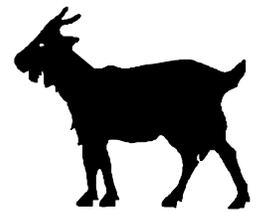


Nannygoats



Earlier this year, the Society sponsored a Walking Tour of Woodwild Park led by resident and Woodwild Park Association member Erick de Vries. The following history was compiled by Mr. de Vries in preparation for the tour, and the Society is delighted to be able to share it with our readers.

THOMAS W. STRONG, CREATOR OF "WOOD WILD"

Thomas W. Strong was an engraver and publisher. He published a wide variety of items including bibles, valentine's cards, almanacs, and comic books. "Yankee Notions" was one of his most popular periodicals. His publishing business allowed him to become quite wealthy. According to the executors of his estate, upon his death he left land in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, Minnesota, "and possibly elsewhere." While his immediate family may not have known how much land he truly had, we do know on which of those lands he chose to live; right here, in Woodwild Park. Strong acquired all of the undeveloped land from Main Street to Grove Avenue, and from Middlesex Avenue to the Port Reading Railroad from various land owners in the 1850s. The tract that includes Woodwild Park was purchased from Robert R. Freeman in 1855. He hired a surveyor to lay out lots and create a map in 1868. Over the course of about 20 years, he managed to sell only a few of those lots. The large area of about 30 acres along Grove Avenue was still wooded in his time. He named this area "Wood Wild Park" (then three words) and built his house there. It is unknown whether he intended for this area to become a public park, or whether he simply chose this as the name for his country estate. He referred to the entire land area, from Main Street to Grove Avenue, as "Wood Wild," almost as if he envisioned it becoming a community separate from Metuchen.

WOODWILD HOUSE

Woodwild House, the Strong family's home faced west towards Oak Avenue, while a large balcony faced present-day Woodwild Park. The house was built some time between 1855, when Strong purchased the land, and 1870, when the Strong family appeared in the federal census as residents of our community.

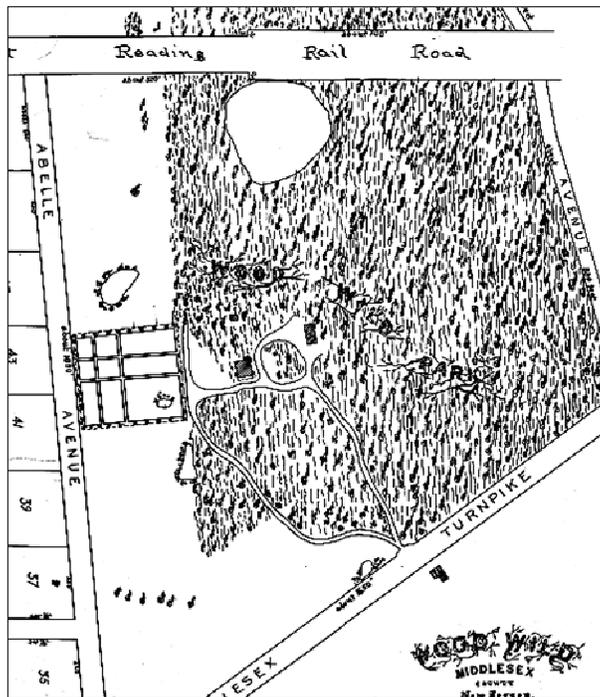


While early 20th century picture postcard views of the house and its surroundings show it to be heavily wooded, the area was nearly devoid of trees and was probably used as farm land in the 19th century when Strong purchased it. A

photograph of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, taken not long after it was built in 1869, gives an idea of what the area looked like in the mid-1800s. Linden, Oak, Maple, and Chestnut Avenues were still mostly an idea in Strong's mind and on his map.

Woodwild Park

by Erick de Vries



THE GLACIAL KETTLE HOLE

Woodwild Park owes its existence to ancient geological events: the Ice Ages. During the most recent glacial period, the ice sheet reached as far south as central New Jersey before it receded about 10,000 years ago. The terminal moraine, i.e., the line of irregular mounds of debris that mark the edge of the glacier, runs from Perth Amboy northwesterly through New Jersey and includes the hills in the park and nearby surroundings.

The seasonal pond in Woodwild Park is believed to be

Top: An early 20th century picture postcard of Woodwild House.

Bottom: Excerpt of Strong's 1868 map of "Wood Wild."

Continued on Page 4

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society was founded in 1974 with the primary purpose of promoting an interest in and appreciation of the history of the Borough of Metuchen and of Edison Township.

UPDATE...

Short Hills National Register Nomination Project

by Walter R. Stochel, Jr.

The Metuchen Edison Historical Society and our consultant, John Milner Associates, are finishing up the report on the project that will be submitted to the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP). In this report will be the description of the battle, a KOKOA analysis of the battle, and the results of the archaeological metal detecting search. The photograph below is of one of the items found during the search. The Society invites you to attend a program about this study, on Tuesday November 16, 2010, 6:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the North Edison Library located at 777 Grove Avenue in Edison. We invite you to come out and learn how our study has lead to new information about the location and specifics of the battle.



Grimstead Room Archives

The Society's Grimstead Room archives, containing thousands of local history images and documents, are located in the basement of the Metuchen Public Library and guided access to the collections is available from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on the following upcoming Saturdays in 2010 and 2011: **November 6, December 4, and January 8.** For more information, contact us at 732-906-0529 or wstochel@earthlink.net.

The following letter was received in response to our previous issue, which featured a story about an aircraft observing tower near Beacon Hill in Metuchen. Mr. Molineux now resides in Virginia, but was a long-time local resident and has donated several items to the society in recent years.

Memories from the Mailbox...

I was excited to read George Muha's account of World War aircraft observing towers. Weren't there two? I seem to recall another one at the far end of Linden Avenue next to (or near) Ray Herb's house. (He taught government and other subjects at Metuchen High, and required his students to purchase *The New York Times*.)

I lived on Washington Place, a short one-block street (then paved with cinders) that parallels Hillside Avenue, and the road - then path - that we would take to Beacon Hill. Near the base of the hill, but still in the woods, was a pond on which we used to ice skate in the winter, the rotating beacon light scanning above. A man - and I have no idea who he was - would dam a languishing stream each fall to make certain there was a shallow pond on which to skate. It was big enough to go in circles, but not large enough to whack a hockey puck, although we tried. The man who made the pond would often bring a wind-up Victrola and play waltzes. On chilly afternoons we would gather sticks for a fire to warm our hands - making a romantic setting for young teens. I suppose this spot in my memory is now in someone's back yard.

My father, Howard O. Molineux, was too old for military service and was one of the airplane spotters, and I, like Mr. Muha, occasionally accompanied him on his observation tour. As I recall, the tower off Linden Avenue was very much like - if not identical, - to the one pictured in *Nannygoats*. All airplanes would be reported by phone - type, direction, estimated altitude. I always thought the calls went to a headquarters in Newark, but I have no idea if this is correct.

Every boy my age (9-10 or so) had a set of airplane identification cards and knew the silhouettes of all military aircraft - much to the approval of our parents and teachers. One day there was great excitement because a Nazi Messerschmitt 109 was seen flying west. It had been captured and was being flown to an Army Air Corps base in Ohio to be dismantled and studied. Spotters along the route had been alerted in advance so as to not set off a false alarm.

Father often had the night shift and he would walk from Washington Place and take a shortcut through a vacant lot on Highland Avenue that backed up to the Masonic Lodge on Middlesex Avenue. From there he'd hike up Linden Avenue, past his brother's house, John B. Molineux, an attorney and later judge. The path through the vacant lot was on a downward slope and one night father tripped on a root or stone and fell. He was holding his Thermos can of coffee and when he fell he landed on the thermos. His ribs were cracked when the Thermos struck a sharply pointed stump - but he was saved from what might have been a puncture wound. He marched on and completed his shift.

What I remember most about World War II were all the trains filled with soldiers and trucks moving through town. We'd spend hours standing on the embankment waving. The soldiers, I supposed, were leaving from Camp Kilmer for debarkation from New York, or elsewhere.

Thanks for allowing me to reminisce, I wish my memory were clearer.

Mr. Molineux's memory seems pretty clear to this editor! But who was that Victrola-toting, pond damming resident who provided such fun for Metuchen's youth?! And does anyone have a photograph of the aircraft observing tower on Linden Avenue?

New in the Collections

The Society has recently acquired a colorful metal reproduction advertisement for Stickney & Poors products being sold at "Rice and Sons Mercantile" located at 112 South Main Street in Edison, New Jersey.



Raritan Arsenal's Italian POWs

Previous issues have featured articles and reminiscences about Edison's Raritan Arsenal and the role it played in the United States' efforts during the first World War. We are now hoping that some of our readers may have information about the facility's Italian Prisoners of War during WWII. The co-chair of the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at Berkeley City College in California, Laura E. Ruberto, Ph.D., has reached out to the Society to see if there is more information about this specific topic. Below is an excerpt of a March 12, 1944 article from *The New York Times* about an altar the POWs built. If you have any information to share, please contact Dr. Ruberto at 2050 Center Street, Berkeley, CA, 94704, or 510-981-2922, or lruberto@peralta.edu.

Italian War Prisoners Build New Altar For Jersey Internment Camp Chapel

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J., March 11—Italian prisoners of war at Raritan Arsenal near here will worship tomorrow before a new altar built with their own hands from salvaged wood and painted to simulate Carrara marble. The altar has been constructed in the chapel of the internment camp at the arsenal, Col. Max A. Elser, commanding officer, announced today.

Three cabinet makers and two painters with wide experience in their trades in Italy, devoted two weeks to creating the buff and green altar at the suggestion of Major Newton B. Mistell, commander of the internment camp, to replace the bare box formerly used for Sunday services. Parts of old boxes and remnants of old planks were nailed together to form a structure seven and a half feet long and four feet high. The prisoners then painstakingly paint-

ed a buff grained marble effect with fluted columns of green simulated marble at each side. Even the paint used for the delicate grain effect of marble was salvaged from paint cans at the arsenal.

Before the paint was dry in informal dedicatory service was conducted by Lieut. Dominic P. Dohanyos, chaplain at the arsenal. Colonel Elser, accompanied by Mrs. Elser and members of his staff, accepted the altar for the encampment, declaring "an object of such beauty could not alone come from drawings but must have first been in their hearts."

Speaking for the prisoners, an Italian marciallo, highest ranking prisoner of war in the camp, wearing insignia equivalent to an American warrant officer, told Colonel Elser through an interpreter that the altar was an expression of "true Italian art, worked in love and devotion."

1928 Directory of Metuchen, Column 3

Below is the third column of entries from a 1928 Directory of Metuchen that includes both addresses and telephone numbers of local residents. The small "r" after the name indicates the entry is for a "residence." The Society began reprinting the entirety of this directory in the Winter/Spring 2010 issue of *Nannygoats*.

Clark A G r Iselin.....Metuchen-91-J-1
 Clark J W r 60 Pleasant.....Metuchen-554
 Clarkson F L r 297 Amboy av.....Metuchen-35
 Calusen R W r Bonhamtown.....Metuchen-589
 Clausen R W Jr r Nixon.....Metuchen-139-M-1
 Clausen Theo r 14 Lauradale av..Metuchen-177-M
 Clyde E Miss r 7 Maple.....Metuchen-767
 Cockfair E V r 20 Highland av..Metuchen-251-J
 Coerr R L r 300 Middlesex av...Metuchen-16-W
 Coil C H r 243 Woodbridge av...Metuchen-417
 Coles W A r 136 Hillside av.....Metuchen-111
 Comerford G M r 139 Main.....Metuchen-737-W
 Comfort A r S Main.....Metuchen-305
 Commonwealth Bank of Metuchen
 407 Main.....Metuchen-614
 Compton Francis Miss r Elmwd av
 Metuchen-253-J
 Compton L r 76 Robins pl.....Metuchen-4-M
 Compton M W Miss r Cntrl av..Metuchen-334-R
 Compton W P r 36 Linden av..Metuchen-136-M
 Connor J M Jr r 279 Chestnut av
 Metuchen-14-W
 Conover A V N r 251 Main.....Metuchen-396-M
 Conover C N r Iselin.....Metuchen-352-W-1
 Conover L r Nixon.....Metuchen-241-R-3
 Cooper E W r Iselin.....Metuchen-352-J-1
 Cooper F E r Iselin.....Metuchen-194-M-1
 Corbin E P r 182 Maple av.....Metuchen-39-J
 Corbin R B Mrs r 224 Middlesex av
 Metuchen-223
 Cornelison N Jr r 22 Home.....Metuchen-230
 Cornell J r 48 Thomas.....Metuchen-188
 Cortright Ed K r 303 Amboy av..Metuchen-214-M
 Costa F confcty 416 Main.....Metuchen-765
 Costa G ice cream Pearl.....Metuchen-695
 Residence 416 Main.....Metuchen-588
 Craig P G r 216 Lake av.....Metuchen-439
 Craig Sarah A Miss r 72 Centre..Metuchen-330-W
 Craig W O r 224 Lake av.....Metuchen-12-J
 Crouse Coal Co Fords.....Perth Amboy-3308
 Crowell A Mrs r 441 Main.....Metuchen-349-W
 Crowell A H Mrs r 73 Spring.....Metuchen-526
 Crowell Edith H Miss r 73 Spring..Metuchen-526
 Crowell H Ramsay r 39 Home.....Metuchen-553
 Crowell J M r 76 Rector.....Metuchen-183
 Crowell R L r 45 Rector.....Metuchen-445
 Crowell Stewart r 60 Rector...Metuchen-232-W
 Crowell W A & Son grain 389 Main..Metuchen-33
 Crowell Wm A r 63 Spring.....Metuchen-12-M
 Cunningham E O Miss r Metu rd..Metuchen-320-J
 Curran Pfeiff Corp clay mfrs
 Liddle av.*Metuchen-555
 Curry Wm M r 10 Park pl.....Metuchen-623
 Dalsgard C r 68 Pleasant pl.....Metuchen-48-W
 Dalton M Mrs r 32 Brunswick av
 Metuchen-186-W
 Dana Erw C r Plainfield av...Metuchen-118-W
 Danford F A r 17 Sylvan av...Metuchen-449-W
 Danford W C ice cream 476 Main..Metuchen-705
 Residence 476 Main.....Metuchen-141-J
 Daniels Emilie J Miss r 161 Hillside av
 Metuchen-43-J
 Danish Peoples Home New Durham rd
 Metuchen-679
 Daub F G r Fords.....Metuchen-331-R
 Davis A r Main.....Metuchen-689-J
 Davis C M r 26 Bounty.....Metuchen-548-M
 Davis Ray florist 429 Main.....Metuchen-664
 Dawe L T r Kempson pl.....Metuchen-289-W
 Decker A V r 263 Woodbridge av
 Metuchen-289-J
 Decker F E Jr r 79 Charles...Metuchen-619-M
 Decker LeRoy G r Menlo Pk...Metuchen-351-J
 Decker P D r Fords.....Metuchen-60-R
 Dehis F r Walnut pl.....Metuchen-608-M
 Delaware Steel & Ordnance Co. Inc
 Bonhamtown..Metuchen-585
 Denecke M A r 233 Main.....Metuchen-783
 De Rozieres Eugene r 16 Peltier av..Metuchen-302
 Dessel Jos fruits & veg 413 S Main..Metuchen-199
 Dietrich C r 63 Grove av.....Metuchen-586
 Detering H r 40 Charles.....Metuchen-134-M
 De Wender H G r 55 Robins pl...Metuchen-399
 Dietz J J r 59 Highland av...Metuchen-174-R
 Di Lorenzo A r 44 Rector.....Metuchen-456
 Dinnebell Wm C r 24 Lincoln av..Metuchen-270

a kettle hole. Such a hole is formed when a chunk of ice breaks off from a receding glacier, is buried by glacial outwash, and then later melts. More detailed explanations by a member of the Geosciences Department at Stony Brook University are available online. The glacial features are mentioned in a Metuchen Environmental Inventory: "Kettle holes left from the melted glacial ice were filled, in time, with vegetable matter and peat causing a boggy condition where solid ground is about 20 feet beneath the surface. For this reason a section of Christol Street ... has not been paved." The boggy area is clearly visible on the 1868 Strong map of "Wood Wild," as is the circular area near the Port Reading Railroad.

The inventory mentions that surface water used to drain naturally from the lowest points of the present-day park into this boggy area. Perhaps this explains why the path from the main entrance on Middlesex Avenue forks and offers two ways to travel to the original estate. The more direct path, along Woodwild Way toward the rear of the estate, passed through the low-lying area and must have been muddy and unsuitable for visitors and guests. The other path, referred to as Woodwild Drive on historic maps, circumvented the low-lying areas and ended at the front of the estate.

The road bed of Woodwild Way was raised in later times, presumably by the Metuchen Building & Loan Association. A drainage pipe was installed underneath the path, but it is not deep enough to drain all of the water from the kettle hole. As a result, the kettle hole has become a seasonal pond. In Strong's time, all of the water must have drained from the kettle hole year-round, because the pond is not shown on his map. The surveyor took great care to document all ponds on the property. All the other ponds in and around the park can be found in exactly the same locations on Strong's map.

THE PARK ENTRANCE

It is believed that the stone pillars on Middlesex Avenue were built by Strong to mark the entrance to his country estate. The two center pillars used to contain brass plaques which disappeared several decades ago. The association restored the pillars and installed new plaques fairly recently.

CHARLES CORBIN, DONOR OF WOODWILD PARK

After Thomas Strong passed away, his properties were sold at auction. The properties in the Wood Wild neighborhood eventually came in the hands of Charles Corbin. Almost all of it was carved up into building lots and sold for development. He donated a smaller part of about 4 acres for "enjoyment of neighboring residents and of the Citizens of Metuchen and vicinity." It does not appear that Charles



Corbin ever lived in Woodwild House. He sold the lot on which the house stood to Frances Connor, wife of John Connor, in 1897, just a month after he acquired the property himself. The Connor family lived in the house for many years. Eventually the house was torn down to make place for new development along Chestnut Lane and East Chestnut Avenue.

Charles Corbin was a partner in the law firm of Collins & Corbin in Jersey City. His specialty was railroad taxation. Railroad companies did not have to pay property taxes on the land that their tracks occupied, and this annoyed Corbin to no end. He was personally responsible for drafting the legislation that required the railroads to start paying taxes.

Corbin also had a significant role in the creation of Metuchen as a Borough in 1900. Most residents did not think it mattered much whether or not Metuchen remained part of Raritan Township, now Edison. Corbin was able to explain what the impact of the new township law would be on Metuchen, and as a result, Metuchen voted for independence.

When the Corbin family first moved to Metuchen from Jersey City in the 1870s, they first lived in a house on Middlesex Avenue north of Grove Avenue, across from where the Baptist Church now stands. Their farm was known as "The Pines" and occupied the entire block of land between Middlesex Avenue, Grove Avenue, and the Port Reading Railroad.

Corbin built a new house for his family just north of the park entrance, at 300 Middlesex Avenue, in the early 1900s. The large white house, which he named Woodstock, for the town in Connecticut where his ancestors first settled, was known later for many years as the residence and office of Dr. Cannamela (the second house on the left, looking north from the park entrance).

We know from Corbin's later efforts to encourage Metuchen residents to secede from Raritan Township that he was suspicious of the township's willingness and ability to take care of the needs of smaller neighborhoods. We suppose that this led him to decide that Woodwild Park should be managed by local residents rather than by

Raritan Township. He deeded the land to the trustees of the Woodwild Park Association in 1897 and charged them with the responsibility to manage the land as a public park. The association was incorporated under an 1895 law and has operated as a corporation ever since. The donation of the park was considered significant



enough that it is mentioned in the biographies that were written about Corbin's life after his passing. While the residents of Metuchen certainly ought to be grateful to Corbin for donating the park land, we cannot entirely rule out the possibility that the park's creation was a compromise to avoid or settle disputes from residents who had already purchased building lots from Thomas Strong. Strong used his "Wood Wild" map to sell several lots, which means that those buyers were aware of, and may have been influenced by, the 30-acre wooded tract that he referred to as Wood Wild Park. It is not clear what the rules were in Strong's time, but certainly in Corbin's time the mere use of the word "Park" on a subdivision map was sufficient to cause such an area to become a public park without any further action required by the owner of the land. The impact of the use of the word "Park" on Strong's map must have been raised again in later years, because the Borough of Metuchen adopted an ordinance in 1961 that explicitly vacates and extinguishes any and all rights to a public park that might exist specifically as a result of Strong's map. Owners of building lots within the bounds of the original 30-acre wooded area may have requested this ordinance because of difficulties in obtaining title insurance or mortgages.

THE METUCHEN SAVINGS BANK AND THE 1897 SURVEY

With respect to selling land, where Strong failed, Corbin succeeded. Corbin understood that it was not good enough to own a large tract of land and wait for people to show up to buy individual lots. It was necessary to provide prospective buyers with the means to borrow money so they could pay for their land and build a house on it. Corbin, along with others, accomplished this in September 1897 by chartering the Metuchen Building & Loan Association.

One of the first acts of the MB&LA, in October 1897, was to survey the land and create a detailed map of all the available building lots. The following page shows a small detail of this map. The boundary of the original 3-acre area that Corbin donated to the Woodwild Park Association is clearly visible. The jagged, L-shaped boundary in the middle of the park matches exactly the tree line of the wooded area on Strong's map. The unnamed area below and to the left was clear of trees. Corbin must have wanted to reserve that area as a potential building lot. Six years later, in 1903, the MB&LA decided that part to the Woodwild Park Association as well.

When the MB&LA finished selling all of its land, it changed its name to the Metuchen Savings Bank. It continues to the present day as a successful local business with a strong focus

on the Metuchen community.
THE HISTORIC HORSE TROUGH

Many of the things we take for granted today were invented not all that long ago. One of these is running water. In that same year of 1897, the Middlesex Water Company was incorporated. While most people were quite used to going out to the well several times a day, the Middlesex Water Company was hoping to sign up many new customers by convincing them of the benefits of having access to running water at all times. And what better way than by installing water fountains around town, where passers-by could be amazed at water at the push of a button, so to speak. Free water from a fountain was but a small investment and an effective marketing tool. In 1899, the company offered free water to Raritan Township, but apparently the township wasn't interested. Most likely, the township wasn't interested in spending money to purchase and install a fountain. Well, the founder of the Middlesex Water Company was William Corbin, brother of Charles Corbin. They must have had a chat, and Charles must have offered to talk the Woodwild Park Association into purchasing a drinking fountain. And he did so, successfully. He talked. We purchased. While the talking may have

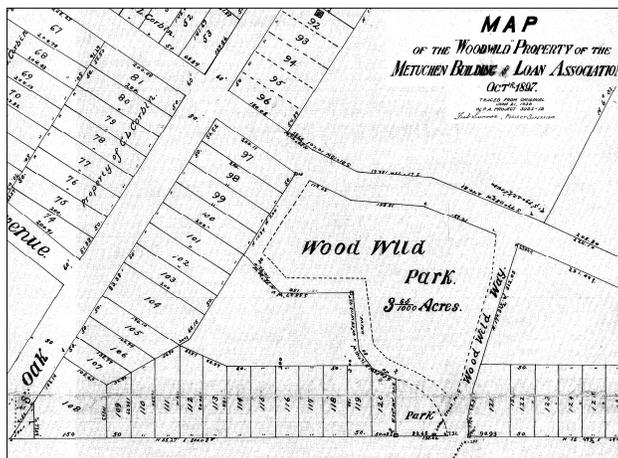


been easy, the purchasing surely was not. A committee of association members spent many months raising the necessary funds, about \$300, for the purchase and installation. The drinking fountain was installed in early 1900 and is as old as Metuchen itself.

The fountain was installed at the edge of Middlesex Avenue, because it was intended to be used by horses and dogs. Later, when horses and buggies went the way of the horse and buggy, the fountain was moved to its present location so as to avoid it being a hazard to traffic.

At what point the drinking fountain starting being called a horse trough is unknown. The term horse trough usually refers to a large container with a flat bottom that sits on the ground. The association has continued to care for the horse trough. A full restoration was done in the 1980s at a cost of about \$8,000, almost thirty times the original cost. Currently, the horse trough is

not in good shape, and preliminary cost estimates for another restoration are around \$25,000. As a non-profit with an annual budget barely enough to cover our insurance premiums, you can be sure we will be passing the hat once again in the near future.



Images on Page 4: Top: An April, 2010 view of one of the two stone entrance pillars along Middlesex Avenue. Middle: An undated photograph of Charles Corbin, on file at the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society. Bottom: 300 Middlesex Avenue, as it appeared in 2001. **Images On Page 5:** Top: An early 20th century picture postcard view of the "Horse Trough." Bottom: Excerpt of the 1897 MB&LA map of the "Woodwild Property."

Metuchen High School's Class of 1931 *History of Metuchen*

The following is continued from the Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, which is being reprinted in *Nannygoats* serially (beginning with Volume 5, Issue 2, Summer 2007). While the history contains some known factual & grammatical errors, the document is reproduced exactly as originally written.

SPORTS

Somewhere around 1880, when ladies wore bustles, and high brow gentlemen sported canes, athletics had their start in Metuchen.

Two men, Dr. E.F. Potter and Dr. J.G. Mason, prominent in social and athletic affairs of the town, formed a golf club and built a course extending from Hillside Avenue to Chestnut Avenue. Halfway between those streets stood the Episcopal Church but aside from that there was little sign of civilization. That was then considered way out in the country, and the golf course seemed to thrive, especially among the men of the town.

Every Sunday they would gather at the club with their awkwardly constructed clubs and play a round or two of the grand old Scottish game, which, although comparatively new in America, had behind it a background of several hundred years.

That Sunday playing was the death of it. Townspeople claimed that golf interfered with church attendance and the church won, golf being dropped temporarily.

Years later, in 1917 to be exact, the present golf club was founded. Five holes of that first club are still in the same place but the other four, formerly on the south side of the golf links pond, jumped over later to the other side of the pond where they are situated now. An additional nine holes has been planned and will, no doubt, soon be made.

Golf is the mostly rapidly growing sport in the country and the local course fills a popular need. Well kept greens, and cleverly constructed hazards make the Metuchen course a fine playground for golf enthusiasts.

Along about the same time that the old golf club was started, another athletic organization had its beginning. A group of the active young men of the town, among whom were John Maclachlan, Ralph Corbin, Washington Wilson, Herbert Diver, Spencer Perry, and Charlie Mundy, formed a club and met regularly in a room in the old John Robinson store. There they had rowing machines and trapezes, and it was there that they held informal boxing matches. Tennis was also a prominent sport in their athletic curriculum.

After the club had run for a while it died out and the Metuchen Club, much the same, was formed.

Team athletics were not very prominent until about 1901 when representative teams were formed in both football and baseball. These teams were the foundations of all the present day local teams.

Football, a rough and tumble football at that time, too, started somewhere about 1902 with the Metuchen Field Club

representing the town. It was made up chiefly of high school students and men who had graduated from high school in recent years. Most of the time it was called the high school team although the school did not officially sanction it. It played as a school team generally, though, and it met other schools in the vicinity of Metuchen including Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, and South Amboy High Schools. Teams from Newark and New Brunswick also met Metuchen. Games were played on the field opposite the present high school and were well attended despite the fact that football (at that time) was going through a rather trying period in its history.

Among the members of the team that first gathered at the field with their battered suits, precious shin pads, and nose guards were Captain Aylin Pierson, halfback, John Breen, brainy quarterback, Davy Kramer, fullback, Andrew White, halfback, Louis Lake and Clifford Morris, centers, Cox, Gilbert, and Roy Thornall, guards, Reginald Crowell, and Fred Starcken, tackles, and Pete Kempson, end. Moore acted as coach or substitute as occasion demanded.

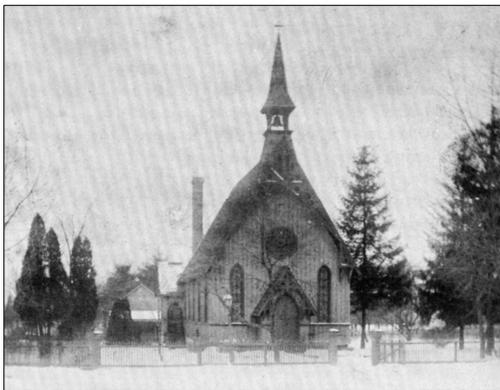
That first team carried on for quite a number of years, the original players gradually dropping out and being replaced by others. After a time, the high school and town teams began to draw apart and became distinct organizations in town. The town team ran for a long time, was partially broken up by the war, but was reorganized and played for several years after the war. It broke up about the same time as the town baseball team which was playing then, did.

High School football ran along in a rather casual, unsystematic way before the war. In 1916 Mr. Elmo Spoerl came here and as part of his duties took up the

coaching of the high school football eleven. From then on the team played annually except for 1918, the war year. Mr. Larson came in 1922 and coached for two years. Mr. Ray Herb coached for the next five years and then the present instructor, Mr. Milton Nicholas took up the job of coaching.

The high school has had several strong teams in the course of its playing, the best probably being the 1919 aggregation. At that time the high school athletic association had no money and the local players presented a rather nondescript appearance in their widely diversified uniforms.

Usually they had to take a collection to buy a football. Despite the lack of equipment, however, Metuchen presented a scrappy eleven, which wound up the season with a record of four victories, two ties, and two defeats. Among their victims included Bound Brook, always strong rivals of Metuchen, twice, New Brunswick seconds, and Roselle Park. One of the crowning features of the season was a scoreless tie with Nutley.



Above: An 1896 view of St. Luke's Episcopal Church.
Below: the 1911 High School Football Team



Holiday House Tour

Sunday, December 5, 2010
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tour beautifully decorated area homes, enjoy complimentary seasonal refreshments, and visit an extensive Holiday Bazaar and Raffle at the Old Franklin School (B.I.L. clubhouse), 491 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen.

Donation \$20 for Adults & Children over 12

All proceeds benefit the historic Old Franklin School. For more information, visit www.boroughimprovementleague.org

Ruth N. Terwilliger

The Society regrets to announce the passing of long-time member Ruth N. Terwilliger on August 15, 2010. Born in Newark, her family moved to Metuchen in 1940. She and her husband, George, raised three children in Metuchen and resided here for over fifty years. Ruth was a staff member at the Metuchen Library, where she assisted with the compilation of an extensive recorded oral history collection of older Metuchen residents. Ruth was a long time sales associate of Weichert, Realtors, a parishioner of St. Francis, a president of the Metuchen High School PTA, and a member of the Metuchen Historical Society. In 1978 Ruth took flying instructions, and soloed in her family's Cessna. At the time of her death, Ruth was living in Little Egg Harbor with her husband.

Interested in reading previous issues of Nannygoats? All of our back issues are available online at the Society's website at www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org.

Published by
The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
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The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The name of the newsletter, "Nannygoats," is taken from the title of a collection of anecdotes, articles, reminiscences, and letters compiled by photographer J. Lloyd Grimstead. He took more than 2,800 photographs of the Metuchen-Edison area, mostly during the 1930s, which make up 80 percent of the Historical Society's photographic collection. The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society dedicates this publication to Lloyd Grimstead, as a way of honoring him for collecting and recording so much of our local history.

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Upcoming Programs and Events

Walking Tour of Clara Barton

Saturday, October 9, 2010
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Join us for a walking tour of the historic Clara Barton neighborhood of Edison on Saturday October 9, 2010, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., starting at the Clara Barton Library at Hoover and Pleasant Avenues.

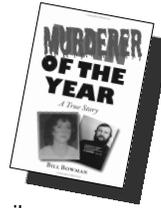
Stops include old farm houses, "Sears" houses, the Amboy Avenue Trolley, the Clara Barton School, Phoenix, and the Lehigh Valley Railroad (currently the Middlesex Greenway). For more information, contact Walter at 732-906-0529 or wstochel@earthlink.net.

MURDERER OF THE YEAR

Sunday, October 24, 2010 at
1:30 p.m.
Old Franklin School

Society members and the public invited to attend a presentation by Bill Bowman of his new book, "Murderer of the Year," which brings you behind the scenes of an investigation and trial that rocked the small borough of Metuchen, New Jersey in the early 1980s. This free program will take place at the Old Franklin School at 491 Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen, and will be followed by a light reception.

Parking is available across the street at Borough Hall and along Main Street. Contact Steve with any questions at 732-452-1381 or popopies@hotmail.com.



Battle of the Short Hills

Tuesday, November 16, 2010
6:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
North Edison Library
777 Grove Avenue, Edison

Learn more about the Battle of the Short Hills Nomination project during this presentation about the site's eligibility for the National Register. This project is being undertaken by the Society in conjunction with a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP)

Maps and other items about the battle, including recently discovered artifacts, will be on display. For more information contact Walter at 732-906-0529 or info@metuchenedisonhistsoc.org

**Save the Date! Don't miss our annual
LOCAL HISTORY DAY is Sunday, February 13, 2011**



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Metuchen, NJ 08840

Can you lend a hand? Membership Chairperson Needed!
Our previous Chair has moved out of state, and we are in need of a replacement...
If you are interested, please contact the president, Fred Wolke, at 732-225-9451.