

Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 4 April 2006

MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT DON RALSTON

Dear Members;

We are all glad that spring has finally arrived. The forsythia, flowering crepe, and daffodils are all blooming. The trees will soon be clothed in green leaves. Wenonah is especially pretty at this time of the year.

In the December 2005 newsletter we enumerated our accomplishments for the year 2005.

In the January and February newsletters it we outlined our objectives for the year 2006. They were to see the renovation to start on the Community Center and the completion of computerizing artifacts, photos and news articles on the history of Wenonah.

A meeting was recently held to explain what was decided by the historical architect and the borough engineer to renovate the Community Center. In attendance were Borough Business Manager Dawn Human, Mayor Tom Capaldi, Council member. Bill Schnarr, Borough Engineer Dave Kreck and Environmental Commission member William Schram. Blueprints were laid out and explained what renovations deemed necessary. A diagram was also shown concerning curbing and correction of a drainage problem to the building. The Historical Society will be given access to these plans so that we can show them at our meeting.

Speaker for the April meeting, Friday 14, 2006, will be our member Charles Wingate. Charles' father was the operator of the lighthouses at Paulsboro and Billingsport. He lived in one of them for 19 years.

An update on our sick list. Carmela Lipari, is rehabbing at Kennedy Hospital, Helen Manners is now home and Jo Dominy is recouping at home but is expected at our April meeting.

We obtained a copy of the Wenonah Community Bus Schedule;
April 12, Wednesday .Smithville.
April 24, Monday, .Camden Aquarium, \$13.95 per person
May 10 Wednesday, Morven Museum and Gardens, Princeton, \$4.00 for Seniors

WHS OFFICERS 2006

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|-------------------|--------------------------|
| President | Don Ralston |
| Vice Pres. | Jack Sheppard Sr. |
| Secretary | Jo Dominy |
| Treasurer | Carol Wiltsee |
| Corr. Sec. | Betty MacLeod |
| Trustee | Vicki McCall |
| Trustee | Lucy Schulz |

Meetings second Friday of the month at the Community Center except June, July and August

May 22, Monday, .Ocean City.
June 7, Wednesday, Winterthur, DuPont Mansion, Brandywine Valley.
Admission \$13 to \$18.00 depending on the tour chosen.

A very successful "Calendar Party" was held March 25th, for the benefit of young Bradley Caraker who is being treated for Leukemia at Children's Hospital in Philadelphia.

The Wenonah Home and School Association is holding its Annual Ice Cream Social May 15th at the Wenonah School. They have offered to allow the Historical Society a table there for display purposes.

Once again, our dues are \$15.00 per family. If by chance or oversight you have not yet paid, please do so.

HISTORICAL TIDBITS

Woodbury Daily Times June 1900

Last night's dance at the (Wenonah) Inn was a very enjoyable affair, from the accounts of it heard, and a large number took part. A jolly crowd from Woodbury came down in Budd's hack, but one young man we understand, had the misfortune to lose his overcoat. We should presume he might have had one hand free to take care of it, but apparently both had gone to "waist."

A very fortunate runaway accident happened early last evening. Ran Stevenson was out driving with his sister and in going east on Mantua Avenue, the traces broke and the spirited animal started to run. Young Stevenson clung to lines, even though the animal's heels were flying close to his nose almost at every leap, and as his sister remained quietly in the wagon the frightened animal was stopped going up the steep hill. Both young people were complimented upon their steady nerves by the large crowd which were attracted by the brief excitement.

This is not to get in the Times, so you had best not read it. Marshal Drummer, the custodian of our peace, always watchful of suspicious characters, found two tramps prowling about the other night, and for the want of a better place, locked them in an empty freight car, on a siding, intending to release them just before going off duty in the morning. Business cares preoccupied his mind until half the morning had gone, when he bethought himself of his prisoners. When he reached the depot, the car, the suspects and all were gone — perhaps just what both parties desired—Drummer as well as the tramps.

More from Old Wenonah

"In 1888 the land company deeded to the Borough Commission the square in front of the hotel between Clinton and West Jersey Avenues with the provision that the same should always be maintained as a public park for the inhabitants of Wenonah."

This is a quotation from "Wenonah's Background" written by Constance Cowell. The hotel was the Wenonah Inn, which later became the Wenonah Military Academy.

The square has been faithfully maintained as a public park by the people of Wenonah and various improvements have been made over the years. In 1946 a project was started to renovate the park. A plan was drawn up which describes a large parade ground to be continued at the southern end of the park and a smaller open area at the northern end; a broad north south avenue to be lined with trees and ornamentals, terminated at the northern end by a stepped entrance to the park and at the southern end by tall evergreens and a semicircle of benches; an east-west corridor entirely enclosed by trees which will be suitable for outdoor meetings; curved walks along the south and east sides of the park to be suitably landscaped with flowering trees and shrubs; the gradual replacement of the old and deteriorating silver maples and sycamore maples with more permanent trees; and finally to create a beautiful display of flowers and foliage.

Progress has been made each year toward accomplishing the objectives of the plan. Open areas have been preserved, progress has been made toward lining the avenue and corridor with suitable plant material. The curved walk at the southern end has been placed. Considerable progress has been made toward removing the old silver and sycamore maples. The oaks in the park have been increased from two to twenty-four representing ten different species. The new planting also include sugar maple, red maple, honey locust, beech, yellow wood, oxydendron, red bud, Hawthorne, hemlock, Douglas fir and holly.

Much progress has been made in providing flowering trees and other ornamentals. These include four varieties of dogwoods, flowering cherries, flowering apples, rhododendrons, azaleas, laurel, taxus, lilac, crepe myrtle, rose, evergreen barberry and Japanese holly.

Much of the improvement in the park has been accomplished thru the assistance of organizations and individuals of the Borough. With money raised by the Wenonah Woman's Club fifty dogwoods and many other ornamentals were purchased. The Wenonah Garden Club donated a group of rhododendrons and azaleas. The Wenonah Junior Garden Club contributed five American hollies and three Japanese hollies. The Explorer Scouts held four work parties at various times at which they planted twelve oak trees and painted the park benches. The Wenonah Fire Company has on several occasions saved the young trees by watering the park during droughts. The curved flagstone walk at the southern end was placed by work parties involving twenty-eight citizens. The park benches were made by volunteer labor. Many individual citizens of Wenonah have made very valuable contributions of trees and shrubs.

With the maturing of the plant material already placed, and with additional improvements in the future, the park will become more attractive each year and will contribute more and more to the beauty and peaceful atmosphere of our town which, to quote from the last sentence of Constance Cowell's paper, is surely ". . . a refuge from the industrialism which has sprung up in the area around it."

George Eldridge, Jan. 23, 1960

From the *Woodbury Times* Nov. 1910

Mr. Editor; Of all "Tom Fool" propositions that have come before our Council, the one to spend \$350 to practically parallel the present cement walk from the depot across the Park is the worst. It is time the tax payers should take notice and protest against such a waste of money. We need this money on our streets, and this amount will gravel ten blocks and be a benefit to the town, while the walk would be an injury to the Park and benefit a few men who would sacrifice the beauty of the park and put a load on the taxpayers to save themselves a half minute of their valuable time each day. We are better off without them. signed,

"Pro Bono Publico"

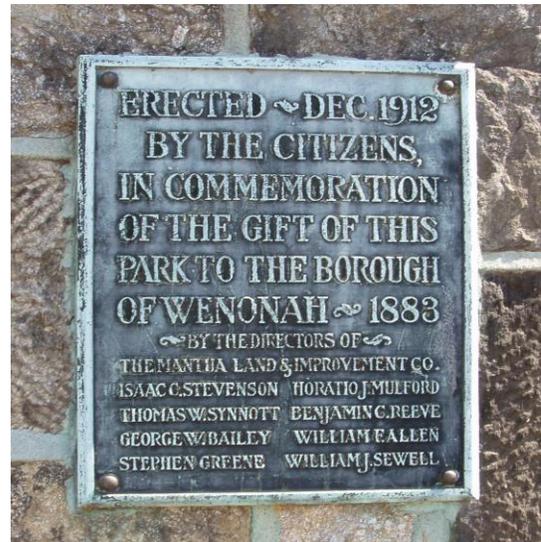
Editor comment: The walk referred to is the cross-walk through the Park shown below.



Photo March, 2006

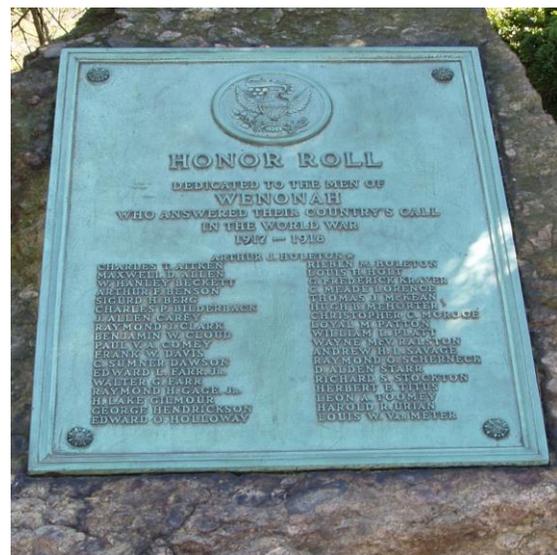
From the *Woodbury Times* Nov. 1912

Work on the approach to the Park is well under way and already you can form an idea of what the finished job will look like. The two outside taller columns are to be topped by lanterns of bronze. The pipe, which shows in the building of the columns, will accommodate gas and electric conduits. A bronze tablet in the column next the railroad will hold a tablet commemorating the gift of the Park to Wenonah by the Mantua Land and Improvement Company in 1883. The eight directors of the company at that time will be named in the tablet.



The Constitution June 1919

Sometime this week W. B. Snelbaker, the marble dealer of Woodbury will commence to place the big boulder (which was recently moved from Mr. Comey's corner to the Borough Park) on its foundation where a bronze tablet containing the names of our soldier boys will be placed on it in preparation for the celebration on July 4th.



Researching the history of our Park one notices there was controversy from time to time as to the condition of the Park and the improvements that were sometimes needed, and sometimes made.

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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Here

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2006

Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAILED TO YOUR HOME
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INTERESTING PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- NETWORK OF KNOWLEDGEABLE HISTORIANS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

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
