

# 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.

## WHS OFFICERS 2009

President	Barbara Capelli
Vice Pres.	Pending Election
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

**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 platted 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



PO Box 32  
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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# 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

WHS PO BOX 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

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