

Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 5 May, 2010

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT BARBARA CAPELLI

Hello All,

Please join us for our next meeting Friday, May 14th at 7:30. Our guest presentation will be given by Penni Heritage of Heritage Vineyards in Richwood. She is a fifth generation farmer with a passion for making great wine. She will be speaking about the history of wine in our region and how Heritage Vineyard started. They have about 100 acres of farmland in Mullica Hill and it is devoted to the vineyards, apples, peaches, and pears. There will be samples and lots of great conversation. Please be sure to join us.

Don't forget if you should come across something particular to the preservation of Wenonah's history or even some great memories of times past in Wenonah, please make sure to come to June's picnic and share your treasures. Eventually, we'd like to document these stories and items in a book about Wenonah. We are hoping Alex Pozza will be with us that evening as he has agreed to record some of our Wenonah Stories.

Therefore, let's welcome Spring, its renewal of all those things living and let's not forget all the people, friends, and family that have

shaped us and made us who we are today.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Barbara Capelli

100 YEARS AGO IN WENONAH, MAY 1910

The need of a baseball team here this summer is already being felt, and some steps are being taken toward the formation of such a

WHS OFFICERS 2010

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

club. We have the material and it would take very little money to put up a good team in the field and we could have some amusement on Saturday afternoons. Push the good work along.

A carload of trees arrived yesterday to beautify the already pretty property of Stephan Green. (These trees, white pine, still exist particularly on South Princeton Avenue and significantly Pine Street.)

Daniel W. Brown is laying a new stone pavement in front of his property on West Mantua Avenue. (former Victor Anderson's property)

Always on the watch for anything crooked or suspicious, Officer Drummer tells that he was almost sure he was about able to swoop in on a daring burglar early yesterday morning. As a rule thieves and thugs give him a wide berth knowing well his reputation for fearlessness in capturing them, and so when he saw lights in the home of Dr. Harvey he suspected at once that some daring desperado had foolishly entered his preempted domain to do violence. Accordingly plans were arranged for a surprise of the wrong doers, and just as the swoop was about to take place the timely discovery was made that the doctor and family had arrived home late last night from Newport News, Va. where they had been spending the winter.

The annual reception of the Monday Club was held at the residence of Dr. and Mrs. H. Lake Gilmour last evening and was a brilliant affair. Vocal and instrumental music and a social hour occupied the attention of the guests for a while when a beautiful collation was served by Caterer

Claphan of Woodbury. (The Monday Club still exists today.)

Fred Middleton and Miss Margaret Farr are the graduates of our school, being the only ones passing the county examination just concluded.

Schools of herring are reported in the creek and the boys are having delightful fishing. (This was an annual event in Wenonah for many years) The butchers say they will be glad when the shad season is over.

The automobile, which went through here yesterday, scared several horses and had many craning their necks to see what was causing all the excitement.

Ice dealer Joe Warner has put his wagon on for the summer to serve the people.

The depot grounds will be greatly improved by the addition of flowerbeds.

A lady demonstrator is at Richard Clark's store in the interest of Walker's Gasoline Borax soap that is said to avoid so much hard work in the wash.

The new bicycle ordinance has been posted forbidding riding on the sidewalks.

New trestlework has arrived for Dr. Bailey's coal yards. (A rail siding across from the firehouse.)

The rehearsal for the musicale and cantata last evening was all that can be desired. The young misses that are in charge of the affair are

much pleased. The admission is only three cents, the proceeds to be turned over to the church.

Hiram Leap has received another bag of seed from the grange, which he is kindly distributing among his friends and neighbors, who have gardens (The Grange Hall was on North Marion Avenue, originally Joseph Noblitt's Hall, later the American Legion Hall.)

Quite a number of our people witnessed the solar eclipse here this morning. The weather was clear and a good view of the phenomenon could be had.

J.L.Drummer has just completed a nice boardwalk in front of postmaster Wilson's property. (It was quite common at this period to have wooden sidewalks called boardwalks.)

Rev. R.H.Gage will give an illustrated lecture of the tour of the continent made by he and Edward Farr in the Presbyterian Church tonight. (They spent half a year in Europe.) A number of G.A.R. men from this section are to attend services in the M.E.Church on Sunday afternoon. (The Grand Army of the Republic was a Civil War veteran's organization.)

Mr. Lewis, the lessee of the Wenonah Inn, is making arrangements to open it sometime this month.

The electric light wires seem to be burning the tops of the trees in several places about town.

It seems your correspondent was wrongly informed regarding the dog of Dr. Stout having symptoms of rabies. Dr. Stout accounts for the bloody and disheveled appearance of his dog from the fact that the animal received a laceration of one ear while chasing through the swamp, which bleed freely and covered its jaws with blood and dust

Woodbury Daily Times
Woodbury, New Jersey mwebb

WENONAH MUSEUM MUSINGS

Our Museum is somewhat of a disappointment to me but maybe it is simply because I may have expected too much.

Curator Julie Ream has spent a great many Saturdays at the WHS computer entering, categorizing, sorting, and then packing the artifacts the Historical Society inherited. Fortunately we do have the Wenonah Military Academy materials received from the Gloucester County Historical Society. Unfortunately we don't have too much else from the period 1871 to 1904 when the Academy opened its doors.

For obvious reasons I find it necessary to once again reach out to the membership with a request for donations of any material even remotely connected to that period of our history. The materials can be donated, or loaned so we can take photographs and save them in that manner. Jack Sheppard Sr.

GROWING UP IN "LITTLEGRANGE"
RECOLLECTIONS OF EDITH URSULA FARR

This is the second part of a three part series describing what it was like being a child of Edward Lincoln Farr and living in the family mansion while growing up in Wenonah. These are remembrances of Farr daughter Edith (1861 – 1924) which she related to her daughter Candace Elizabeth who married Dr. William Ridington in 1936.

The first episode of the series in the April newsletter described the layout of Littlegrange and what some of the rooms, especially the cellar were like.

In this episode she describes what life was like around the holidays, especially Christmas.

Christmas at Wenonah was a regular event for us until Mumph (the grandmother) died. The air seemed alive with special plans and special sights. Sometime before Christmas, Aunt Dol (Elizabeth Farr) loaded up the car with gifts and let us accompany her while she delivered them to Wenonah friends. These gifts were beautifully wrapped, and I'd watch as Aunt Dol carried them to various decorated doorways until they were delivered and out of sight.

The air was cold and bright on those jaunts, in my memory, and the Wenonah houses represented what I now romantically imagine the best of middle class Americana—clean framed homes with modest wreaths and neat lawns. Whenever I remember those trips I picture specifically a white frame house as I viewed it from the car. The door opens and Aunt Dol laughs and chats with the person who obviously likes and respects her a great deal. There was a Norman Rockwell flavor about those scenes, and the deliveries perfectly summed up the Christmas spirit.



Sometimes we went by the drugstore on the way home and bought pretzel sticks, the thick long kind. I always think of Wenonah when I see those pretzels today.

The big event at Christmas was unveiling the tree. Unlike later, for the Ridington Christmases, the tree was decorated mysteriously Christmas Eve behind the closed nursery doors, and then unveiled with much fanfare Christmas day. Although I'd not recommend this method for families with children, yet there was something special and exotic about it, for the long wait between Christmas Eve and the next morning was exquisitely excruciating.

How we wanted to see beyond those nursery doors! But rushing in the next morning was wonderful, although at first, the gifts took on more importance than the tree. We examined it in detail later. One of those Christmases I received a "Sparkle Plenty" doll whose name I never thought much about until recently, when my friend, Gerald Clements, told me the "Plentys" were cartoon characters and Sparkle was one member of the

family, along with B. O. Plenty.

I remember well her blonde hair, which my cousin Van seized to drag her along the hallway, to my rage. I still remember my anger and disgust with him over such unbelievable callousness with my "child".

I don't know how often my Aunt Jeanie, her husband Nick, and their children, Jud and Van (their third child, Mark, was born later) came for Christmas, but one year, they were certainly there. Aunt Edie and Aunt Clara, actually great aunts, were always there, as was Great Granddaddy Cooper, and of course, Aunt Mike and her children, Maurie and John, who lived close by. The great aunts and great grandfather deserve special attention later in these

pages; they were marvelous figures whose beauty, age, and dignity lent a special atmosphere to the gatherings they, attended.

And so, the nursery was the scene of special holidays, as well as the place where relaxation, conversation, and play were carried on by children and adults alike. It was there the adults sat comfortably in the evening, Aunt Dol smoking, Mumph .sipping some sort of nightcap which I later learned was beer, us playing with the building brick set, or just sitting listening.

Aunt Dol had virtually a wing of the house to herself, where in addition to her bedroom and bath, she used a comfortable little studio for arts and crafts. There, she painted simple oil landscapes, which ranked her as a full fledged professional artist in my eyes, until Mother told me Aunt Dol wasn't an artist in the way I thought. Tables in this little room were spread with wooden angel figures, about seven inches high, she painted the angels in various pastels and stacked them up for Christmas. I loved these angels, and couldn't understand why my aunt was not a real artist because of them. I still have two of these angel figures, who smile from their half moons in my guest bedroom.

Aunt Dol was the source of-games at Littlegrange. Some of the most memorable romps were the bedtime "elevator" rides, when Tante linked her hands to form a stirrup, let us step into them with one foot, and then lifted and dumped us into bed. The lifting and dumping gave our stomachs the sensation of being in an elevator; thus the name. It was a simple game and a simple gesture- the tossing of giggling children in the air. And yet, I remember it with enormous fondness and special affection.

Another activity Aunt Dol directed was the drawing of our silhouettes from wall shadows. We'd sit hushed while she traced the outlines of our profiles directly into black construction paper, or onto plain paper to be transferred later. Recently, I discovered one of those silhouettes, Joy's, in a trunk in the attic at Westminster. I don't know if any other survived.

Sometimes, Aunt Dol launched with little warning into the role of Katishaw from *The Mikado*, the part she sang at camp in New Hampshire, and shrieked out, "Assist me! All of you!"

But more routinely for a while, she carried off an even more dazzling tour de force. This was her magical ability to "swallow" a prune pit and cause it to emerge directly and painlessly from one of her ears. I was quite transfixed by this art, which I demanded to see over and over in an effort to catch the pit on its journey, or to figure out the mystery in some other way. I must have been small, because I never could detect any flaws in the process, mostly because my method of detecting flaws was to inspect her ears after the pit had emerged. I was forced to conclude that somehow, she probably did ingest the pit and allow it to travel within her body, though I wasn't a hundred percent convinced. Mercifully, I never tried the trick myself. As an adult, I'm delighted to imagine my wonderful gullibility at that stage of 'childhood, whatever age it was.

Another intermittent game involved the fascinating wall intercoms connecting the first and second floors. One was in the kitchen and connected with the nursery; another was outside Mumph's room. We'd relay strategic messages back and forth on those amusing gadgets, probably annoying the adults at times, and I imagine if I were offered the chance to play with them today, I'd be just as annoying.

Then there were the carved bears on the posts of each main staircase landing. Kissing the bears was really Jeanie's original game. Sometimes I'd follow suit, but only in pale imitation of her resounding and serious smacks for each bear, as she struggled up each stair, to be lifted at strategic points.

Rolling down the steep front bowl of a terrace outside the house, "the Hollow Hill", was a game the home movie camera captured. Today, at least three of the Ridington children plus Maurie, our cousin, and a neighbor boy, can still be viewed, seriously eyeing the long tumble down, then putting the project into grinning, and finally chuckling practice. Robin was the leader of the bunch, his spinning on target, his aim sure. The camera captures me, however, taking my sights and aim, and then rolling quite crookedly a short distance down the terrace, but smiling nevertheless.

PLEASE NOTE: These "Recollections" require too much space for one newsletter. The final segment will be in the next issue. J. Sheppard Sr



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WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2010

Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INTERESTING PROGRAMS
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- INFORMATION BY KNOWLEDGEABLE WENONAHANS

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DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

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