

# Wenonah Historical Society Newsletter

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

Volume 9, Issue 2, February 2011

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Charles Horan

Dear Members,

As we begin our Spring season and look forward with great anticipation to warmer and more arid weather, I wish to acknowledge and thank Barbara Capelli for her dedicated service to the WHS. As you know, Barbara recently completed a 2-year term as President. Of course...many, many thanks to Jack Sheppard who has ended his long tenure as Editor-in-Chief of our newsletter. This heavy torch has been passed to Larry Smith. Also, kudos to our team of current officers as we move forward into a successful 2011.

Before I mention a few upcoming programs, I want to say that I am always open to any ideas for future WHS presentations. For example, I thought the talk given by Rich Heritage of Heritage Winery in Richwood, NJ was an excellent example of "thinking outside the box" for new ideas. Let us put our thinking caps on and come up with some innovative and interesting programs for future meetings!!

Our February meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup> will feature a recently updated PowerPoint presentation from the Gloucester County Historical Society on its collection of a variety of military artifacts from Gloucester County. It will focus primarily on the Revolutionary War era

and Red Bank Battlefield. Also, there will be a limited number of artifacts on display.

For the March meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>, Professor Robert A. Emmons, Jr. from Rutgers University-Camden will be our guest speaker. He is a documentary maker who will show parts of and speak about "Deluxe: The Tale of the Blue Comet." It tells the captivating story of a passenger train that, from 1929 to 1941, transported New Jersey residents from Jersey City to Atlantic City. Mr. Emmons teaches film and media studies at Rutgers. His first feature length documentary is titled "Goodwill: The Flight of Emilio Carranza." It is the story of the Mexican pilot who crashed in the Pine Barrens in 1928 on the return leg of a goodwill mission to New York. Robert is very interested in New Jersey history and we look forward to his visit. DVDs of both documentaries will be available for purchase.

Both the February and March meetings look to be interesting and "close to home." Think about inviting a friend or neighbor as a prospective member of the Wenonah Historical Society.

See you there!

### 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.

## GLOUCESTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Don't forget to stop by the Wenonah School on a weekday and view the Gloucester County Historical Society exhibit.

SUNSHINE NEWS  
Vicki McCall

Dorothy Diament continues her recovery. Please send cards to her home.

Kathryn Ralston is still recovering from injuries sustained in an accident. She can have visitors at Manor Care in Washington Township. Cards can be sent to her home.

Please forward any news of a member's illness or surgery to me at [vmccallpc@comcast.net](mailto:vmccallpc@comcast.net) so we can send cards and well wishes. I will forward the information to the newsletter editor.

FEATURE HOUSE  
The Stone House Tavern

The "Old Stone House" was built before 1763 as a tavern by Samuel Moffett. It originally faced west on Bark Bridge Road (Monroe Avenue today). It was an important location as it was the only crossing available before the bridge on Kings Highway in Mount Royal, and important to commerce and stage coach travel. Taverns were nerve centers in those days and people gathered here at the Stone House Tavern to hear the news of the day. In war time, it was also a recruiting center for the militia, who met here to practice, hold meetings and elect officers.

Originally this building was part of a 1,300-acre plantation comprising most all of Wenonah, large sections of Sewell and Woodbury Heights, and four tenant farms. The

main house and out-buildings are not standing today. The property was constructed by Samuel Moffett some time between 1742 and 1763, when it was deeded to Jeffery Chew, who transferred the title to his son Jonathan Chew. He continued to procure the whole 1,300-acre plantation. Jonathan Chew was the grandson of Nathaniel Chew, one of the oldest pioneers in Gloucester County, having his homestead in Mantua Township.

The front entrance of the house now faces east and the original front door has been moved to the south end to provide a family room.

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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, and was speedily settled. 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 or 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 Hennissey's Landing on the Stone House Farm, with extensive warehouses, and Chew's 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, and also 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 glassware from the Stanger Glass Works 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 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 in 1731, and lies buried in the old Chew Burying Ground, near the late famous Mantua Oak. In his will, Nathaniel Chew left land to his sons, Richard, Jeffery 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 Jonathan he gave 100 acres, "being part of the land I bought of Hannah Rowlinson, along

the line of Abraham Dilks, son of James Cooper." Jonathan Chew added 80 acres to this tract. This tract of 180 acres, later known as the Stone House Farm, was purchased by Robert Sparks, for \$2,000.

On January 1, 1855, Joseph Saunders, executor of Joseph Dilks, conveyed the Stone House Farm of 180 acres in two parts: 75.5 acres to Isaac Stevenson for \$3,510.75, and the other 100.5 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 closer to the present Mantua Creek Bridge, and a station, called Mantua Station was located on the south side of the creek for the convenience of that village. Extensive remains of the original embankments may be seen both north and south of Wenonah.

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

The late Mr. Howard C. Hendrickson, who lived in Wenonah, and then at the ripe age of eighty-eight, told that 5 acres of ground is mentioned as being 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 Moffett, and that it was long known as Samuel Moffett house. It was then on the main road leading to the ford, near its junction with the road leading down to Hennissey's Landing and provided

accommodations for travelers north and south.

It is possible that this 5-acre tract may have been separate from the rest of the farm at the time of its traditional occupancy by Samuel Moffett, 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 meetings and elect officers at the Stone House. The papers also stated the house 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 restored it to its original condition. It is now known as 100 South West Avenue.

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The following summarizes the succession of ownership of the Stone House Tavern property from 1681 to 1967:

- Samuel Groom purchased from Edward Bylling, Proprietor: November 16, 1681.
- Thomas Budd by deed: February 10, 1689.
- William Chester by deed: December 3, 1695.
- Samuel Moffett by deed: 1742.
- Jeffrey Chew by deed: 1763.
- Jonathan Chew by grant or will.
- Robert Sparks by Sheriff sale: May 2, 1779.
- Robert Sparks, Jr. and Thomas Ure Sparks by will.
- Robert Sparks, Jr. by deed: 1813.
- Joseph C. Dilks acquired 5.5 acres by deed separately: 1814.
- James Matlack acquired 5.5 acres separately

by deed: 1825.

- James Matlack by Sheriff sale: 1822.
- Joseph Dilks by deed: 1827 (180 acres bought from Sheriff sale on November 20, 1822 sold as property of Thomas S. Sparks).
- Hiram Morgan by will: 1855.
- George See by deed: 1864.
- George Manger by deed: August 4, 1864.
- Charles P. Ramsden by deed: November 26, 1864.
- Mary Cockran by deed: July 26, 1865.
- James Ramsden by deed: August 22, 1865.
- Samuel See by deed: August 28, 1866.
- Tobias A. Durney by deed: May 1, 1866.
- Mehitable Ann Ramsden by Sheriff sale: March 2, 1867.
- Daniel A. Young by deed, March 25, 1867.
- Peter Kier by deed: March 30, 1867.
- Mantua Land and Improvement Company by deed: March 24, 1871.
- Mahlon Hutchinson by deed: December 5, 1877.
- Mantua Land and Improvement Company by deed: April 17, 1888.
- Ida Leddell by deed: April 27, 1888.
- Harriet M. Ballinger by deed: August 20, 1892.
- Richard C. Ballinger and Edwin H. Ballinger by will: August 24, 1913.
- Woodbury Trust Company, Trustee, by deed: May 26, 1939.
- William E. and Rosa T. Manners by deed: December 15, 1939.
- Webster S. and Audrey Shinn by deed: July 17, 1964.
- Churchill L. and Gretchen W. Blakey by deed: November 28, 1967.

*Researched and prepared by Jean C. Ehlers, past President Wenonah Historical Society, March 1994. Provided by Frank Eggert.*



WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 32  
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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# 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

WHS PO Box 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

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