

WENONAH

Historical Society Newsletter



December 2001
Published by the
Historical Society
of Wenonah, NJ

President's Letter

As the holiday season approaches I want to take the time to thank you for all of your support and help. We have accomplished some important items over the last year. Our archive committee has documented and updated all our records and have prepared a database that will soon be available to all. We have accomplished setting up our first display cabinet in the Wenonah School. Be sure to stop in and see this wonderful piece. I wish to thank David Ramsay Cabinetmakers for the wonderful work they did with the design. Our first display is dedicated to the memory of Milton Webb. He would be very proud to see us finally reaching one of our goals...bringing our archives to the public's attention.

In these times of worldwide turmoil do not forget to take a minute every day to count your blessings. Let each of us look around and find ways, no matter how small, to reach out and help others. I wish you all a VERY HAPPY and HEALTHY HOLIDAY!!!

-Vicki McCall

Wenonah's Christmas in the Past

1890

The Methodists had a very interesting Christmas entertainment on Thursday evening. Beside the part taken by the little folks and the excellent part taken by the choir there was a short address by Dr. S.D. Risley, formerly a resident here. Several of the Sunday school teachers received valuable presents from their classes, and the Pastor Herr was presented with a costly gold watch, purchased by contributions from members of the church and other friends.

1891

As is its custom, the Wenonah Presbyterian Sunday school provided the inmates of the West Jersey Orphanage for Destitute Colored Children at Camden with their usual Christmas dinner of poultry and all the "fixins." (Thomas W. Synnott was one of the founders of this institution)

1893

The jingle of sleigh bells, the many shouts of school children, the whirling of the snow and the debut of ulsters and gum boots reminds us that winter is here. Christmas morning was joyously welcomed by our little folks whom Santa Claus had treated with great liberality. He made many little hearts happy and warmed the hearts of older folks with true Christmas cheer by the sight of their happy faces. "Peace and good will toward men" reigned supreme in the borough. Our post office has a very festive air in its decorations of Christmas greens.

1899

On Monday evening (Christmas night) an entertainment will be given for the Presbyterian Sunday school in Noblit's Hall. As usual at the M.E. church a collection will be received for the poor. Nothing will be refused from a ton of coal to a bar of soap.

1900

The Sunday school entertainment of the M.E. Church will be held on Christmas Eve. The children will give a cantata entitled "The New Santa Claus" forty nine taking part. Silver offering at the door for adults.

1903

A substantial and much appreciated gift comes to the Presbyterian congregation in the shape of a residence adjoining the church. The donor, Stephan Green has done much for the welfare of Wenonah and its residents, and has a warm place in the hearts of the citizens. (This Victorian house was sited where the social hall stands today.)

1904

The Christmas cantata of the Presbyterian Church will be held at Noblit's Hall. A rather unique admission will be charged - an apple or a potato or their equivalent in anything else or more. These are to be donated to the worthy poor irrespective of color, denomination or nationality.

Collected from the
Gloucester County Democrat
Gloucester County Constitution
Woodbury Daily Times

1908

A large audience enjoyed the Christmas Cantata "Sleepy Santa Claus" in the Methodist Church. The little folks chorus "The Sleepy Head Band" was quite the hit of the evening. Misses Truncer, Gringo and Jordan were very attractive as "Toy Factory Girls." Misses Eleanor Stout, Elizabeth Mehorter and Hazel Nightingale were the fairies. The scholars of the school received candy and oranges. Hon. William C. Cattell, in a stirring speech, presented the Pastor with a liberal remembrance from the congregation.

1909

The Christmas services of All Saints Mission Sunday School was held at the home of Rev. G. Livingston Bishop. Regular services at Noblit's Hall on Sunday morning at 10:45 all welcome. The Christmas cantata entitled "Santa Claus Junior" will be given December 30th and promises to be interesting.

1911

The Christmas cantata "Why Santa is Happy" rendered by the members of the M.E. Sunday school in the new recreation hall was a decided success, the participants entering into the spirit of the occasion in a most creditable manner due, no doubt, to the careful training of Mrs. Charles Hopson. Dr. Lake Gilmour as Santa Claus acted the part to perfection. The little tots claiming him for their sweet heart in song.

Wenonah School

N. Clinton Avenue and E. Elm Street

Fourth in a series of articles of some of Wenonah's more notable structures (series started by Milton Webb in February 2001)
Excerpts taken from Marge Lentz's book, A History of Wenonah

by Vicki McCall

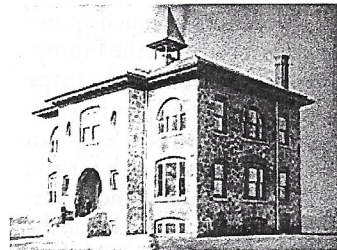


According to the annual report of The Mantua Land and Improvement Company, fifteen residential lots and four business lots had been sold and \$75,000 worth of buildings had been erected by May 8, 1873. Over the next ten years, fifty "cottages" were built which, can be identified today by their Mansford roofs, slate roofs, Mansford double doors, fish scale shingles, and towers with iron cresting.

Children of some of these new residences attended boarding schools in Philadelphia or attended the Mantua School. In 1875, parents hired Charles Buckman to drive the school aged children to the one-room Monongahela School where Sallie Baily was the teacher. This school was located three miles east of Glassboro Road, down a lane that passed the Benjamin Clark farmhouse (now on Gloucester County College property).

In 1876, District Clerk George Baily, brother of the teacher Sallie Baily, proposed a school for

Wenonah. He wrote a letter to the Gloucester County Superintendent of Public Instruction stating that "The school during



the months of September and October will meet in a room in a private dwelling. On October 31st we expect to occupy a part of the Wenonah House. Please send the books and blanks which, as I understand the matter, are furnished by the state."

After this, classes were held in The Howard-Wentzell Building located at 7 W. Mantua Avenue. This building was referred to as, "Daddy Howard's School". During the winter months, the children met at The Wenonah House, a hotel, in the dining room.

Teacher Sallie Baily was paid an annual salary of \$360 and was given an allowance to purchase a stove to heat the dining room of The Wenonah House. Classes were held in this manner from 1876 to 1878.

On March 19, 1878, the annual meeting of School District 54 in the County of Gloucester was held at the Wenonah House. The President read the following call, which had been posted in three public places: "Notice is hereby given to the legal voters of School District No. 54 in the County of

Gloucester, that the Annual School meeting will be held at the school room in the Wenonah House, on the Tuesday of the week following Town meeting, being the 19th day of March 1878 at 8 o'clock in the evening, at which meeting will be submitted the question of voting a tax to maintain a free Public school the coming year.

The amount thought to be necessary for the purpose is (\$300) three hundred dollars.

The question of building a school house will also be considered, with all matters relating there to.

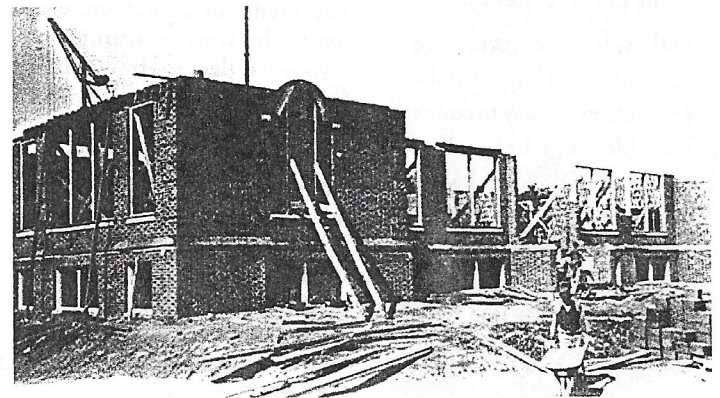
The amount thought to be necessary for this purpose is (\$2,500) twenty five hundred dollars.

Dated this Fourth day of March 1878"

-George W Baily, District Clerk

This was the official start of the Public School system in Wenonah!

The first school building was located at 6 N Marion Avenue. It was completed in 1879 and classes immediately started. This building served as the Schoolhouse until it outgrew its capacity for the growing number of school children in Wenonah. In June of 1894, the trustees of the school district sold this building at auction to Joseph Noblit.



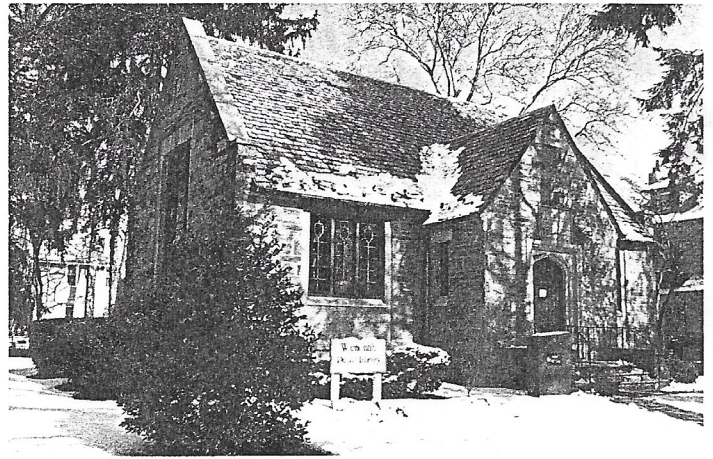
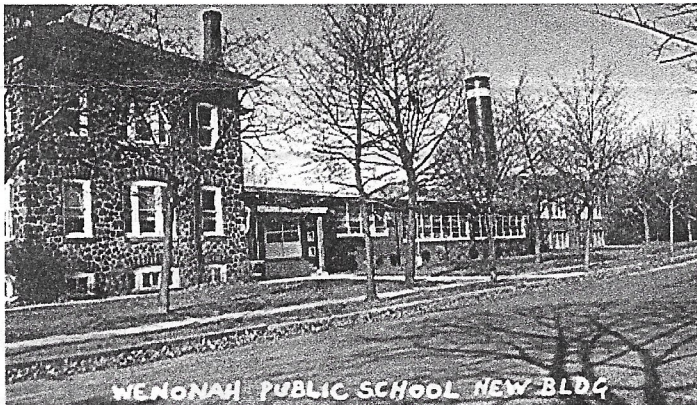
A new school was built in 1894 in the section of Wenonah known as "Sand Town." The new building was known as The Old Stone School and now houses the third and fourth grade classes. Mrs. Andrew Carey and Mrs. Edward Farr were the FIRST women in Wenonah to be elected as school Trustees. Wenonah was the second school district in Gloucester County to elect women to this post. The Old Stone School in 1894.

In the 1890's, an article in a monthly newspaper called "The Wenonah News," Wenonah was described as "a model home town with pure spring water, conveniences, hot and cold water, best

schools, established churches, and seventeen trains for the city and no salons. The article added it is "just the place for you and better still for your children."

As news of this great town spread, more people moved in and the population continued to grow. A new brick addition was added to the school ground in 1921 to house the older classes through eighth grade. In 1955 the two schools were joined by the brick addition that today houses the Kindergarten through second grade.

WENONAH SCHOOL: "A great place for you and better still for the children"



Don't forget the Wenonah Holiday House Tour!

Tour some of Wenonah's most historic public spaces and most delightfully decorated residences on Sunday, December 9th from 2-7pm. Tickets are available \$10 in advance or \$12 at the Community Center the day of the tour.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Archiving and Preservation Committee

Photography has commenced to accompany the recorded written records in our database. This is the most laborious aspect of the archiving, but will also reap the most rewards for use on the internet and future generations. Digital photographs and scans are being used to record our holdings and will be available to anyone who may request them. We are working toward a February deadline to make a presentation to the society.

If you have any ideas or items that you would like to contribute to the Historical Society please contact me.

Rocco F Doto · 415-1215
rockracc@aol.com

WENONAH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM • 2001-2002

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

eMail Address _____

Amount Paid \$ _____ Check # _____ Enclosed Cash Enclosed

Please bring this form with your payment to any meeting or mail. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Monthly newsletter mailed to your home
- Monthly meetings with informative programs
- Access to various archives and memorabilia
- Network of knowledgeable historians
- Historical field trips

COST: \$10 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

RETURN TO WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY • P.O. Box 32 • WENONAH, NJ 08090-0032

December Christmas Party

Annual Christmas Party will be held Friday, December 14th, 2001
Community Center • 6:00pm Wine & Cheese • 6:30pm Dinner



Our annual Christmas Party costs \$15.00 per person. Please bring a door prize (unwrapped) and we will also have a special raffle!
RSVP to Jane Ramsay at 468-5593 as soon as possible.

January's meeting

Our first meeting of the year 2002 will be a special one. Bring an item or two for appraisal at our own "Antiques Road Show" on Friday, January 11th at 7:30pm at the Community Center.

How to Contact Us

Mail: WHS · P.O. Box 32 · Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
E-mail: wenonahhistoricalnews@home.com

THE MISSION OF THE WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The objectives of this Society shall be:

1. To acquire and preserve historic documents, records, artifacts and memorabilia of the Borough of Wenonah.
2. To locate and acquire a suitable place for the storage and display of such materials.
3. To encourage the protection and preservation of historical landmarks and points of interest within the Borough of Wenonah.
4. To encourage historical and genealogical research, and publication of its results.
5. To encourage interest in history generally, and in Wenonah history in particular, among the youth of Wenonah.
6. To make all information and acquisitions of the Society available to the public.

Ralph + Rachel Knissell
100 W Mantua Ave
Wenonah, NJ 08090

Wenonah, NJ 08090-0032
PO. Box 32
Newsletter Committee

WENONAH
Historical Society

