

Wenonah Historical Society Newsletter

Next Meeting at 7:30 P.M. on
Friday, September 13, 2013

Volume 11, Issue 6, June 2013

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *by Charles Horan*

Dear Members,

Memorial Day Greetings - let us remember those who have and continue to serve this great nation.

At an executive meeting held on Wednesday, May 22nd, one topic on the agenda was the 2013 WHS picnic scheduled for Friday June 14th. Due to mitigating circumstances and logistics, we have decided to forego the picnic for this year. Next year it will be held on the second Friday of May. Other issues of importance to our fine organization were discussed. They will be detailed and presented at the October regular meeting.

I hope you will agree that despite the weather related cancellation of the February meeting, it has been another interesting year for the Wenonah Historical Society. The executive committee has some proposed changes planned that will hopefully enhance the vitality of the WHS going forward.

Please have a safe and enjoyable summer. Mark your calendars for our "Meet and Greet" to be held on September 13th. Details to follow.

2013 WHS DUES ARE DUE

Dues for 2013 are now due and are still a bargain at \$15 per family. The dues can be given to any WHS officer or mailed using the membership application on the last page of this newsletter.

2011 WHS OFFICERS

President	Charles Horan
Vice President	Paul Lader
Secretary	Vicki McCall
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Louis McCall

Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month (except June, July and August) at the Train Station Community Center.

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The following article was researched and written by Jack C. Sheppard, Sr. Source materials were from Milton H. Webb and Marjorie K. Lentz. Jack's research suggests that Dr. George Washington Bailey was the founder of Wenonah's school system.

This part of the article concludes Jack's return by time machine to interview of Dr. Bailey. (The first part of the interview appeared in the May newsletter.)

DR. GEORGE WASHINGTON BAILEY
December 5, 1840 – December 10, 1916
Pioneer of Wenonah Elementary School
and Sunday Schools Worldwide
by Jack C. Sheppard, Sr.

Question: When I interviewed you in 1871 you told me you were to marry Rebecca Hurff the following year. How did that work out? Is she still your wife?

Dr. Bailey: No I am sorry to say, and may God rest her soul, my Rebecca died in 1888. Although we had 16 great years together we

were not fortunate to have any children. After a few years I married again, a Wenonah girl, Annie McGill. She is the daughter of George S. McGill of Wenonah who is a molasses merchant in Philadelphia. We have two lovely daughters, Grace and Anna who were born here in Wenonah.

Question: Obviously Wenonah was growing rapidly in the care and control of you “volunteers”. When did you decide a more formal organization was necessary to run the town?

Dr. Bailey: When by the early 1880’s Wenonah had grown to fifty “cottages” and a population of three hundred we polled the residents and they agreed it was time for us to establish our town as a separate entity from Deptford Township. We put it to a vote and on March 8, 1883 our residents chose to be incorporated as a Borough Commission. Those elected to office were me as President, Isaac C. Stevenson, treasurer, Thomas W. Synnott, Andrew W. Carey, M. H. Perry, J. Frank Shull and Cunningham B. Johnston.



Dr. George Washington Bailey

The “Commission” structure enabled us to act independently from Deptford Township in many ways. However we were still part of the Township and paying taxes to them. In 1896 we again polled Wenonah’s residents asking for permission to adopt a newly created form of government in New Jersey, the Borough form. The residents approved the change. This new arrangement fully separated us from Deptford, created a Mayor and Council and provided authority to use all of the ensuing property taxes for Wenonah purposes only.

Question: I know you are a busy man and this interview is taking a lot of your valuable time so I will make my remaining questions as brief as I can. Will you summarize for me the other important activities you either initiated or participated in?

Dr. Bailey: Yes indeed, and I should say I and all of the other original activists that started Wenonah continued almost as a team in providing the facilities and functions necessary for a successful community.

In addition to the changes in the form of government resulting in our separation from Deptford we also found the time to create the school system, the Presbyterian and Methodists churches, the rebuilt Wenonah Inn that became the Military Academy the Wenonah Water Works and others of small but useful and necessary function. Both the Wenonah Inn and the Military Academy aided in creating an attraction in Wenonah that resulted in additional growth, support for Wenonah’s business, and a reputation for excellence that extended far beyond our corporate boundaries. During my national and worldwide travels I frequently meet people who have heard of our town and hold it in high regard.

Question: You mention your worldwide travels and I assume you mean those connected with your Sunday School activity. Can you tell me more about how you went from a Sunday School in Wenonah to heading up similar activity worldwide?

Dr. Bailey: I’ll be glad to. Following the creation of Wenonah’s Sunday School I began spreading the message of the benefits of such schools throughout the region and the state. These activities resulted in my being elected to the state “Sunday School Association” becoming its president, a position I held for twenty-seven years. Then while in that position I was elected to an international Sunday School committee to represent New Jersey. The following year I was put in charge of the finances of the entire American Sunday School

Association. And most recently, in 1910 I was entrusted the arrangements for the great World Sunday School Convention at Washington, D. C. And finally, later in 1910 I was elected president of the World's Sunday school Association. In that position I attended and presided over an international convention in Zurich, Switzerland in 1912. Didn't take long to describe those activities but they were important and they started right here in our beloved Wenonah.

Question: Dr. Bailey, you have apparently decided to dedicate the rest of your life to creating Sunday Schools, not only here in Wenonah and America, but around the world as well. Can you tell me why Sunday Schools are so important to you that they have become your life's goal?

Dr. Bailey: I certainly can and I'm glad you asked. As the worldwide population expands it is vitally important to provide our youth with a knowledge base that includes moral teachings. How else are they to learn about good and evil, right and wrong, moral versus immoral activities and the like. Since Sunday Schools are attached to our churches we can provide the biblical "Ten Commandments" and other similar Bible-based teachings. And for those choosing to go through life without benefit of religious teachings we can repackage the Commandments as "Ten Good Ideas" and teach them in our elementary schools. I consider it mandatory that citizens here and worldwide be taught how to live in peace and harmony with one another so we need to establish basic rules on how to accomplish this. Sunday Schools are an excellent means of getting these messages across to current and future populations.

By Questioner: Thank you Dr. Bailey. The way you describe it I can readily understand your prodigious drive and ambition. I wish you all success for the future.

I have to leave now but before going I want to tell you how much I enjoyed this visit with you and learning more about your life's work, aims and ambitions. As I mentioned to you earlier, I can't tell you how I know, but you can be assured your activities will have a positive impact on future generations and that this town will be a success. Thank you for giving us Wenonah.

Author's Comments: While researching the lives of Wenonah's founders I learned much about them and what it was like to function at their level in our society in the period 1870 through the early 1930's. I was impressed. These people were self-made, intelligent; religious, and very much involved in their community, state and nation. They worked hard, created substantial wealth, and were very generous with contributions to those less fortunate. It was a time that I wish would return but I doubt ever will. It was a unique era in the history of our country.

Dr. George Washington Bailey died December 10, 1916 and is buried at the Eglington Cemetery. In a eulogy it was said of him "Generous to a fault, kind hearted and true, with a personality that won the respect and admiration of rich and poor alike, he filled a big place in the social and religious uplift movement of his generation. He was one of God's noblemen."

A monument commemorating his work with the World's Sunday School Association, which preceded the World Council of Churches, has been erected at an entrance to the Cemetery.

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2013

Membership Benefits

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

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
