

Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue 7 October 2008

OCTOBER 1908
WENONAH 100 YEARS AGO

Halloween parties will be numerous in this town.

According to the evidence already obtained in the poker gang, there seems to be a baker's dozen and when His Honor brings down the whip of justice there will be some squirming.

Application soon will be made to have gas lamps placed in the new section of Wenonah.

Charles Hopson will move into his new house about November 1st. (100 North West Avenue)

Contractor Brown expects to complete the new firehouse this week. It is quite a building and will be a credit to the borough.

Thomas Wentz has picked over 1700 baskets of pears this fall. He has over a thousand baskets on hand yet, which he will market soon as they yellow up. (His farm was north of Linden Avenue, west of Jericho.)

A girl wishes a position in Wenonah as a child's nurse or as a chambermaid or waitress. Call Bell phone 112-L

The Military Academy has sent invitations out for a big military hop to be given Halloween.

The hinges on the door of our "jug" have not had time to rust the past week. There was much comment over the gent that was arrested at 3:00 o'clock yesterday morning and kept in the jug until one o'clock that some of the citizens furnished him with victuals and cigars and are thinking of asking borough council to put a couch and carpet in the jug.

Rev. R. H. Gage preached one of the best temperance sermons ever heard in the new church.

When some little life is sacrificed probably means will be found to stop the fearful rate at which autos speed along the streets of this borough.

Mayor Lorence is making an effort to have the 8:05 morning north bound express stop here, as since the 8:19 has been taken off there is no other train until 8:34, which makes it late when the passengers arrive in Philadelphia.

WHS OFFICERS 2008

President	Louis McCall
Vice Pres.	Barbara Capelli
Secretary	Jo Dominy
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Vicki McCall

Meetings are held the second Friday of each month at the Community Center except June, July & August

One of Dan Mumford's mules became tangled up in the harness here yesterday and in trying to free itself was severely cut.

The citizens meeting for the arrangement of the election night entertainment will be quite successful and a pleasing entertainment will be given. For men only. The ladies will have to prepare an entertainment for themselves that evening. (They were lucky National Organization for Women didn't exist at that time.)

We received the following this morning, and evidently from one of

the scholars of the public school, who rejoices in the fact that his or her teacher failed to get out of the school house before the janitor locked up the building. "One of the school teachers was locked in the building last night and had to jump out the window. It was a good jump, don't you think. It was more than I would like to do. I bet she will go out sooner the next time, don't you."

Going to Woodbury tomorrow night to see the Boston Bloomers Girls' basketball team play the Woodbury team? Better go; as it is an opportunity which you will never, get again to see the only girls' team in the United States that plays against men. The girls also give fencing exhibitions.

Officer Drummer found two men loitering around town early yesterday morning and as they could not give a good account of themselves he took them to Woodbury and locked them up. They were afterward discharged.

Rev. R. H. Gage and wife had a large reception Monday evening for the congregation of the Presbyterian Church. It was a very large affair. Some of the ladies gowns were imported from Paris for the affair.

Some of the Wenonah Athletic Club who profess themselves to be the best players of Wenonah forget they had to use two pitchers in order to defeat the Methodist team last Saturday. Their first pitcher lasted only six innings for he was knocked all over the field.

Woodbury Daily Times
October 1908

“A BOROUGH COMMISSION, A FIRE HOSE CARRIAGE AND A FISH FARM” 1873 - 1883

Excerpts from the book “Wenonah” by Marjorie K. Lentz

(continued from the September 2008 newsletter)

Previously the topic was Wenonah’s churches, the start of its schools, and the fact that much of the activity in the town centered around the hotel and the railroad. The next chapter is entitled “A Borough Commission, a Fire Hose Carriage and a Fish Farm.

When Wenonah had grown to fifty “cottages” and a population of three hundred, the voters chose to be incorporated as a Borough Commission on March 8, 1883. The seven elected commissioners were Dr. George W. Bailey, President who served as secretary-treasurer of the Mantua Land & Improvement Company, Isaac C. Stevenson, treasurer and a director of the Company, and Thomas W. Synnott, a director of the Company. Also elected were Andrew W. Carey, M.H. Perry, J. Frank Shull and Cunningham B. Johnston.

The first item of business as a Borough Commission was the receiving from the Mantua Land and Improvement Company the deed to two squares of parks which faced the Wenonah House. The first purchase was two fire ladders which were stored in the School basement along with twenty-two fire buckets, the trustees of the Wenonah School having granted permission to use one cellar window and one side of the cellar for storage. The first resolution passed by the Borough Commission was one urging property owners to repair their sidewalks. The original wooden sidewalks were being replaced by flagstone walks.

Although the Mantua Land and Improvement Company had laid out streets, planted shade trees, built a hotel, sold lots and houses, a newspaper noted that since the Borough had been incorporated “the spirit of improvement has taken on a strong grip upon the residents and gratifying proofs of it will soon be witnessed.”

Immediately the Borough Commission installed twelve lamps on the streets and William Vogt was hired as a lamplighter at a salary of six dollars a month. As an economy move the lamplighter was cautioned not to permit the lamps to burn too late in the mornings. Poles were erected to connect the Wenonah House to Glassboro Road for telephone service and a post office was placed in the railroad

station with Sallie Ballinger as postmistress.

H. Haynes Perry was appointed Wenonah’s first policeman in 1886. After serving four years with no salary, the Borough Commission granted him an annual salary of twelve dollars. In 1893 a pair of handcuffs was secured for the policeman and his salary was increased to twenty-four dollars a year.

In order that the town be “built up with a creditable class of dwellings,” a resolution was passed by the Borough Commission that “no dwelling should be erected east of the railroad at a less cost than two thousand dollars and that no dwelling should be erected west of the railroad at a less cost than one thousand dollars.” In later years in good humor the eastern section of town was referred to as the silk stocking side and the western section as the cotton stocking side.

The Borough Commission was faced with a myriad of problems. Should dogs be muzzled? What should be done with the farmer’s chickens roving the streets? Should hogs be slaughtered in town? What should be done with the resident who buried his horse in his backyard? How can burglaries be prevented? Should stores be closed early in the evening to discourage loafing? What should be done with the boys who remove the burrs from the wheels of the carriages hitched in front of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Sunday evenings? Should housewives give handouts to gypsies and tramps? And should the farmers unload manure in the middle of Wenonah?

The manure problem created heated arguments. With the mixing of Philadelphia commuters and Wenonah House guests who used the passenger service of the railroad, and farmers who used the freight service there was bound to be a conflict. The unloading of manure in the center of town was declared a nuisance by the commuters and the railroad was requested to build a siding near the pumping station to unload the manure. However some farmers were not satisfied with the new location and wrote letters claiming they would never use the railroad again. The siding was installed and the farmers did use it. Also the commuters did attempt to prevent freight trains from stopping more than five minutes and they complained of excessive locomotive whistling at night.

Freight service accelerated. Joseph Cattell shipped his baskets of sweet potatoes to the Philadelphia markets and T.P. Darlington, a local poultry shipper, sent four tons of poultry a week out of the Wenonah Station. Sweet potatoes, watermelons and tomatoes were leading farm crops. Charles Buckman continued to operate his Wenonah Mills at the mill pond, John Steward operated a steam corn sheller, and on a sad note, John Kromer's cow died from eating potato vines sprinkled with Paris Green. One farmer boasted of a hog that weighed 775 pounds and another farmer displayed a watermelon in Thomas Savage's tobacco shop that weighed 63 pounds. The story was reported in the newspaper that "two young ladies were told they could have the watermelon for nothing if they could carry it away without letting it down to rest on the way. The ladies put the watermelon in a clothes basket and carted it home." The Duell and Perry canning house was purchasing the farmers' tomatoes and one progressive farmer succeeded in raising very large potatoes by using chemical fertilizer.

With the increased passenger service on the West Jersey Railroad, a new station was built in 1893 of Pompeian bricks to "harmonize with general improvements and surroundings of the Borough." Also the freight house was enlarged and James Darlington was appointed the gatekeeper.

The Wenonah Water Company was organized in 1885 with Stephen Greene as President, Thomas W. Synnott as Vice-President, Dr. George W. Bailey as secretary-treasurer, Blair Smith, Daniel Brown and J. Frank Shull. Galvanized pipes were laid, a Dover well bored and the first experimental fire hydrant placed at the corner of East Mantua Avenue and North Clinton Avenue, commonly known as Shull's Corner. Two years later twenty-three acres, including the mill property and the two adjoining lakes were purchased, a fourteen-foot wheel as well as a steam pump were installed. As need for water increased, the Wenonah Water Company erected a one hundred foot standpipe, bored five artesian wells and built a steam engine house on the south side of the dam. While digging the foundation for the engine house a vein of marl was uncovered and circular oyster shells measuring a foot across were unearthed.

Concerned with the "decorating and otherwise improving the parks," the Wenonah Park Association was formed in 1886 under the leadership of Stephen Greene, Thomas W. Synnott, Dr. George W. Bailey, Edward L. Farr, Andrew J. Carey and others. The Association's first act was the closing of Park Avenue as a driveway from South Clinton Avenue to the railroad tracks which had created two parks in front of the Wenonah House. There was now one park. Three hundred shade trees were placed along newly surveyed streets and land was cleared on Camel's Back¹ bordering Camel's Back Run, a popular picnic area in the woods on the eastern edge of Wenonah. Picnics were organized "to bring all the people together" in Wenonah and also wagon loads of picnickers came as far as Richwood and Clarksboro for church outings.

Several years prior when the barn at the Wenonah House burned and consideration was given to calling for assistance from as far away as Camden, the community realized the need for fire equipment. The Wenonah Hose Company, NO. 1 was organized in 1888 with E.R. Winship as President and chief engineer. Other officers included Charles Wilkins, Lewis Buzby and Blair Smith. To test their new fire hose carriage, called Mareshanks, a fire was ignited in a pile of barrels on the outskirts of Wenonah and within nine minutes after the alarm was sounded the new hose carriage was at the scene and the fire extinguished. The equipment was housed in the new barn of the Wenonah House and later transferred to Synnott's ice house. For several years the firemen possessed keys to the Methodist Episcopal Church in order to use the church bell for a fire alarm.

A lawn tennis club and baseball team were organized. One baseball game was played against a Philadelphia deaf mute team. In the Mantua Creek boys caught pike weighing three and a half pounds, terrapins, herring and at night they fished for eels. Rail birds were shot in the marshes and in the spring young people hunted for trailing arbutus in the woods.

¹In woods bordering South Stockton Ave.



PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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Here

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE: THE NEXT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING WILL BE HELD AT
THE WENONAH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 202 E. MANTUA AVENUE
FRIDAY OCTOBER 10TH AT 7:30 PM**

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2008

Membership Benefits

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

AMOUNT PAID \$ _____ CHECK _____ CASH _____

BRING FORM AND PAYMENT TO MEETING, OR MAIL. THANK YOU

WHS PO Box 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR
