlegrange, there was a similarity. Also similar to an "Upstairs, Downstairs" episode was the birth of a servant's baby in the Littlegrange premises. In this case though, the father of the baby was most certainly no one in the Farr family, and no king dined upstairs as King Edward did in the television series, Mumph had not even known the girl was pregnant, so the event surprised her, even though she didn't have to deal with a king at table while the mother-to-be was in labor.

Another magical place, but scary in an entirely different way, was Mumph's, (my grandmother) bath. Mumph herself I remember as somewhat reserved, so undoubtedly her rooms held the same associations for me. The bedroom itself, outside the bath, wasn't scary. I remember the set of silver-backed combs, mirrors, and brushes on her bureau, the photographs, the lovely Chinese rugs, the many windows, and the air of repose.

But for some reason, Mumph's bath made me uneasy and crawly because of its shower. In a poem, years later, I called it a "sarcophagus' shower" Its walls were not porcelain, but rather some kind of metal, perhaps zinc, and once the door was closed, it seemed like a dank prison.

I liked very much indeed the "children's bathroom" at Littlegrange, the one we kids took long sloppy baths in, with boats and rubber animals; and I liked Aunt Dol's (Elizabeth Farr) bath too, quiet and private at the end of a long hallway.

In the cellar at Littlegrange was the "Pumpkin Patch", a marvelous musty smelling room like a club house, I think there may even have been flags there, like in a Rotary Club room, and an old piano stood in one corner. Remembering the musty smell of the room alone makes me excited. I always felt a sense of drama down there, as though we children would dream up plays or act out dramatic situations the minute we crossed the threshold.

The good piano was in the living room, and how I'd love to play it now! It was a lovely Chickering

grand set in a wondrous room where I loved to sit alone, daydreaming. I remember vividly sitting in one of the soft armchairs and dreaming about Alan Palmer, the boy all the girls in school loved from afar. I had recently become familiar with a song from South Pacific which I heard on the radio, and so I sat there, singing along to "I'm in love with a wonderful guy," and feeling quite fine about everything» the comfortable scene around me, the privacy I had made for myself in this splendid room, and my love for Alan Palmer which seemed more fun and safe here, far away from the real situation, the grubby scene of cloak rooms, school bells, stale chewing gum, and the smell of cafeteria food.

Opposite the downstairs hallway were two other rooms a library and another sitting room of entirely different flavor from the living room. They contained rough horsehair furniture, or at least felt like horsehair, all prickly as it was. These rooms were darker, more cloistered than the living room.

The sitting room boasted the famous "jitney bus", an enormous plush rocking chair that quite engulfed a child. Sometimes two of us sat in it, first straining so its rockers lurched us so far backwards we expected to turn upside down, then waited to be flung recklessly forward. A few years ago, I realized with some shock that the large armchair I'd sat in at my sister Jeanie's house in Maine was one and the same with the "bus". It is a big chair, but nowhere near as big as I'd remembered. Its proverbial wings are clipped now, for it no longer rocks. But in its heyday, it could take a child on some ride! A visit to Wenonah was never complete without a ride on the "jitney bus".

Paneled walls lined the grand dining room, and the table was long, nearly the length of the long narrow room. I suspect we children didn't eat there regularly, for my memories of that room are hazy. But not hazy is my memory of the fine crèche, the largest I'd ever seen, which rested among pine boughs on the sideboard at Christmas time. I'd guess the clay figures were a foot high, but as in the case of the "jitney bus", my measurements could be off. The crèche arrangement gave the whole dining room a special grace, as far as I was concerned, and I loved to gaze at each figure."

PLEASE NOTE: These "Recollections" require too much space for one newsletter. The remainder will be provided in future issues. J. Sheppard Sr

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 5 May, 2010

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT BARBARA CAPELLI

Hello All,

Please join us for our next meeting Friday, May 14th at 7:30. Our guest presentation will be given by Penni Heritage of Heritage Vineyards in Richwood. She is a fifth generation farmer with a passion for making great wine. She will be speaking about the history of wine in our region and how Heritage Vineyard started. They have about 100 acres of farmland in Mullica Hill and it is devoted to the vineyards, apples, peaches, and pears. There will be samples and lots of great conversation. Please be sure to join us.

Don't forget if you should come across something particular to the preservation of Wenonah's history or even some great memories of times past in Wenonah, please make sure to come to June's picnic and share your treasures. Eventually, we'd like to document these stories and items in a book about Wenonah. We are hoping Alex Pozza will be with us that evening as he has agreed to record some of our Wenonah Stories.

Therefore, let's welcome Spring, its renewal of all those things living and let's not forget all the people, friends, and family that have

shaped us and made us who we are today.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Barbara Capelli

100 YEARS AGO IN WENONAH, MAY 1910

The need of a baseball team here this summer is already being felt, and some steps are being taken toward the formation of such a

WHS OFFICERS 2010

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Vice President.	Charles Horan
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club. We have the material and it would take very little money to put up a good team in the field and we could have some amusement on Saturday afternoons. Push the good work along.

A carload of trees arrived yesterday to beautify the already pretty property of Stephan Green. (These trees, white pine, still exist particularly on South Princeton Avenue and significantly Pine Street.)

Daniel W. Brown is laying a new stone pavement in front of his property on West Mantua Avenue. (former Victor Anderson's property)

Always on the watch for anything crooked or suspicious, Officer Drummer tells that he was almost sure he was about able to swoop in on a daring burglar early yesterday morning. As a rule thieves and thugs give him a wide berth knowing well his reputation for fearlessness in capturing them, and so when he saw lights in the home of Dr. Harvey he suspected at once that some daring desperado had foolishly entered his preempted domain to do violence. Accordingly plans were arranged for a surprise of the wrong doers, and just as the swoop was about to take place the timely discovery was made that the doctor and family had arrived home late last night from Newport News, Va. where they had been spending the winter.

The annual reception of the Monday Club was held at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. H. Lake Gilmour last evening and was a brilliant affair. Vocal and instrumental music and a social hour occupied the attention of the guests for a while when a beautiful collation was served by Caterer

Claphan of Woodbury. (The Monday Club still exists today.)

Fred Middleton and Miss Margaret Farr are the graduates of our school, being the only ones passing the county examination just concluded.

Schools of herring are reported in the creek and the boys are having delightful fishing. (This was an annual event in Wenonah for many years) The butchers say they will be glad when the shad season is over.

The automobile, which went through here yesterday, scared several horses and had many craning their necks to see what was causing all the excitement.

Ice dealer Joe Warner has put his wagon on for the summer to serve the people.

The depot grounds will be greatly improved by the addition of flowerbeds.

A lady demonstrator is at Richard Clark's store in the interest of Walker's Gasoline Borax soap that is said to avoid so much hard work in the wash.

The new bicycle ordinance has been posted forbidding riding on the sidewalks.

New trestlework has arrived for Dr. Bailey's coal yards. (A rail siding across from the firehouse.)

The rehearsal for the musicale and cantata last evening was all that can be desired. The young misses that are in charge of the affair are

much pleased. The admission is only three cents, the proceeds to be turned over to the church.

Hiram Leap has received another bag of seed from the grange, which he is kindly distributing among his friends and neighbors, who have gardens (The Grange Hall was on North Marion Avenue, originally Joseph Noblitt's Hall, later the American Legion Hall.)

Quite a number of our people witnessed the solar eclipse here this morning. The weather was clear and a good view of the phenomenon could be had.

J.L.Drummer has just completed a nice boardwalk in front of postmaster Wilson's property. (It was quite common at this period to have wooden sidewalks called boardwalks.)

Rev. R.H.Gage will give an illustrated lecture of the tour of the continent made by he and Edward Farr in the Presbyterian Church tonight. (They spent half a year in Europe.) A number of G.A.R. men from this section are to attend services in the M.E.Church on Sunday afternoon. (The Grand Army of the Republic was a Civil War veteran's organization.)

Mr. Lewis, the lessee of the Wenonah Inn, is making arrangements to open it sometime this month.

The electric light wires seem to be burning the tops of the trees in several places about town.

It seems your correspondent was wrongly informed regarding the dog of Dr. Stout having symptoms of rabies. Dr. Stout accounts for the bloody and disheveled appearance of his dog from the fact that the animal received a laceration of one ear while chasing through the swamp, which bleed freely and covered its jaws with blood and dust

Woodbury Daily Times
Woodbury, New Jersey mwebb

WENONAH MUSEUM MUSINGS

Our Museum is somewhat of a disappointment to me but maybe it is simply because I may have expected too much.

Curator Julie Ream has spent a great many Saturdays at the WHS computer entering, categorizing, sorting, and then packing the artifacts the Historical Society inherited. Fortunately we do have the Wenonah Military Academy materials received from the Gloucester County Historical Society. Unfortunately we don't have too much else from the period 1871 to 1904 when the Academy opened its doors.

For obvious reasons I find it necessary to once again reach out to the membership with a request for donations of any material even remotely connected to that period of our history. The materials can be donated, or loaned so we can take photographs and save them in that manner. Jack Sheppard Sr.

GROWING UP IN "LITTLEGRANGE"
RECOLLECTIONS OF EDITH URSULA FARR

This is the second part of a three part series describing what it was like being a child of Edward Lincoln Farr and living in the family mansion while growing up in Wenonah. These are remembrances of Farr daughter Edith (1861 – 1924) which she related to her daughter Candace Elizabeth who married Dr. William Ridington in 1936.

The first episode of the series in the April newsletter described the layout of Littlegrange and what some of the rooms, especially the cellar were like.

In this episode she describes what life was like around the holidays, especially Christmas.

Christmas at Wenonah was a regular event for us until Mumph (the grandmother) died. The air seemed alive with special plans and special sights. Sometime before Christmas, Aunt Dol (Elizabeth Farr) loaded up the car with gifts and let us accompany her while she delivered them to Wenonah friends. These gifts were beautifully wrapped, and I'd watch as Aunt Dol carried them to various decorated doorways until they were delivered and out of sight.

The air was cold and bright on those jaunts, in my memory, and the Wenonah houses represented what I now romantically imagine the best of middle class Americana—clean framed homes with modest wreaths and neat lawns. Whenever I remember those trips I picture specifically a white frame house as I viewed it from the car. The door opens and Aunt Dol laughs and chats with the person who obviously likes and respects her a great deal. There was a Norman Rockwell flavor about those scenes, and the deliveries perfectly summed up the Christmas spirit.



Sometimes we went by the drugstore on the way home and bought pretzel sticks, the thick long kind. I always think of Wenonah when I see those pretzels today.

The big event at Christmas was unveiling the tree. Unlike later, for the Ridington Christmases, the tree was decorated mysteriously Christmas Eve behind the closed nursery doors, and then unveiled with much fanfare Christmas day. Although I'd not recommend this method for families with children, yet there was something special and exotic about it, for the long wait between Christmas Eve and the next morning was exquisitely excruciating.

How we wanted to see beyond those nursery doors! But rushing in the next morning was wonderful, although at first, the gifts took on more importance than the tree. We examined it in detail later. One of those Christmases I received a "Sparkle Plenty" doll whose name I never thought much about until recently, when my friend, Gerald Clements, told me the "Plentys" were cartoon characters and Sparkle was one member of the

family, along with B. O. Plenty.

I remember well her blonde hair, which my cousin Van seized to drag her along the hallway, to my rage. I still remember my anger and disgust with him over such unbelievable callousness with my "child".

I don't know how often my Aunt Jeanie, her husband Nick, and their children, Jud and Van (their third child, Mark, was born later) came for Christmas, but one year, they were certainly there. Aunt Edie and Aunt Clara, actually great aunts, were always there, as was Great Granddaddy Cooper, and of course, Aunt Mike and her children, Maurie and John, who lived close by. The great aunts and great grandfather deserve special attention later in these

pages; they were marvelous figures whose beauty, age, and dignity lent a special atmosphere to the gatherings they, attended.

And so, the nursery was the scene of special holidays, as well as the place where relaxation, conversation, and play were carried on by children and adults alike. It was there the adults sat comfortably in the evening, Aunt Dol smoking, Mumph .sipping some sort of nightcap which I later learned was beer, us playing with the building brick set, or just sitting listening.

Aunt Dol had virtually a wing of the house to herself, where in addition to her bedroom and bath, she used a comfortable little studio for arts and crafts. There, she painted simple oil landscapes, which ranked her as a full fledged professional artist in my eyes, until Mother told me Aunt Dol wasn't an artist in the way I thought. Tables in this little room were spread with wooden angel figures, about seven inches high, she painted the angels in various pastels and stacked them up for Christmas. I loved these angels, and couldn't understand why my aunt was not a real artist because of them. I still have two of these angel figures, who smile from their half moons in my guest bedroom.

Aunt Dol was the source of-games at Littlegrange. Some of the most memorable romps were the bedtime "elevator" rides, when Tante linked her hands to form a stirrup, let us step into them with one foot, and then lifted and dumped us into bed. The lifting and dumping gave our stomachs the sensation of being in an elevator; thus the name. It was a simple game and a simple gesture- the tossing of giggling children in the air. And yet, I remember it with enormous fondness and special affection.

Another activity Aunt Dol directed was the drawing of our silhouettes from wall shadows. We'd sit hushed while she traced the outlines of our profiles directly into black construction paper, or onto plain paper to be transferred later. Recently, I discovered one of those silhouettes, Joy's, in a trunk in the attic at Westminster. I don't know if any other survived.

Sometimes, Aunt Dol launched with little warning into the role of Katishaw from *The Mikado*, the part she sang at camp in New Hampshire, and shrieked out, "Assist me! All of you!"

But more routinely for a while, she carried off an even more dazzling tour de force. This was her magical ability to "swallow" a prune pit and cause it to emerge directly and painlessly from one of her ears. I was quite transfixed by this art, which I demanded to see over and over in an effort to catch the pit on its journey, or to figure out the mystery in some other way. I must have been small, because I never could detect any flaws in the process, mostly because my method of detecting flaws was to inspect her ears after the pit had emerged. I was forced to conclude that somehow, she probably did ingest the pit and allow it to travel within her body, though I wasn't a hundred percent convinced. Mercifully, I never tried the trick myself. As an adult, I'm delighted to imagine my wonderful gullibility at that stage of 'childhood, whatever age it was.

Another intermittent game involved the fascinating wall intercoms connecting the first and second floors. One was in the kitchen and connected with the nursery; another was outside Mumph's room. We'd relay strategic messages back and forth on those amusing gadgets, probably annoying the adults at times, and I imagine if I were offered the chance to play with them today, I'd be just as annoying.

Then there were the carved bears on the posts of each main staircase landing. Kissing the bears was really Jeanie's original game. Sometimes I'd follow suit, but only in pale imitation of her resounding and serious smacks for each bear, as she struggled up each stair, to be lifted at strategic points.

Rolling down the steep front bowl of a terrace outside the house, "the Hollow Hill", was a game the home movie camera captured. Today, at least three of the Ridington children plus Maurie, our cousin, and a neighbor boy, can still be viewed, seriously eyeing the long tumble down, then putting the project into grinning, and finally chuckling practice. Robin was the leader of the bunch, his spinning on target, his aim sure. The camera captures me, however, taking my sights and aim, and then rolling quite crookedly a short distance down the terrace, but smiling nevertheless.

PLEASE NOTE: These "Recollections" require too much space for one newsletter. The final segment will be in the next issue. J. Sheppard Sr

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 6 September, 2010

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT BARBARA CAPELLI

Hello All,

This month's meeting is our "Meet and Greet Return from Summer Soiree". Friday, September 10th at 7:30 pm. Please be sure to bring a friend who may be interested in a membership.

For many years members brought appetizers and/or beverages to the McCall's porch. This year we will meet at the Train Station Community Center where we can enjoy the outside train platform, weather permitting and still have the comforts of the indoors. Huge thanks go to Vicki and Lou McCall for so graciously hosting our September porch party for those many years.

We are asking members to bring a favorite side dish, snack, appetizer or beverage for all to share. We also are hoping to have photos of past displays from Betty Rose, Frank Eggert's House Plaque book, and Jack's photos and postcards. And as usual, Historical Society merchandise for sale.

Our goals for this season include as always increasing our membership, and providing thoughtful, informative, and historically relevant Wenonah programs. For instance, in our October meeting we will have a presentation from the Harts, Dominys, and Cowles about the Fire Company.

October is Fire Prevention month and we are sure to enjoy a historically interesting program by former and current Fire Company members.

We continue to work on archiving our memorabilia, photos, maps, and writings. If you would like to volunteer please contact Barb Capelli (856 364 1306) or Vicki McCall (856 468 9555).

Thank you.

WHS OFFICERS 2010

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Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Louis McCall

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WENONAH MUSEUM

Progress on the Museum during the summer of 2010 can best be described as slow, to stopped. However this is to be expected as the Military Academy artifacts are relatively easy to catalog and stow, while photos, written materials, historic documents and such are much more difficult.

Member and author Marjorie Lentz has contributed much time and talent assisting with the narrative for the "Origins of Wenonah" slide

show. When this is completed a slide presentation of Wenonah history can be made with substantial information for each slide, some of which has come from Marjorie's files and hasn't been seen or heard before.

Hopefully now that fall is here there will be more time for this worthwhile project.

WENONAH HISTORICAL MUSINGS

Shown below is the actual cover design for Wenonah's Fourth of July program for the year 1910.



An enigma encountered while researching and cataloging our program collection is that although we have the program for the first celebration in 1872, we have none going forward until 1897 and then another gap until 1909. Should anyone have any of those please let us add them to the collection or at least make a copy.

Jack C. Sheppard Sr.

GROWING UP IN "LITTLEGRANGE"
RECOLLECTIONS OF EDITH URSULA FARR

This is the last part of a three part series describing what it was like being a child of Edward Lincoln Farr and living in the family mansion while growing up in Wenonah. These are remembrances of Farr daughter Edith (1861 – 1924) which she related to her daughter Candace Elizabeth who married Dr. William Ridington in 1936.

The first episode of the series in the April news-letter described the layout of Littlegrange and what some of the rooms, especially the cellar were like.

In the second part she described what life around the holidays, especially Christmas.

In this final part of her recollections she describes the physical amenities of Littlegrange, both inside and outside in exquisite detail.

Robin and Maurie, close in age, played many games together. But I was quite awed, as a child, by my cousin Maurie, five years older than I, who seemed so terribly grown up and self-assured and who cut quite a figure with her blonde hair.

I coveted everything she owned. I remember coloring happily in my own book, one with large pictures of balls and toys and animals, until I saw her book, one with fairies and elves and stars. I lost all interest in my own book and instead, dreamed of one like hers.

Maurie has always been a great story teller, and even when she was a child, she used to spin out endless engaging tales for Robin and me,

illustrating them by drawing on a magic slate, the kind you can instantly erase with a flick of the plastic page. Characters appeared before our eyes while Maurie created adventure after adventure for them. Today, Maurie continues to write, and has succeeded in publishing stories while also maintaining a journal hundreds of pages long by now.

Later, Maurie visited Littlegrange with a "grownup" pocketbook which dominated all my thinking. I was probably not yet ten, but I felt grownup enough to have such a pocketbook. My wishes were fulfilled when my parents let me choose such a pocketbook, a red shoulder bag

which I prized and can still picture perfectly today.

Other outdoor games at Littlegrange included croquet and badminton. I'm glad I can lay claim to having participated in such an old fashioned and wonderfully Jamesian game as croquet.

Remembering the faded colors of the

worn balls and mallets, and the feel of the wickets, I half confuse myself with Isabel Archer or some other turn of the century figure. But play croquet we did, on ground tunneled by moles, so that I could imagine the cute furry creatures beneath me as I played. I don't remember the adults playing much with us, though they probably played sometimes. Badminton was even more fun, and in later years, I continued to play badminton with my friend Anna Miller in Westminster.

The equipment for all these games and more I never played, like tennis, waited for us in the hall closet which held its own special musty sporty



odor. This closet was situated near one of the side porches, "by which one could reach the back garden where we held Easter egg hunts. All the porches were magnificent deep stone structures from which one could hole up in a wicker chair or, more frequently, perch on the stone sides, miniature walls, really, and survey the world. We used to walk around the house as far as we could on those stone walls, inching carefully around the pillars. Often, the family sat on the front porch, and there are pictures of us there: Mother, in a striped seersucker skirt, flanked "by Jeanie and me, sucking our thumbs; Mumph with John, Maurie's brother; Aunt Jeanie, grinning; me, with a corsage pinned to my dress for my tenth birthday later on. Those were casual, pleasant moments.

Toward the front of the house was a stone gazebo, the "summer house", where I especially loved to sit. It was surrounded by enormous evergreen trees, which particularly attracted me. It was there I think I began to be consciously aware of trees' beauty, though I'm not sure from this vantage point how strong that consciousness was. I used to climb part way up one or two, but was content mostly to touch them and gaze upward into them as I stood below and within, sheltered in their circle of branches which reached the ground and formed a cozy room around me. Sometimes I fantasized about what it would be like to live there under the branches. That lawn, and the lawn at Bryn Mawr, were my favorites in all the world, and I have yet to find another lawn which measures up.

The Littlegrange lawn and facade were majestic and prominent. I wonder now, with all the valuable items inside the house, did the Farrs worry much about robbery? They were, indeed, robbed once when my mother was six, on the night before her sister Jeanie was born. In the morning, it was discovered that all the flat silverware had been stolen, along, with some large cut glass bowls which were found later, discarded. My mother and Aunt Dol were most astonished, however, to learn the thieves had dumped all the

sugar from the silver sugar bowls. The two girls reasoned that if they were thieves, they would have stolen the sugar, a more valuable item in their minds, and in point of fact, a rationed item too in 1918.

Littlegrange days are far from my daily milieu, and have been for years and years—since I was ten, in fact. It amazes me how deeply the place touched me, in a mythical way. I guess the house and my associations with it are mythical to me, a symbol of golden rich days and of imagination, because everything there was so spacious, so unbounded. I knew it all was, even at the time, and so didn't take it entirely for granted, although I was only a child. Possibly, too, because my access to the place was cut off so abruptly, I was left with a sense of mystery and irreparable loss. It was as though Littlegrange had disappeared. Thus, I began to dream that I'd miraculously found it again, and with rejoicing and wonder, wandered its halls and rooms again. Sometimes, I dreamed of other large houses, in which I discovered more and more rooms, reminiscent of Littlegrange, or I'd dream that our Westminster house, or the one I was currently living in, was physically connected to Littlegrange or to rooms like its rooms. As recently as last year, 1983, I dreamed that Jack and I moved to Princeton, where he had, in reality, applied for a job, and settled into our house. In the dream, I awoke next morning to look out the back window and discover that Littlegrange lay right next door, quiet, majestic, and unchanged, to keep us company. I was overjoyed and felt I'd come home again. In truth, Littlegrange and all it represents will remain forever unchanged for me, a little like figures on Keats' Grecian urn, unconsummated but intact in the precious care of my memory.

PLEASE NOTE: Many thanks to Vicki and Lou McCall who have spent a great deal of time and effort seeking out and recording the history of their home known as Littlegrange. By doing so they have preserved a grand part of Wenonah history.

J. Sheppard Sr

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 7 October, 2010

OCTOBER MEETING PROGRAM

The Cowles, Dominys and Harts will be discussing their lives in the fire company from 1960 through 1988. They will briefly discuss fire company history, life as a member and the friendships made, major fires during the time frame, innovations, and humorous stories of fire fighting and non-fire fighting activities. The final part of the presentation will be one of many movies made by the fire company during those years, entitled "The Red Hot Mamas" depicting life in the Wenonah Fire Company if it were run by women.

EARLY DAYS IN WENONAH

Street lighting

The first lights along our streets were oil lamps, provided by citizens, that needed to be lit each evening and extinguished some time later. According to the Minutes of the Borough Commission May 8th, 1883 a Resolution was adopted to "... assume the care of filling, cleaning, lighting and extinguishing all street lamps that are located by private individuals". However the cost of the oil and other materials for the lamps was at the expense of the residents. At the July 1883 meeting Mr. George Vogt was hired to light,

extinguish and maintain the lights for the sum of Fifty dollars a year. Shortly after this period the Borough started purchasing and installing street lamps at public expense. By the end of 1883 many more lamps had been purchased and installed requiring George Vogt's contract to be adjusted. Going forward he was to be paid 30 cents per lamp per month.

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(Editor's Note; In view of the many electrical outages in Wenonah recently we may have to go back to installing and maintaining our own street lights and possibly building an electricity generating plant.)

Just kidding of course but we do have problems with interruption of electricity to Wenonah needing immediate attention. I have expressed my concerns to Mayor Capaldi and Chief Scheetz as these outages are not only a nuisance, but

dangerous as well. Electronic devices are rendered useless along with hard-wired telephones. Many senior citizens don't have cell phones so emergencies cannot be reported if phone lines are disabled.

Jack C. Sheppard Sr.

WENONAH HISTORICAL MUSINGS

In last month's newsletter I mentioned the problem of gaps in our July 4th program collection. We have the program for the first celebration in 1872 but none going forward until 1897 and then another gap through 1909.

This then raises the question of continuity of July 4th celebrations in Wenonah since its founding.

I recently spent time reviewing Milt Webb's collection of news clippings and found a significant number of articles in local papers reporting celebrations in Wenonah. These reports indicated there were parades, speeches, athletic contests, and for many years fireworks.

In view of these findings I feel safe in suggesting there have been Independence Day observances in Wenonah continuously since its founding in 1871. There are very few communities in the state, or in the country for that matter, that can make that claim.

Jack C. Sheppard Sr.

The following is the first of two parts of an article written by Wenonah historian Milton Webb. Milt was born in Wenonah and loved the town more than anyone I have known. He retired from employment early for health reasons and spent a great amount of the rest of his life at the Gloucester County Historical Society museum studying Wenonah history.

There were two hotels, the first being the Wenonah House Hotel which was also among if not the first building in Wenonah. .

THE HOTELS OF WENONAH
BY MILTON H. WEBB

Wenonah was a housing development created by the Mantua Land and Improvement Company. This organization was a mix of men associated with local businesses, the West Jersey Railroad and Philadelphia investors. The West Jersey Railroad in Deptford Township below Woodbury had been realigned and a new station built called the "New Mantua Station at Wenonah." This was sited in the middle of what had previously been Isaac Stevenson's sweet potato field. This was the area proposed for the new town on the West Jersey Railroad. In December 1870, the decision was made to form this land company and to buy 572 acres of land in this area for \$69,575.

One of the men attending this preliminary meeting was William Frederick Alien, Resident Engineer of the West Jersey Railroad. He was the son-in-law of Thomas Jones Yorke, president of the railroad and director of the Land Company. Alien's role in the creation of Wenonah was vital, as it was his plat,

which would be the guideline for the future evolution of this new town.

In Alien's plan, the focal point was to be a "boarding house" facing a two block park area. Adjacent to this was the new railroad depot and a two block business section. The streets were laid out in a grid pattern, roughly north and south, east and west. "Wenonah was an early example of a railroad suburb that was established around a transportation node both to derive profit from the sale of land and to provide ridership for the railroad itself."

The proposed Wenonah House, the "Boarding House," was specified to be 45 by 52 feet, three stories high with a back building 26 by 40 feet surrounded by a veranda 12 feet in width. It was described as being Doric in style but the cupola on top gave it a distinctive Italianate style, very Victorian. Each room was to have water and gas, a luxury for this period. An interesting detail was a windmill to provide power to pump water into a tank on the roof.

Bids came in from as far away as Cape May City. One typical bid of interest was for "the Boarding House at Mantua Station in the sum of \$15,800 signed by Sterling Clayton, guaranteed by E. Stokes Co. of Woodbury, dated April 3, 1871." The low bidder was Harden and Brother of Camden in the amount of \$15,000, for which they were awarded a contract.

In 1872, the new Wenonah House opened for its first summer season with Benjamin Packer, a local resident, in charge. Although the town was sparsely populated with only ten houses, the hotel was fully

booked up for the season. Newspaper accounts give a glimpse into the activities of the boarding house. Mentioned were plays, cakewalks, pigeon matches, yachting parties, concerts and turtle suppers. One such event is related in the local newspaper:

"The guests of the Wenonah House prior to closing enjoyed a reed bird supper, and the last hop of the season, impromptu". At the supper the reed birds were invitingly imbedded in the only toast offered as if they were anxiously expecting appreciation, which they fully met with, in connection with the hot waffles and dressing of "sugar and spice and all that is nice." Every luxury was included in the amply spread table, and all did full justice to the repast, and were reluctant to leave the supper room radiant with brightness and good cheer. Dancing on the "light fantastic toe" was heartily enjoyed until the participants were well tired. This was followed by a tableaux and stair dance, so vivid, so real that all could participate in the mirth. The respected proprietor and his lovely wife have our warmest thanks for their cordial hearty efforts for the comfort and pleasure of their guests, and as we parted it was with the earnest wish and prayer that they might be encouraged for many years with the same well filled house of cultured and pleasant people."(1) Wenonah was never a "boom town" and has had its periods of depression. One such period was in the early 1880's. Bookings at the hotel became meager; houses built on speculation by the Land Company remained unsold. It was decided to hire a resident agent to create momentum for the land development. The man

hired was Ephraim J. Lloyd of Salem. He pursued his job with vigor and his first action was to persuade the Mantua Land and Improvement Company to get out of the hotel business and sell the Wenonah House. The sale was to an Ann Linch of Philadelphia and then to a Samuel Shreeve of Mt Laurel in the same year and finally to Mahlon Newton of Woodbury in 1884.

Newton was an experienced hotel manager. He entered the hardware business at the young age of eighteen and four years later opened and managed the Newton Hotel at Broad and Delaware Streets in Woodbury. The first new approach, at the suggestion of Lloyd, was that the hotel would be opened all year. Flyers were distributed which read: "Go To Wenonah the new town on the West Jersey Rail Road 11 miles from Philadelphia before making arrangements for the summer or for the year. No healthier location in the vicinity of Philadelphia fine rolling country and the best of water, boating and fishing."

In 1884, he opened the Wenonah House hosting a reception for one-hundred invited guests. There was a string orchestra from Philadelphia, Chinese lanterns, flags and flowers. This-set the stage for the coming season. There were elaborate dinners, tableaux, lectures, yachting parties and hops. General William Sewell, the supervisor of the West Jersey Railroad and a frequent guest of the hotel, on several occasions provided private cars to be added to the excursion trains for trips to the shore. The period of 1884 to 1887 was very successful.

Unfortunately the ownership of Newton ended in 1887 when the

building and grounds were sold to Senator George Pfeiffer, Jr. of Camden for \$12,000. He was a successful businessman owning a coal and lumber business, and also the water supply business for the city of Camden. His hotel experience involved the ownership of a hotel at Brown's Mills In-The-Pines. Business at the Wenonah House diminished rapidly, possibly because of absentee, ownership and lack of interest. In 1890, the building remained empty and reflected poorly on the financial condition of the community. The newspaper wrote "There is no probability that the hotel will open this season. As things go at present the Wenonah House is of no advantage either to the owner or to the borough."(2)

1. Constitution, 1 September 1874

2. Ibid, 11 March 1891

Next month's concluding installment, the second hotel in Wenonah, *The Wenonah Inn*.

WENONAH 101 YEARS AGO
OCTOBER 6, 1910

Speech by President Woodrow Wilson to the Cadets of the Wenonah Military Academy

"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."

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 8 November, 2010

OCTOBER MEETING PROGRAM

Barbara Conway and Charles Horan will present a program about the NJ Leni Lenape Indians and will include information about her father James Conway, and how he began his life-long hobby of searching for and collecting Indian relics. They will display samples of artifacts from her father's extensive collection, many of which were found in and near Wenonah.

Barbara will also relate some history about the Conway family in Wenonah starting when her grandfather, a Pennsylvania Railroad accounting employee, was transferred from the "Pennsy" offices in Pittsburgh to its offices in Philadelphia.

William Conway served on Borough Council from 1931 to 1944 and as the 12th mayor of Wenonah from 1945 through 1959.

Barbara Conway continues the long-tradition of involvement in the affairs of Wenonah that started with her grandfather and continued through her father.

RUTH INEZ SHUSTER FORMER WHS MEMBER

Ruth Inez Shuster and Irma Shuster Coates, Reunited in Death

Former WHS member and long time Wenonah resident Ruth Shuster and sister-in-law Irma Shuster Coates are now interred in the same

location, Eglington Cemetery in Clarksboro. They both died within six months of each other, Ruth most recently on October 7, 2010, Irma on April 25th of this year.

Ruth's husband Oram was the son of James Shuster who at one time was both Wenonah Tax Collector and a barber with his shop and office in the former ticket office for the West Jersey Railroad Co., known to many as the Wild Iris flower shop.

WHS OFFICERS 2010

President	Barbara Capelli
Vice President.	Charles Horan
Secretary	Vicki McCall
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Louis McCall

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

The father, James, in addition to being a barber, was also an avid photographer, merchant and postcard creator, and many of his postcards appear from time to time on the EBay computer auction and at flea markets in New Jersey.

We are thankful to the Coates family for the many contributions of historic materials to the Society, and to Ruth Shuster for being a devoted member of the WHS until her illness took her away from Wenonah.

THE HOTELS OF WENONAH BY MILTON H. WEBB

Last month's newsletter provided the first of two installments describing the first structure in Wenonah, the "Wenonah House", a hotel intended to attract people to this new town along the tracks of the West Jersey Railroad. The first article described the early days of the hotel starting in 1872 and the period through the early 1890's when the advent of the automobile caused doubt about the future of the hotel. We continue with the concluding installment.

In May 1891, there was a public sale of the House and its furnishings by M. Thomas and Son of Philadelphia. The sale was a disaster; only the furniture was sold. Charles Middleton of Philadelphia held a \$7,000 mortgage on the building and foreclosure soon followed. The building was put on the market and sold for \$5,000 to Stephen Greene of Philadelphia and Wenonah.

Stephen Greene was one of the early pioneers of Wenonah. He was the owner of Helfenstein, Lewis and Greene, one of the largest printing firms on the East Coast. Mr. Greene and his family vacationed for several years in Wenonah as guests at the Wenonah House. In 1880, he purchased a tract of land and built a large home with many outbuildings including a barn, stables and a greenhouse suitable for him to go into the florist business. His love was Wenonah and he became very supportive of the growth and

betterment of the new village. One large philanthropic gesture was the financing of the construction of the new Methodist Episcopal Church (E. Willow St. at S. Marion Ave.).

In 1892, Stephen Greene created a syndicate incorporated as the "Wenonah Inn Company" made up of himself, Thomas Whitney Synnott, Dr. George Washington Bailey, J. Frank Shull, and Charles M. Wilkins. Mr. Synnott was the president of the Whitney Glass Works of Glassboro and had retired that year. Dr. Bailey, a Civil War veteran, had been a medical doctor, but because of overwork had health problems; he then went very successfully into the coal business and amassed a considerable fortune. J. Frank Shull was the owner of the wholesale grocery firm of Shull, Wireback and Company, Philadelphia. Charles M. Wilkins was the owner of Partrick, Carter and Wilkins, manufacturers of electrical supplies.

Plans were formulated to build a new hotel on the site of the old Wenonah House, which was to be demolished. It was designed to accommodate one hundred and fifty guests, three times as many as the old hotel. The total cost would exceed \$70,000, a considerable amount of money in that period. The paper reported "a sufficient supply of water has been secured and the electrical apparatus is of the latest design, the plumbing, always one of the most important in a public house, has been put into the most competent hands." There was a bowling alley, billiard room, barber shop, a 32 by 60 foot amusement room, laundry and engine-dynamo room.

The West Jersey Railroad started construction of a new "handsome"

station as part of the agreement with the syndicate in their guarantee to build a new larger hotel. This still stands today as the Wenonah Community Center.

Other improvements followed the 1892 construction of the Wenonah Inn. In 1894, servants' quarters were built on South Marion Avenue. Additional "shedding" for carriages and horses of the guests was erected on East Cherry Street. A large athletic field with a grandstand was laid out on East Cedar Street. An extensive sewage system, remnants of which still exists today, was built not only for the hotel, but also for the houses of the community. A park area called "Camel Back" was



The Wenonah Inn was originally opened in 1872 as the Wenonah House Hotel. It was one of the first buildings in the town. Eventually expanded becoming the pictured Wenonah Inn, it was converted into the Wenonah Military Academy opening in 1901

created for the hotel patrons and the citizens of the town. This is now known as the Frank Stewart Estate acquisition, Comey's Lake. A wooded area on West Cedar Street called the "Glen" was cleared and "put into good order" for the visitors of the Inn. A new lake was formed at the foot of South Clinton Avenue with a large boathouse. This created accessibility to the Great Mantua Creek for canoeing which was quite popular during this period. This pond was called Greene's, then Lake Cornelia, and later Parker's Lake. A small golf course was built extending from the recreational field to "Camel Back." Flagstone sidewalks replaced the old wooden walkways.

The hotel was an instant success and business was described as "booming." This brought back memories to the townspeople, of the Wenonah House under the management of Mahlon Newton in the 1880's. The staff consisted of a manager, chief clerk, room clerk, night clerk, chef, headwaiter, head cook, head engineer, head porter, master of ceremonies, waiters and bellboys.

On several occasions special trains were put on the railroad siding for large dances and special affairs for the convenience of the patrons. One such affair was the performance of an opera advertised in July 1890: "Wenonah Inn. Extraordinary event grand opera "FAUST" by Gounod sung in concert by the Wolffunger Grand Opera Company of Philadelphia [with a] chorus of 40 people"

Another interesting account was in 1895: "A novel parade took place last Saturday afternoon by the guests of the Inn who have their teams here. There were about 35 turnouts and these were gaily decorated. The occupants carried flags and flowers while handsome horses held their heads high and seemed-to feel they were engaged in the novelty as much as their owners. After parading through Wenonah they drove to Mantua and Woodbury." In 1899 the Wenonah Inn Company sold their real estate holdings back to Stephen and Martha Greene for an unknown reason. It could have been that there was a growing apprehension that trains previously carrying guests to the Inn were now transporting them to seashore points. The railroads during this period had created spurs to most of the off-shore islands, giving access to the growing

popularity of salt-water bathing. The advent of the automobile after the turn of the century gave freedom to explore new vacation spots. Wenonah was no longer considered a summer resort destination

In 1903, Stephen Greene started extensive restoration of the first floor of the building and the grounds. Rumors circulated that he was going to build a large swimming pool. These changes seemed strange considering the dim outlook for the future of the building. These doubts were answered on September 20, 1904 when the Inn building opened under a new name - the Wenonah Military Academy.

Milton H. Webb

WENONAH 110 YEARS AGO
AUGUST, 1900

Plover gunning is much enjoyed by many of our sportsmen.

The quoits fever has struck the town, and it is said some of our enthusiasts don't have time for their meals even.

One of the Western Union telegraph-wires was found burned out at the depot yesterday, from the storm the night before.

E. Ward Wilkins, wife/and daughters, and son, are on an extended trip to Niagara. Falls, New York State, and other summer points of interest.

The building of the lockup must have had a very salutary effect here as it has not yet had an occupant. But our evil doers — of which we have very few — will have to keep a sharp look out for Constable Drummer for he is a determined sleuth.

During the heavy storm Tuesday night the water pipes in Dr. Gilmour's residence seemed all aflame. At nearly every flash, of

lightning, the current would snap and crack from the faucet and sparks would shoot out several feet.

Watches, clocks and jewelry repaired. Called for and delivered on receipt of postal. A.F. Jenkins, Wenonah, N.J.

Woodbury Daily Times

WENONAH 110 YEARS AGO
NOVEMBER, 1900

A masquerade ball was held in Noblitt's Hall last night. There were about thirty present from Mantua, Westville, Woodbury and Wenonah.

Butter prices are going up but Turner and McCormick are keeping their prices as low as possible.

The Junior Athletic Club will open their football season tomorrow with a game with Sterling Junior of West Philadelphia. Admission to the ball grounds will be free.

The democrats of the borough think they will poll something like fifty votes next Tuesday. Time will tell just how many are of that persuasion however.

Stephan Greene has moved some of the furniture of the Inn to his boathouses in Atlantic City.

All the arrangements have been made for the vaudeville entertainment and food by the Republican Club in Noblitt's Hall. The club members are looking forward to the best time in the history of the organization. Cards of admission have been issued. The program will be interspersed with returns by telegraph when they come in.

Headline: *McKinley and Roosevelt Chosen by the People to Conduct Affairs of State -- A Republican Land Slide*, Wenonah results, McKinley 89 Bryan 21.

REWARD The subscriber will pay \$5.00 reward for information which will lead to the conviction of a party or parties who alleged to burn Noblitt's Hall on Saturday evening-Joseph Noblitt, Wenonah

A new telephone is being put in the depot to connect to the marl pits.

Regular services in the churches tomorrow with prospects of large congregations. Our pastors are quite popular with their people and the houses are always nearly full.

The cottage prayer meeting of the ME congregation was held at the house of W.J. McGowan last evening. Tonight it will be held at the home of Mrs. Cline.

An extension of South Marion Avenue is to be laid out across the meadows (Mantua Creek) making a more direct course and shorter drive.

The entire number of lots of land of the Mantua Land and Improvement Company —268 lots—were sold at their recent sale. Dr. Bailey, Stephen Greene, and Thomas Synnott were the principal buyers. This practically puts the land company out of business as they have nothing more to be in business for and it will probably be disbanded.

George Dilkes lost a valuable cow Saturday. (He would graze it in the park.)

Who would bother with a horse? No one after a ride in Blair Smith's Locomobile. Mr. Smith almost froze a Times representative on a trip from here to Woodbury this morning. Most of the time the speed was fully 20 miles per hour.

Woodbury Daily Times
Milton H. Webb archives