

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.

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

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



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Here

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2010

Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INTERESTING PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- INFORMATION BY KNOWLEDGEABLE WENONAHANS

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

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

WHS PO BOX 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090
