

# 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 Nighthingale 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

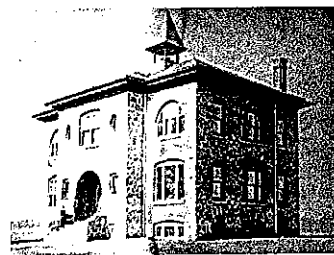


According to the annual report of The Mantua Land and Improvement Company, fifteen residential lots and four business lots had been sold and \$75,000 worth of buildings had been erected by May 8, 1873. Over the next ten years, fifty "cottages" were built which, can be identified today by their Mansford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

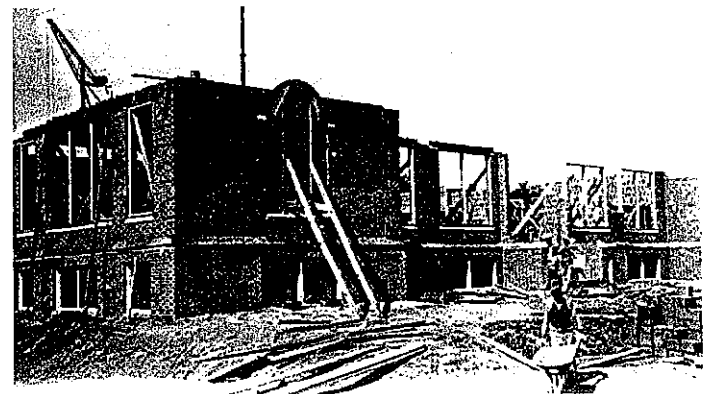


the months of September and October will meet in a room in a private dwelling. On October 31st we expect to occupy a part of the Wenonah House. Please send the books and blanks which, as I understand the matter, are furnished by the state."

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.