

# WENONAH

## Historical Society Newsletter



March 2001  
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Historical Society  
of Wenonah, NJ

## WENONAH 100 YEARS AGO · MARCH 1901

Compiled by Milton Webb

While at the B.F. Davis sale at Lambtown on Wednesday surveyor Cattell had a runaway as one front axle broke throwing the occupants out of the buggy and the horse continued on towards Almonesson where it was caught.

FOR SALE one bay pacer 15½ hands high 6 years old can show better than a 2:30 pace without training. Inquire Dr. Harry A. Stout (He lived and had his practice at 5 East Mantua Avenue)

The annual town meeting of the borough will be held Monday evening in Noblit's Hall where the yearly financial report will be on record and other business transacted as may come up before the meeting.

The Wednesday evening prayer meeting of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches will be combined this week to hear Miss Effie Braddock, a returned missionary who spent seven years in Indian. She is said to be a pleasing speaker.

A citizens meeting has been called to be held in Noble's Hall to nominate an assessor, 2 councilmen for three years, one for one year and a justice of the peace.

There was talk of having the school children vaccinated but the small pox scare is over and it might be delayed or forgotten.

Politicians are out with their war paint and it is said to be the hottest election we have had in some time.

There was general sorrow expressed here this morning over the death of ex-president Harrison.

Eggs are selling at 18 cents per dozen and may go lower.

Richard Clark went to the city today to lay in his stock of seed peas, onions etc. (Traditionally peas and onions were planted on Saint Patrick's Day)

There was much interest manifest in school matters in our borough Tuesday evening. It was rumored

no women were to be placed on the board and this aroused the women of our town to action and the result was the highest vote ever cast at a school election. 70 were cast for Mrs. Annie Johnson, 65 for Eldora Hurff and 62 for Ed Farr. 23 of the ballots had written on them "no taxation without representation."

Several of our horse owners about town think they have some speed and don't have to take the dust of anyone. There seems to be one way to prove this, however driving separately even though the animals do make a record seems unsatisfactory. There must be a race. Sylvester Chew believes he has speed to burn while Hi Leap splits the air with his rig and John Holton says he takes no back seat. A course has been prepared on Mantua Avenue and about all it will take to get a meet some afternoon is for someone to name the hour and there will be several starters.

Bring out the dish pan—here comes the fish man with toothsome Delaware shad.

J. Vandergrif who has the bakery route is the prime favorite with all the boys as he sometimes has samples to pass out.

Both the residents of Mantua and Wenonah are again reviving the question of damming the Mantua Creek. Should this be done it is claimed we would have one of the finest lakes in South Jersey. (In 1885, William Allen, the engineer who laid out the streets of Wenonah created a plan to dam the creek. This was to be done at what we call today "Clay Hill" or the old West Jersey Rail Road trestle embankment. The lake created would have extended to an area near what is now Moore's Liquor store. This plan was again considered in 1901 and later on several occasions.)

From the Woodbury Daily Times · Woodbury, New Jersey

## President's Letter

It has been a real inspiration to me to see such a great turn out for our meetings. I welcome all the familiar and the many new faces! It is a huge help to have so many volunteering to take on committees that are helping us to fulfill our mission statement. This is not an easy or a quick task. It takes the efforts of many and we still need lots of help...so, don't be shy...get involved! I want to take this opportunity in our first President's Letter to extend my gratitude to some of you who have been so instrumental in making this organization a success. A heartfelt thank you goes to:

- Jane Ramsay for her guidance and mentoring
- Milton Webb for his "100 Years Ago" letter that we have all been enjoying for so long...and for his newest column in the newsletter on our Historical Buildings and homes!
- To Jack Sheppard for keeping our mission statement foremost in our thoughts, for always taking on any task, and for his photography support
- Rocco Doto and staff for taking on the DAUNTING task of cataloguing Wenonah's archives! Please call if you have any help or archives to add!
- Curt Kapus for taking on the office of Vice President and presenting us with this wonderful newsletter...truly a great piece of historic journalism!
- Rachel Knisell for her dedication to keeping our Victorian Garden alive!
- And to all our officers' past and present who have set the solid groundwork from which we are able to go forward
- And finally to all our members for it is your support that keeps our organization and this town's rich history alive!

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. Bring a friend and introduce them to the many benefits of the Historical Society

It is the knowledge of our past that keeps Wenonah the historically rich town that it is...a place where people not only stay, but still call home after moving away!

-Vicki McCall, President

## Upcoming Historical Events

March 10, 2001 · 9:15am to 2:30pm · Winter meeting of The League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. Mauricetown Methodist Church, Second and Noble Streets, Mauricetown, NJ.

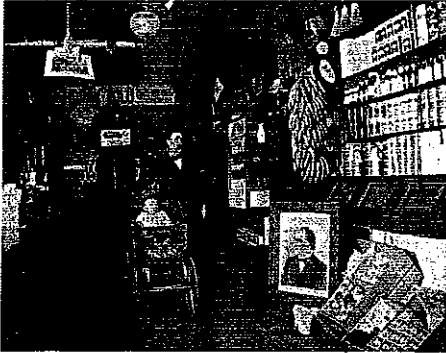
March 25, 2001 · 2:00-5:00pm · Gloucester County Historical Society presentation "Crazy About Quilts" in observation of Women's History Month. Gloucester County Historical Museum, 58 N Broad Street, Woodbury, NJ.

May 12, 2001 · 2001 Historic Preservation Awards Program, New Jersey State House in Trenton, NJ.

# THE LITTLE HARDWARE STORE AROUND THE CORNER

3 East Mantua Avenue

Third in a series of articles detailing the histories of some of Wenonah's more notable structures. By Milton Webb



Interior of the Richard Clark General Store 1897 Herbert Clark is in the baby carriage. Picture is of William Jennings Bryan.

Lavander Bateman built the store building in 1884. Very little information on him is available other than he conducted a general grocery store on the premises. This was a short-lived enterprise as the store and property were deeded to Richard J. Clark in September of 1888.

The store was expanded with *honest goods and honest prices*. The stock consisted of dry and fancy goods, notions, furnishings, boots, hats, caps etc. During this period he was in competition with Turner and McCormick who had similar goods. He outlasted them and eight other competitors until 1912. He was quite active in the community serving on the town commission and various church boards. His sons Herbert and Jim were born in the house. Later Herbert would operate the coal yard business where the borough public works is today. Jim became a semi-professional baseball player.

The newly formed People's Rural Telephone Company put their "central" in his store serving the thirty telephones within the town. Five years later when the Delaware and Atlantic Telephone Company wanted to house their exchange but he refused because they wouldn't provide an operator.

Richard Clark sold the business and the building to John Madara. He was a glass blower at Whitney Glass Works in Clayton. He continued the dry goods and grocery business successfully until 1920 when he sold it to a Norman Brown.

The business continued under his leadership until 1925 when it went up for public sale. The advertisement for the sale gives insight into the business. Listed was the *store stock of shoes, hosiery, hardware, notions, dry goods, groceries, a meat cutter, refrigerator display, and everything to be found in a general store. This is one of the best residential and business properties in town located at the Wenonah station and across from the Military Academy Park.*

Bill Seiders at this time had a hardware store in the northern part of the Grosseup building, being formerly owned by John Viereck. He was seeking

a new location. Milton Webb, a salesman for Winchester-Simmons Hardware Company, was persuaded by him to go into partnership in the 3 East Mantua Avenue building and to create a new hardware store. Mr. Webb, with the consent of his wife, also was talked into moving to town. They moved into the apartment next to what would become the hardware store. Soon after moving they were assessed \$500 for the concrete paving on Mantua Avenue that was their welcome to the town.

They called the store "The Little Hardware Store Around the Corner." The Winchester Simmons Company was the forerunner of our present True Value, Ace and other hardware chains. The stock was quite varied: sporting goods, tools, hardware cutlery, paints, and building materials. The barn in back was turned into a warehouse. The enterprise was quite successful despite the depression. However in 1935 the academy closed and this was a disaster to all the businesses in town and the area. The store closed in 1937.

The store was then leased to Mr. A.H. Williams who opened up a Fairlawn grocery store which was unsuccessful and closed in two years. After this Charlie Hill opened a hobby shop, which went out of business in 1940. The store was then turned into an apartment unit. During this period Mary Bilderback, formerly a piano teacher at the academy, taught music in the second floor. Many a child from Wenonah started their music careers with her.

In 1949 Mr. Webb sold the building to Jim and Eleanor Ross. Eleanor's father was Charlie Hohlweg who owned Charlie's later called the Tall Pines Jim

and Eleanor successfully created the Jim-El Sweet Shoppe, which was in business for fifteen years. This was basically a luncheonette and coffee shop serving breakfast and lunch. Many years later Eleanor after returning from Florida opened up a similar shop in Swedesboro under the same name.

After this it became Marge's luncheonette under the ownership of Margery and Bill Fox. This was an institution in Wenonah. In the morning for breakfast there was an influx of workers from Atlantic City Electric, Bell Telephone, and other locals. For lunch were those from Marmac and Newton Tool Works and the schoolteachers. It was a gathering place for the community, so many fond memories. Sadly Marjorie died but fortunately Bill Fox's sister Gladys Clark was able to take over the management of the store. Interesting is the fact that Gladys's husband was Herb Clark who was born in the building and whose father was Richard Clark the early owner.

The next owners were George and Jane Bowker who ran the business under the name of The Carriage Shoppe. They ran it for several years but Jane's ill health caused it to close. Several attempts were made to reopen, but were unsuccessful. Roy Duffield bought the building and did extensive renovations. In 1989 he leased the store part to Mary K Hair Design who have conducted an outstanding business there since that time.

The building over the years has been one of the focal points and historic centers of the town. Indeed its message is that it would be good to have a coffee shop again as we did years ago. This is something that is lacking in our community. For those who remember, we know.



Madara's General Store 1915. Iron fence in front. Porch was removed in 1925.

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## Archiving and Preservation Committee

The committee met on February 27th at the home of Milton Webb. The following items were discussed and agreed upon to be our main objectives:

1. Produce manual inventory list of all items recently acquired by the committee.
2. Prepare a receipt form to give to members handing over Wenonah Historical Society memorabilia.
3. Secure and prepare interim storage space at 9 West Mantua Avenue.
4. Identify purchase needs to submit to

Executive Board for approval.

5. Review Grant Program 2001 pamphlet from New Jersey Historical Commission for possible eligibility.

6. Arrange a meeting of the entire archiving committee.

7. Inventory the two lockers in the basement of the library.

8. Produce an inventory of all historical society artifacts

9. Identify any Historical Society artifacts not on the archiving committee list.

Our goals are ambitious and we will need everyone's cooperation. We encourage all to

learn as much as possible about the history of our special town. If you have any ideas, suggestions, or articles to donate to the Historical Society please feel free to contact me.

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

### To submit your committee's report:

- Provide a disc to Curt Kapus (464-2485) with your file saved as a text or MS Word file
- eMail your file to [wenonahhistorical-news@home.com](mailto:wenonahhistorical-news@home.com)

Your report must be received two weeks before our monthly meeting for inclusion in the newsletter.

## WHY WE MOVED TO WENONAH

Featured Residents:  
Jim, Mary, and Zachary Ready



We moved from Woodbury to Wenonah five years ago to live in a quieter and safer community. We knew that we wanted a "small town" environment in which to raise our family. Another draw to this town for us was the beauty and charm of the houses—every one was different and had a unique style. We also wanted to live within a town where the community cared and took pride in its town. You can see this by looking at our park, trails, and lake.

We found our house by accident. We were searching for the Wenonah Cemetery, made a wrong turn, and came upon this run-down house on 8 South Princeton. There was something about the house that drew us in—we knew we had to have it! After driving through the town we had confirmed our thoughts: "we were moving to Wenonah" and here we'll stay!

## OUR TRIBUTE TO THE WENONAH LIONS CLUB

On April 21st of 1951 Charter Night was held for this local service organization. The group was made up of many outstanding citizens of the community many of which are no longer with us to name a few: Lew Hambrecht, Dave Knight, Norm Sanger, Bill Buckley, Howard Blithe, Charlie Homberg, Tony Sacca, and Ted Worthington. Since then their work and outreach to the community has been outstanding. Foremost is the time and effort they put into organizing our annual, traditional Fourth of July. They have contributed equipment to our local fire company, aiding people in time of need and did much toward the restoration of our historic gem, the Wenonah Community Center. This is our opportunity on their fiftieth anniversary to say thank you for so much.

# WENONAH

## Historical Society Membership Form · 2000-2001

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

eMail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed  Cash Enclosed

Please bring this form with your payment to any meeting. 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