



MANTUA TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION QUARTERLY BULLETIN

Volume 2, Issue 3

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Edenwood – The Centre City section of Mantua Township



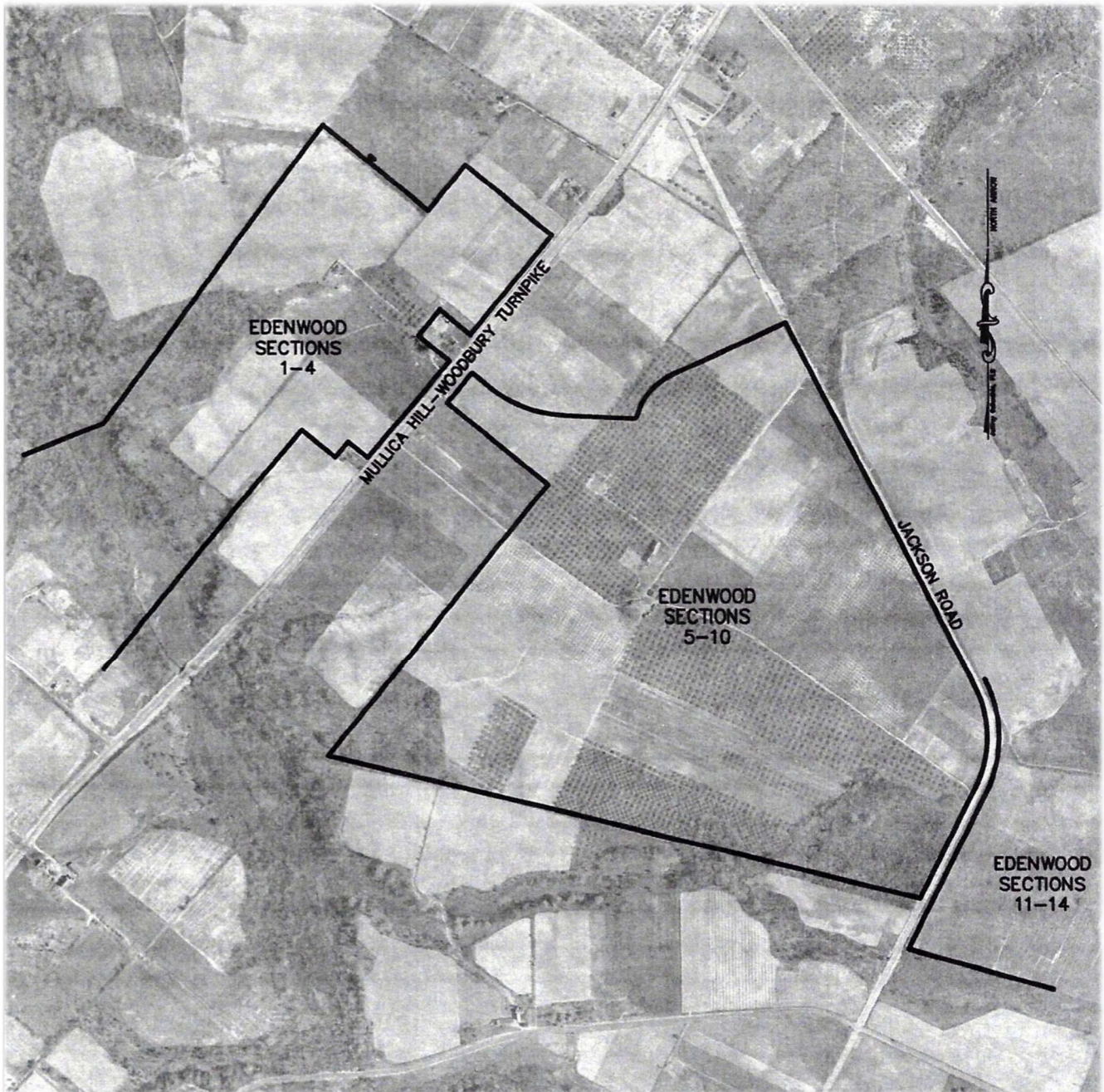
Aerial image of Centre City courtesy of Google Earth - 2022

Edenwood – The Centre City Section of Mantua Township

By Jeff Gellenthin

There was a time when much of Mantua Township was farmland. This holds true for the Centre City section of Township. The aerial image below was taken during 1940. It shows how open and undeveloped the area was. As the push to get out of

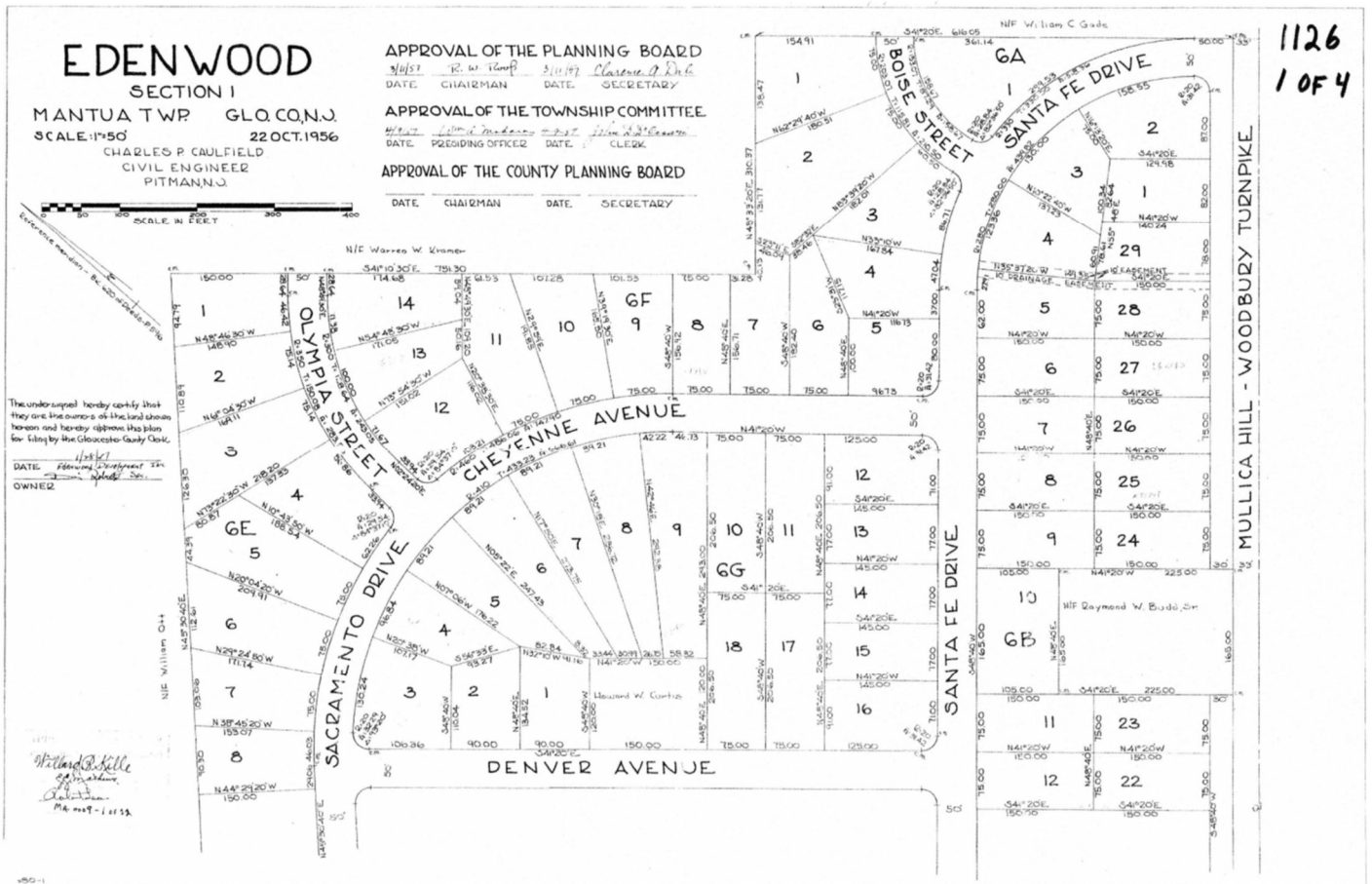
the city and into the suburbs grew, the local land was slowly, but surely sold to the “developer”. Centre City’s story is just that. The bulk of the land that is now Centre City was originally owned by Raymond W. and Mary G. Budd. Their land ownership consisted of hundreds of acres as described in Deed Book 620, Page 596 & c. They acquired the land from Walter and Eliza Budd in 1949. Raymond and Mary Budd sold most of their land to Edenwood Development, Inc.



Following the land development concept of the then popular Levittown in Pennsylvania, the construction of Edenwood, a 1,200-home residential development was planned for Mantua Township. With sweeping streets, curves, and cul-de-sacs, this would be the second of its kind in Mantua Township. Buckingham Village in Sewell was the first, started in 1955. It was during 1957 that Edenwood Developers officially announced plans to construct a new residential community.

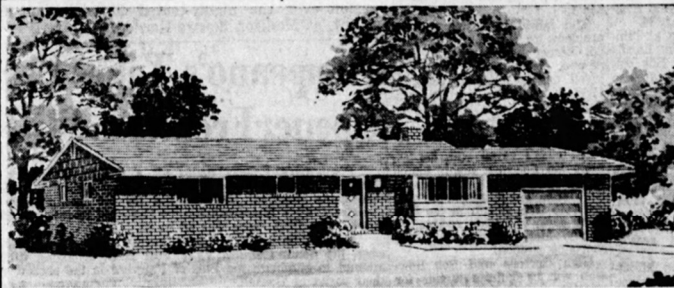
Through the process of design and approval of the development, the geometry of the proposed streets and lots were created by Charles P. Caulfield, Civil Engineer in Pitman, New Jersey. The mapping of this

detailed information was performed between October 1956 and September 1957. The development consisted of 13 separate sections, allowing for phasing of the construction. Once a section plan was completed, it was reviewed and eventually approved by the Township and County Planning Board. After each approval, the plan was filed in the Gloucester County Clerk's Office, thus memorializing the location of the proposed lots and the dedication of new streets. For unknown reasons, sections 11 through 13 were not constructed. These sections are located on the Southeasterly side of Jackson Road where the Royal Oaks Apartments and part of Royal Oaks were constructed.



The Edenwood Development was associated with the following corporations: Capital Developers, Denver Developers, Helena Developers, Pierce Developers, and State Developers. Streets within Centre City bear the names of these entities.

The homes were to be constructed of brick and wood frame with three or four bedrooms. The initial price of a new home ranged from \$10,990 to \$12,490.



The Edenwood

- ★ BRICK ALL-AROUND
- ★ FULL BASEMENT
- ★ 3 Bedroom Ranch
- ★ Exciting Bay-Windowed Kitchen
- ★ Cathedral Ceiling Living Room

\$11,490

The Hamilton

- ★ BRICK ALL-AROUND
- ★ 4 BEDROOMS
- ★ 9 Room Split Level
- ★ Sliding Glass Wall
- ★ 2 Bathrooms

\$11,790



The Provincetown

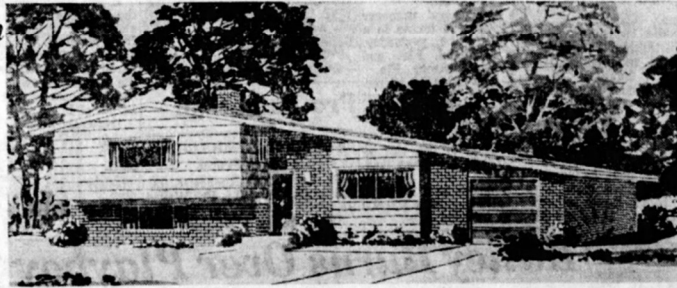
- ★ 8½ ROOM SPLIT LEVEL
- ★ 4 BEDROOMS
- ★ Finished Recreation Room
- ★ Bay Windowed Kitchen
- ★ Cathedral Ceiling Living Room

\$10,990

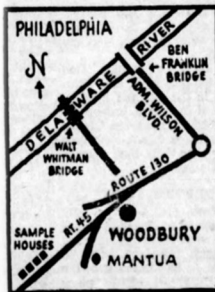
The Californian

- ★ BRICK ALL-AROUND
- ★ 4 BEDROOMS
- ★ 9½ Room Split Level
- ★ Glass-Enclosed Breakfast Nook
- ★ 2 Bathrooms

\$12,490



OPENING TODAY... A STIRRING SYMPHONY in BRICK



- ★ ¼ ACRE LOTS
- ★ 10 MINUTES TO NEW WALT WHITMAN BRIDGE
- ★ NEW SCHOOL BEING BUILT ON SITE
- ★ 15 ACRES PROPOSED SHOPPING
- ★ PUBLIC SERVICE BUS (Bridgeton Bus)
- ★ PARKS

DIRECTIONS: Philadelphia-Camden Bridge to Route 130-South to Route 45 and Woodbury, N. J., continue on Route 45 (Broad Street) through Woodbury 4 miles South to CENTRE CITY.

Centre City

adjoining Woodbury, N. J.

a complete, self-contained community . . .

by Edenwood Developers, Inc.

G.I.'s: from **\$225 DOWN**

garage optional

It is not clear as to when and why the development was renamed Centre City early on. However, we can find a similar situation with a more recent development in Barnsboro. During the construction of the Bellemeade development, it was officially filed and known as Hollybrook. Different builders took part in the construction of these homes and most likely had an influence on the renaming for marketing purposes.

The first group of new homeowners began moving in during September of 1957. During this time, John S. Flack, sales agent for the new community, stated in a news article: *the sample houses were open a few months ago and we have deposits on more than 500 homes and more than 40 firm agreements have been signed in the short time.* Flack further stated: *Each property lot is one-quarter of an acre. All Township improvements will have been installed when the project is completed.*

There was much excitement as this new concept in residential development started to grow. It was reported in the Courier Post on April 12, 1958, *that Centre City will be an unparalleled community with convenience never before offered in such a modest price range. Centre City encompasses sprawling, scenic acres of premium land that will, in short time, house the most completely self-contained community in New Jersey. A modern school will be constructed on 20 acres of land specifically designed for children. Parks and recreation centers will be completed on an additional 20 acres. A modern shopping center, complete with stores and services, will be constructed on another 15 acres.*

The Centre City News, a non-profit, non-political publication was published monthly by John S. Flack, Realtor, in the interests of the community. The following are some interesting topics that are found in Volume 1, Number 5, May-June Issue 1958:

- Civic Association - *The first regular general membership meeting of the Association was held at the Mantua Fire Hall at 8pm on Tuesday, May 20th, 1958. Approximately eighty people attended. The first order of business was to introduce the members of the Board of Directors. They included Edward Worthington, Chairman, George Gould, President, and William Bartleson, Vice-President. During this meeting, the basic points of the Civic Association Program for 1958 were outlined. They were as follows: 1. To secure 100% membership in the association among all owners and residents of Centre City. 2. To achieve 100% registration of all Centre City legally qualified voters. 3. To improve the amount and quality of schools in Mantua Township and Centre City. 4. To secure a larger and more representative Township Committee. 5. To attempt to speed completion of streets, installation of signs and street lighting in Centre City. 6. To institute and coordinate active social and athletic programs for children and adults.*

TRIVIA TIME

What do all of the following have in common?

1. American Nursey
2. Cherry Hill
3. Clover Valley Farm
4. Cream Ridge

The answer will appear near the end of this bulletin.

HINT: Cherry Hill does not refer to the community in Camden County and there is nobody living today who has visited these places.

Centre City Little League Team



FRONT ROW—Don Reismann, Mike Dunn, Gary Simons, Ray Simons, George Broomall.

SECOND ROW—Tom Carosia, Bill Wesemann, Bud Reismann, Bob Friel, Bob Muccigrosso, Bill Hagenburg.

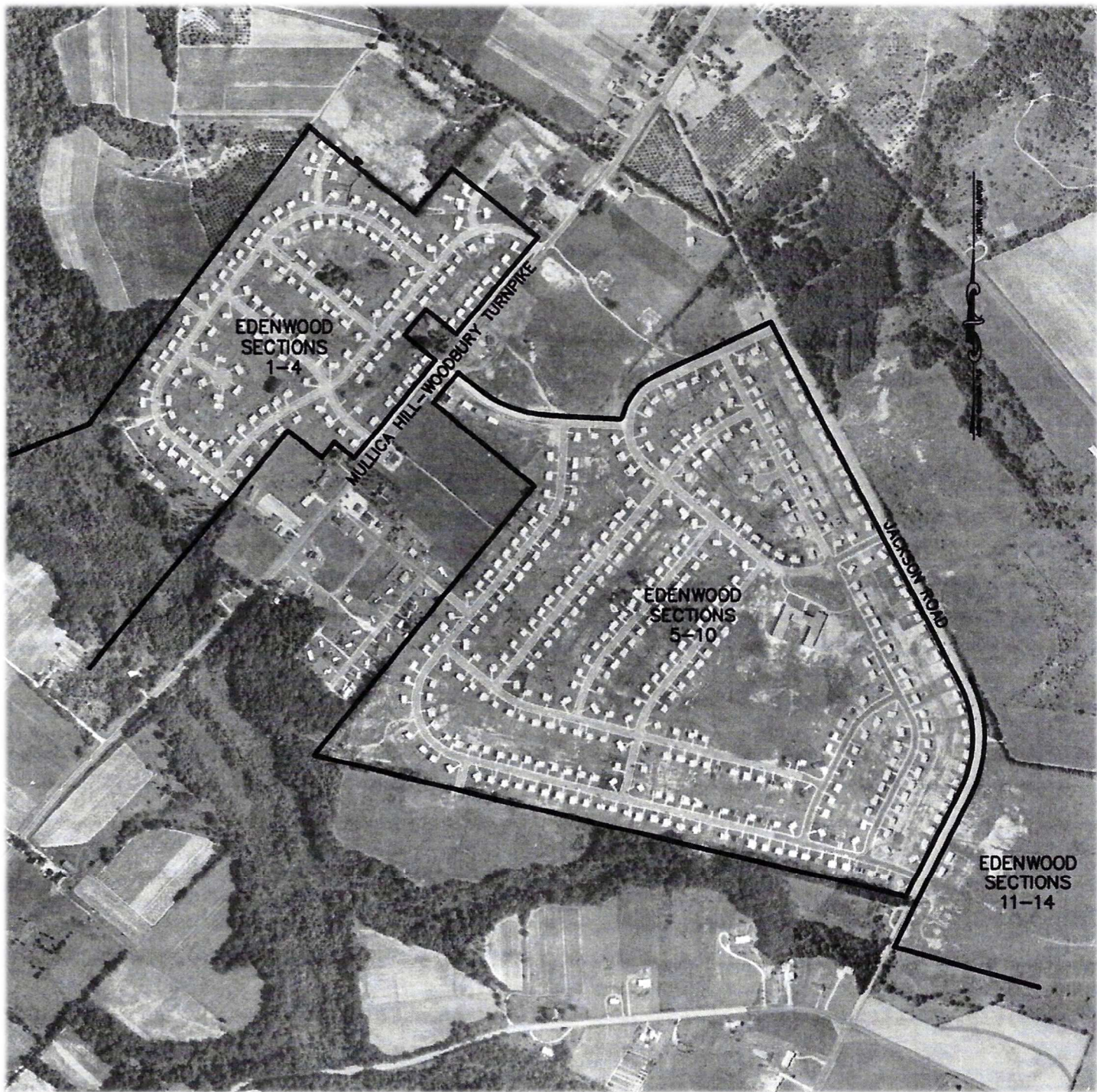
THIRD ROW—John Ritchie, Jim Canna, Mike Wilson, Joe Falvey, John Miller, Richard Keuler.

COACHES—Ted Rucci, Ed Rothman, Ray Simons, John Miller.

PLAYERS MISSING—Joe Spagnuola.

COACHES MISSING—Sal Salamone, Byron Dougherty, Roger Hamson.

- Editorial Corner – John Flack writes, *I am very much exercised at the thievery and destruction in the houses under construction by some of the buyers and some of the boys of the residents. I am also surprised I know who some of the boys are. I know some of the buyers who have deliberately stolen windows, sheet rock, wood, kitchen cabinet doors, hardware, gas range parts, oven parts, doors etc. In one of the first issues of this paper I said if buyers would come into the office, I could arrange to get them things. Aside from the morale angle, which is an individual's business and not mine, it certainly does not lead to creating goodwill with the builders. This piece continues on...*
- Trash Collection – John Flack writes: *I have arranged with one of our residents here in Centre City, Mr. Charles Tooley, to collect trash here in the tract, every Saturday. The first collection will begin at 7am on the West Side of the Road. Collection on the East side will begin about 11am. There will be a charge of 30 cents per collection. Mr. Tooley is the most honest and reputable person, and I am glad and feel fortunate that I could work out the above arrangements with him. The Mantua Township Dump, located at the intersection of Mantua-Sewell and Woodbury-Glassboro Roads in Sewell is open for individual dumping on Wednesday evenings, and Saturday and Sunday.*
- Dogs – John Flack writes: *Historically, dog is man's best friend, but the relations are apt to be strained whenever a best friend scratches up his master's turf, flowers, or vegetables. I love dogs very dearly. I had a dog for 21 years, one of the oldest dogs buried in the Cheltenham Animal Cemetery, just outside Philadelphia. But I love my fellowman, my neighbor more. I had to, when one of my neighbor's dogs ran across my newly paved patio. At a cost of more than \$60 it had to be repaved. I would like to suggest that you do not fuss with a neighbor, have hard feelings, or lose his friendship over his dog. I think that a neighbor's friendship is worth more than a plant of yours his dog might mar or destroy. By planting barberry hedge around shrubbery and/or lawns I have been able to prevent most of the damage done by dogs. *Warning, barberry plants are toxic to dogs.*
- Education Committee – William Bartleson writes: *As pointed out by Mr. Boone of our May General Membership Meeting, the Mantua Township School Board has reached a final agreement with Harrison Township on plans for a Regional High School to serve and be jointly financed by both communities. As a result of the information given, and facts gathered, it appears that although the new high school won't immediately solve Centre City's grad school crisis, it will have a positive step in the right direction and in the long run will speed the solution to the problem. The rest of Mantua Township is faced with an immediate high school crisis. Pitman High School, which now educates Mantua students has given notice that the last freshman it will accept from Mantua Township will be those enrolled in September 1958. *Note: Centre City School did not exist at this time. The land was reserved, but not built upon.*
- Ant Control- John Flack writes: *With a round stick or other tool, ream a hole 6 to 8 inches deep into the center of an ant nest. Pour in about a ½ pint of used crank case oil, so that it floods the deeper recesses of the nest. This destroys the ants, and the exposed grass is not affected. *Please, do not attempt this process. It is bad for the environment and illegal.*



The Centre City Volunteer Fire Company was incorporated on March 12, 1959. All that existed at that time was a group of people and a desire. While plans were being made to acquire a firehouse and fire equipment, the Barnsboro Fire Company was kind enough to take them under their wing. After much hard work the Fire Company acquired the property at State and Jackson Road. By 1960, the firehouse was erected, and equipment began to be collected. The

Fire Company could not have made such progress without the support and cooperation of the residents of Centre City.

On Thursday, June 24, 1959, Mantua Township voters approved of a proposed \$500,000 bond issue for the construction of a new elementary school and an addition to another school. Polls in this special school election were open from 2pm to 9pm

according to Harold Simmerman, Board of Education president.

It was announced in a Courier Post news article on November 17, 1959, that Mantua plans to break ground for a grade school in Centre City. *The groundbreaking ceremony for a new elementary school in the Centre City section of Mantua Township was held on Saturday, November 21, 1959. The school is designed to house 600 pupils and is expected to be ready for use at the start of the 1960-61 school year next September. Mortimer W. H. Cox, secretary of the Board of Education, said the school, of a one-story construction, will have 20 classrooms, an all-purpose room, a library, and administration offices. The school will be built on a 15-acre plot off of Jackson Road and there will be ample parking for its staff. Archie J. McTamney, now principal at Barnsboro School, will be principal of the new school. Cox also announced that the board of education is constructing an additional four rooms and an all-purpose room at the J. Mason Tomlin School.*

As construction of Centre City continued, a long list of headaches developed. In a Courier Post news article dated August 4, 1960, the complaints of new homeowners are shared. Residents described unpaved streets, parts of which were washed away. A protest was held where 67 Centre City families appealed to the Governor to help with poor street conditions, inadequate street lighting, insufficient drainage and flooding following rainstorms. Further issues included deep holes and ruts along the unfinished roads, to the point that bread and milk deliverymen threatened to cut off delivery due to damage to their vehicles and merchandise. Driveways could not be used due to the grade difference from unfinished road surface to the driveway. Aprons were not built to allow for cars to be put in the garage. Insects were a serious problem as water puddled in the holes and ruts. A local doctor expressed his concern as he treated children with as many as 52 insect bites on their bodies.

NEWS FLASH

GLOUCESTER COUNTY DEMOCRAT

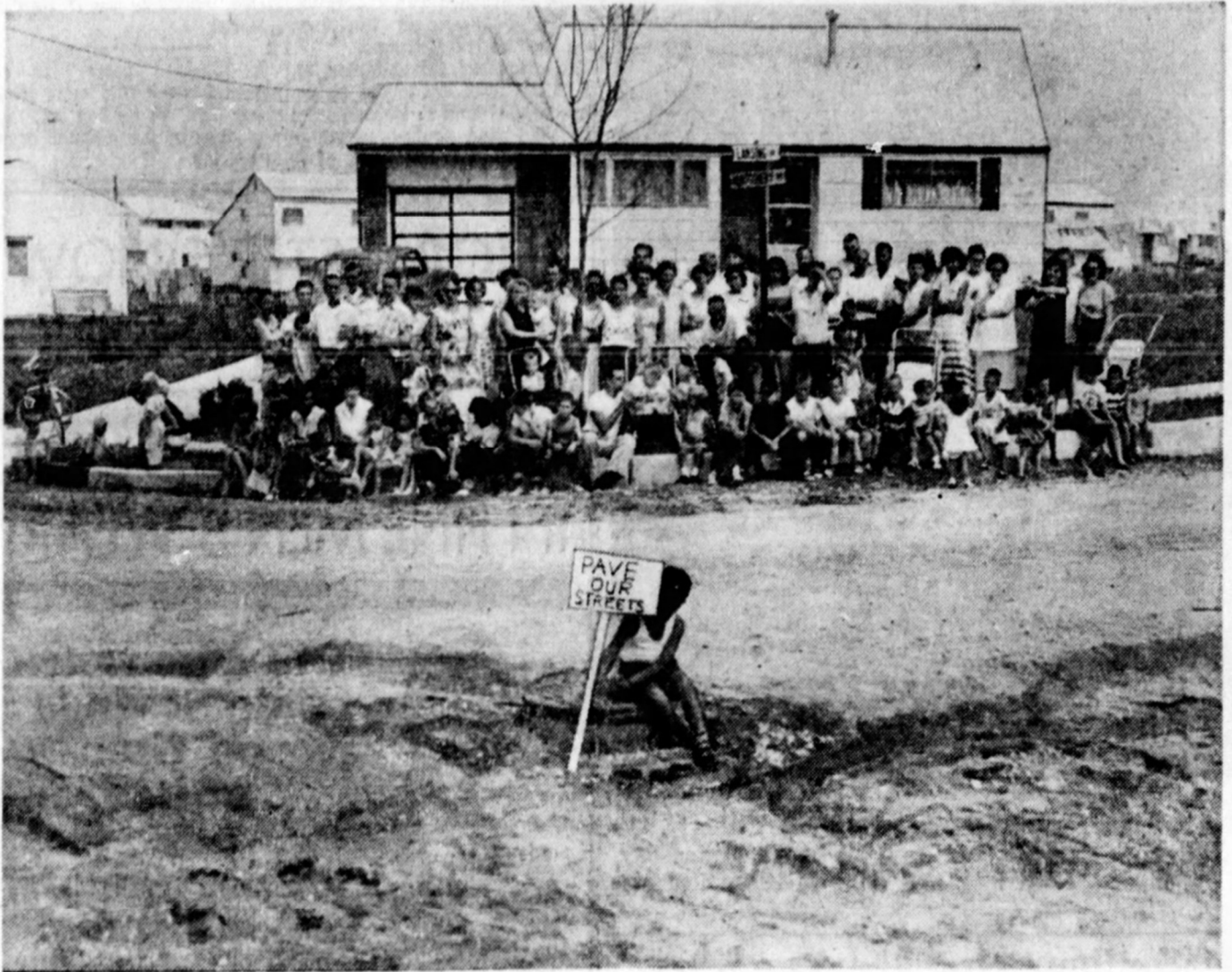
October 8, 1878

OUR CHANGE-

WE change with this issue the name of our paper—enlarge it to six column sheet. We also change the location of our office from Mantua to Woodbury. It might be in place for us to briefly state our reasons for these several "new departures." Coming to Woodbury necessitated dropping the word "Mantua" and for equally good reasons to change the entire name and select one that would at once proclaim our principles our aims—hence the Gloucester Co. Democrat. Our change of location was thought advisable from the fact that Woodbury is a center for railroad and telegraph communication and the County seat always more or less a radius of county news, therefore we would be enabled to better serve the interests of our party and the wants of our readers from this point.

We enlarge our paper because in the goodness of Providence we have been prospered beyond our hopes, and thus are able at this early stage in the life our paper to enlarge and improve it, thereby adding to its worth and usefulness.

We leave our Mantua friends with regret—they treated us with uniform kindness and courtesy and we shall ever remember our short stay among them with pleasurable emotions, and endeavor, although we print our paper here, to look carefully after the interests of Mantua and make our paper of even more use to the people than heretofore. To the people of Gloucester county we shall add what we may have said before, that we intend to make this paper in every way worthy of their support and confidence. To the



—Courier-Post Photos

A GROUP OF CENTRE CITY residents form prior to a meeting Thursday protesting poor street conditions, inadequate street lighting, insufficient drainage and flooding following rainstorms. Anthony Nardello Jr., 4, of 390 Lansing dr., sits on an exposed sewer cover at the intersection of Lansing and Montgomery dr. with a sign urging Mantua Township officials to "pave our streets."

The Centre City Community Ambulance Service was incorporated on January 18, 1961, for the aiding of the sick and disabled persons of Centre City and Mantua Township. During 1961, Edward Prickett, a Mantua Township Committeeman, purchased a 1955 Pontiac ambulance and donated it to the Centre City Community Ambulance Service. Ever since the conception of this ambulance service, the Centre City Volunteer Fire Company housed the ambulance.

By the mid-sixties, the dust of construction had settled. Centre City had finally become its own fully functional community within a larger community, Mantua Township. Like the Villages of Barnsboro and Mantua, and the Suburbs and Buckingham in Sewell, Centre City became the newest member of the bunch. With its own, more modern personality, it became and remains an integral part of the Township.

ATTENTION KMART SHOPPERS

By Michael DiGiamberardino

“Attention Kmart Shoppers” was a phrase commonly heard while shopping in Mantua for over 44 years, but do you know how it all started?

Sebastian Spring Kresge was born on July 31, 1867 in Allentown, Pennsylvania.



S.S. Kresge

Following his graduation from Eastman Business College in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1889 he became a clerk in a hardware store for two years. In March of 1889 he began working for J. G. McCrory's at his five and ten cent store in Memphis, Tennessee. He worked there for two years investing in the company. In 1899, Kresge founded his own company along with Charles J. Wilson.

In 1899, Sebastian Spring Kresge opened his first 5 and 10 store in downtown Detroit, Michigan.

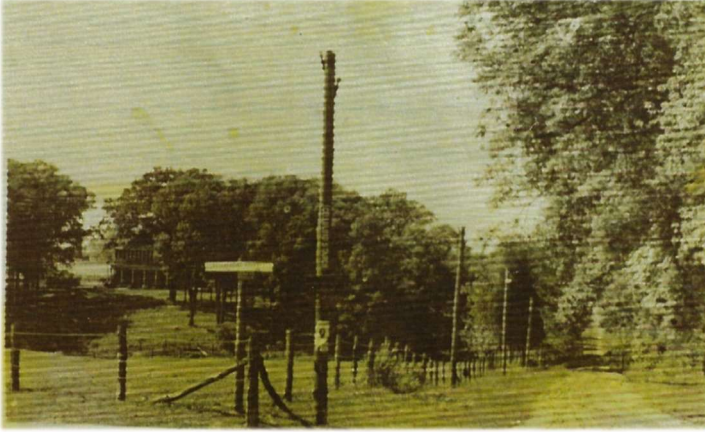
He did this by exchanging his interests in McCrory's Memphis store for McCrory's interest in his Detroit store. This was the predecessor to Kmart. During the 1920's the company was opening locations in towns all over the mid-west. In 1937, Kresge opened the first suburban store in Kansas City, Missouri. While changing the landscape of retailing it was also going to change the landscape of Mantua, 74 years later. Through wars, a depression and an ever-changing economy the SS Kresge 5 and 10 stores thrived. By 1950 there was a S.S. Kresge in downtown Woodbury. Kresge's store number 587 was located at 66 South Broad Street. It was located on the block between Curtis Avenue and Center Street. It had an entrance on Broad Street and on Center Street. Shown in the below picture, along with Kresge's, is the five and ten cent store belonging to the F. W. Woolworth company. By 1958, Woolworth's moved to the same side of the street to a location between Cooper Street and Curtis Avenue.



In the 1950's as the retailing environment became more competitive Kresge ran print advertisements and radio promotions. In 1959, Harry Cunningham became the president of the company. Cunningham had been studying the emerging trend of discount retailers. In 1962, the first Kmart store was opened in Garden City, Michigan. By 1966, there were 162 Kmart stores and 753 Kresge stores and sales topped one billion dollars. In 1987, the Kmart corporation sold its remaining Kresge's stores to McCrory's Stores.

In 1972, the announcement came that Kmart would be opening a store in Mantua. It was to be built on the corner of Bridgeton Pike and Berkely

Road. It would take over the space occupied by the Stark farm.



Early picture of the corner of Berkley Road and the Bridgeton Pike, now known as Route 45. Picture from the Ristine Collection.

Kmart would be one of two anchor stores in the shopping center, the second one being the Acme Supermarket.



NEW K-MART shopping center being built on Route 45 near Berkely Road in Mantua will include an Acme supermarket and about 10 satellite stores. The 160,000 square-foot mart will open this spring. —Courier-Post Photo by John Avery



When construction began one of the old Toll Houses in the township was located on the SE side of the property. This shopping center was named “The Tollhouse Plaza”.



Toll house on the Bridgeton Pike in Mantua

The toll houses, in their time, was how money was raised for the maintenance of roads. For example, there was a toll house located in Barnsboro and a second toll house located at Carpenter’s Bridge, now the location of the bridge over the Mantua Creek. Later, public taxes paid for the upkeep of roads and bridges.

By the time of the construction of the Kmart shopping center in Mantua, the toll house had deteriorated from neglect since it was not used due to funding for roads paid by taxes. The toll house had



become obsolete and just a relic of past times when a toll keeper lived in the toll house in much the same way that a light house keeper might live in a light house with a dwelling attached.



OLD TOLL HOUSE... is viewed by J. Cavallaro of County Real Estate, representative of the developers of Toll House Plaza. The 105 acre development includes a two stage shopping center and eventually an office complex. It will be located at Berkley and Route 45. This Toll House, for which the development is named, once served to collect tolls from travelers on Route 45. According to Cavallaro, a 5c toll was the cost from this point to Woodbury. Unfortunately because of the run down condition of the building, the old toll house will be torn down, and another memory of the past will vanish from Mantua's highways.

Kmart opened on August 21, 1973, within a few weeks Acme, Hallmark and other stores followed, including Sal's Pizzeria, which is the only surviving original store. Kmart opened with an Auto Service, Sporting Goods, Garden Shop, apparel departments for Women, Men and Children, Health and Beauty Aids, Home Improvement, Camera, Jewelry, Appliances and General Merchandise. There was also the Kmart Cafeteria and a deli. Over the years, Kmart became well known for their "Dollar Days" sales and the famous "Blue Light Specials". Kmart was the destination shopping spot for Mantua Twp and the surrounding areas. Shortly after the Kmart opened the Woodbury SS Kresge was closed. Kmart became the focal point of life in Mantua Twp. If anyone needed anything they could "run down" to Kmart to pick it up quickly. It was also the most recognized point in Mantua for giving directions. "When you get to the Kmart...." In 1977 the SS Kresge Company officially changed their name to the Kmart Corporation.

Over the years the Mantua Kmart went through many changes. The store was remodeled in the 1980's to adapt to consumers' changing lifestyles. Martha Stewart was a large addition to the assortments in the Home Goods and Kitchen departments and Jaelyn Smith women's wear. In the 1990's, Kmart added a 1,100 sq ft Panty department to encourage more frequent customer visits. Kmart stores that had a Panty department were now known as Big Kmart. Throughout the 90's the Kmart Corporation grew by acquisitions, including Pace Warehouse, Sports Authority, OfficeMax, Builders Square and Borders Books.

In 2003, Kmart had filed Chapter 11 for reorganization and closed 283 of its nearly 2,300 stores. Throughout the 2000's Kmart kept trying to capture sales in their stores by introducing the Joe Boxer and Disney clothing brands. In 2004 Kmart merged with Sears Roebuck and Company forming Sears Holdings. Sales continued to suffer over the years as competition continued to grow around the country. In the Mantua area, Kmart weathered the competition from stores like W.T. Grants, J.M.

Fields, Wards, and Bradlees, and finally with the addition of Target. In November 2017, “**The Blue Light**” went out at the Mantua Kmart, for the last and final time, taking with it the memories and experiences of a number of generations of not only Mantua Township but of the surrounding areas as well.

Edwards Run, the Creek of Destruction and Death

By Herb Hood

Edwards Run is a small creek that begins near the Barnsboro to Richwood Road. From there, it gets larger as it winds a course westward at times and northward at times. It crosses Jefferson Road, Breakneck Road, Heritage Road, Route 45 in Centre City, Jessup Mill Road, the New Jersey Turnpike, the Mantua-Mount Royal Road and eventually empties into the Mantua Creek.

Edwards run can be called a “creek of destruction and death”. The waterway had two mill ponds located along its path, the Leppee Mill Pond and the Jessup Mill Pond. The Leppee Mill Pond has had other names at times such as the Jessup Mill Pond which should not be confused with the Jessup Mill Pond near Jessup Mill Road. The two Jessups here are two different people.

Dams were built on waterways to cause ponds to be made. The dams were named for the person who built them or who owned them. They, too, have changed names for the same reasons as mill owners.

A man named Henry Leppee was born in Germany in 1826. He came to America on October 18, 1839 arriving in Baltimore, Maryland having departed from Bremen.¹ While in that area, he met a woman named Marianne, the daughter of German immigrants. Marianne was born in Washington, D.C. in 1834. Henry and Marianne got married. They had a son soon afterwards in 1857 and named him John H. Leppee.

Henry was a miller by trade. He migrated to Burlington County, New Jersey to a place called Indian Mills in Shamong Township. On July 11, 1859 they had a daughter who they named Mary Ann. A record of her birth comes from New Jersey, Births, Marriages and Deaths, 1711-1878.

Sometime after the birth of Mary A., Henry and his family migrated to Mantua Township with Henry continuing on as a miller. Henry and Marianne had four more children, William (born 1863), Harry S. (born 1867), Idella (born 1871) and Edward H. (born 1873). These four children were born in Mantua Township.

By 1867, Henry had built a mill pond dam on Edwards Run.



Portion of Map of Mantua Township in 1876 showing the Leppee and Jessup Mill Pond

Henry advertised for a miller for the mill.

A good miller wanted, at Mantua Mills, apply to Henry Leppee.

¹ U.S., Baltimore, Maryland, Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1826-1872

Woodbury Constitution, May 22, 1867

Soon afterwards, disaster struck. On Wednesday afternoon on August 21, 1867, it began to rain. The rain turned into a deluge. The rain caused tremendous flooding on waterways throughout Gloucester County which led to damage to mill ponds, mill pond dams and the mills themselves.

Leppee's mill dam, on the roads to Clarksboro, was carried away.

Woodbury Constitution, August 21, 1867

Undeterred by the loss of his mill dam, Henry built another one. Sadly, disaster struck again.

We regret to hear that the mill dam of Mr. Henry Leppee, near Mantua, was carried away on Sunday night last. It is supposed that it was undermined by muskrats, who gave no evidence of their work until the whole superstructure toppled over.

Mr. Leppee lost his mill dam in August, 1867, which he rebuilt at a cost of several thousand dollars. These repeated losses fall very heavily upon Mr. Leppee. He is preparing to rebuild the dam, and assistance from his neighbors, farmers and others, who have teams, in hauling earth, would be very acceptable.

Woodbury Constitution, July 22, 1868

Again, undeterred by this, Henry repaired his mill pond dam.

The subscriber, having repaired his mill dam, would announce to his customers and the public generally, that he is now prepared to do all kinds of grist and merchant work, of short notice.

Flour and feed constantly on hand, at market rates. Thanking the public for their liberal patronage, he hopes by prompt attention to business to secure an increase in the same. Henry Leppee, Mantua

Woodbury Constitution, August 22, 1868

Less than a month later, an even more powerful storm struck Gloucester County. The storm was

nothing short of a catastrophe causing even more damage than the storm of 1867. Again, Henry suffered.

The bridge on the Mullica Hill turnpike at Richards Hill was all swept away. Leppee's dam was third time in about a year that again broken, 60 feet of embankment being carried off, and the flood washing all around the mill. The forebay and floodgates remain.

Woodbury Constitution, September 9, 1868

Again, Henry was undeterred and made repairs. He did seek some compensation from the Gloucester County Board of Freeholders.

Henry Leppee petitioned the Board for some compensation for keeping in repair a road and bridge over his mill dam.

Woodbury Constitution, November 25, 1868

Through all of this, Henry's troubles were of a physical and financial nature. They could be repaired or rebuilt with some labor and some personal wealth. This he had. The Federal Census of 1870 listed Henry as having a personal property wealth of 2,000 dollars and a real estate property wealth of 10,000 dollars.

Things in Henry's life began to take a more tragic turn of events. It started with Henry's son, William.

On Friday evening last, Willie, a little son of Henry Leppee, near Mantua, was drowned in the mill pond. He had been sent to call the miller to supper, and was seen in a boat afterwards. When looked for he was not found. He was a fine little fellow, only 8 years old.

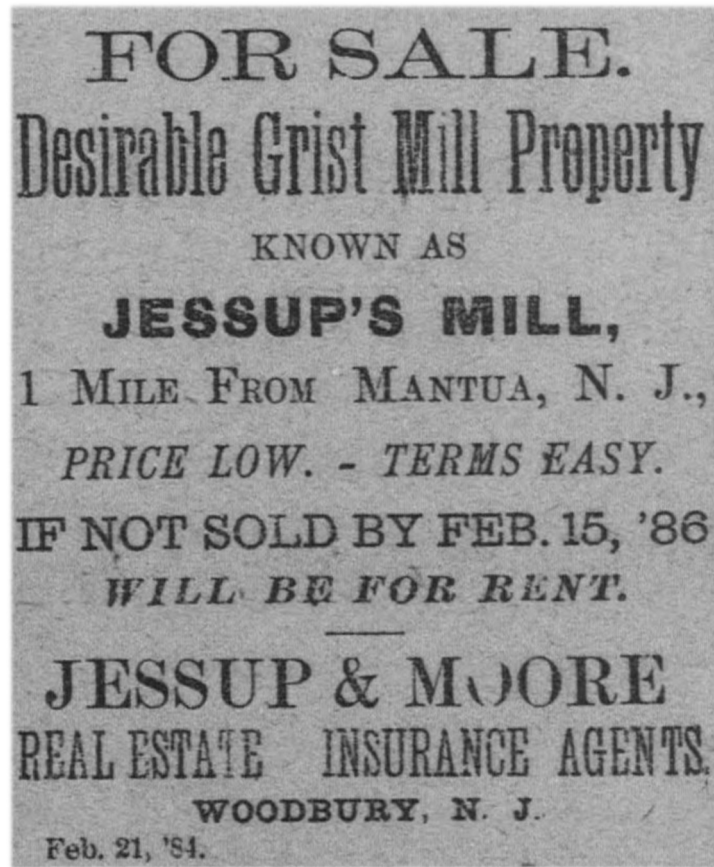
Woodbury Constitution, July 13, 1870

William R. Leppee was buried on July 8, 1870 as noted in the Eastlack Diary on page 43.

Fourteen years after the death of William, Henry's wife, Marianne died. She passed away in Mantua on September 25, 1884 at the age of 50. By

this time, Henry had been appointed as Postmaster of Mantua on March 24, 1875.

The mill that Henry had built his mill dam for was put up for sale in 1886.



Gloucester County Democrat

Henry Leppee bought the grist mill property.

Henry Leppe, the Mantua Miller, has bought Jessup's Mill, near Mantua, price \$6,500. Mr. Leppe will associate with him his son John, who is also an expert miller.

Gloucester County Democrat, February 18, 1886

In Blackwood, New Jersey, on February 10, 1887, Henry Leppee married his second wife, Rebecca J. Bradshaw.

William Leppee's father had his business to the south of present day Centre City. Another young boy from Mantua Township also drowned in another mill pond fed by waters of Edwards Run. His father had his business just to the north of present day Centre City. Readers can find out about this tragic story by

visiting the Mantua Township Historical Commission Museum.

DID YOU KNOW?

Robert Meyner, a former Governor of New Jersey, paid a visit to Mantua for the dedication of the Scouts' Hall on Norris Street in Mantua.

Leading up to his visit there was a Scout parade that marched down Norris Street.

Horse and Cattle Doctor

I would respectfully inform my friends and the public generally that I have resumed the

VETERINARY BUSINESS

AT MANTUA.

Thankful for the patronage so liberally bestowed upon me in the past, I solicit a continuance of the same.

Veterinary Medicine and Surgery

In all its various branches practiced according to a wholesome system of animal medication.

REFERENCES BY PERMISSION,

John Rambo Geo. C. Laws, M. D.
T. W. Hurff Wm. B. Christine M. D.
Hon. S. Hopkins Ed. L. Reeves M. D.
J. W. Downs Paul S. Heritage M. D.
Wm. Beckett Henry C. Clark M. D.
 Judge Samuel T. Miller M. D.

JOHN P. EASTLACK,
Horse and Cattle Doctor,
Mantua, N. J.

Gloucester County Democrat

December 17, 1878

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is the time of year where many folks head off on jaunts to the shore, adventure travel to distant locations and day trips to nearby attractions. As you go, I encourage you to visit some of the many historic locations and museums in the South Jersey area. You can start by coming to the Mantua Township Historical Commission's Union Center where you will find a wonderful little museum, library, and research area, along with the neighboring historic Union Graveyard. We are a volunteer organization that enjoys preserving and sharing the rich history of Mantua Township. Our museum and library are currently open each Saturday from 10 till noon, and you can call if you would like to arrange for a special visit. Admission is free. We look forward to seeing you this Summer.

RECENT NEWS

On April 18th and 19th, the Mantua Township Historical Commission held a museum and graveyard tour for the 5th grade classes from JMT School. Over the two-day period, eight classes participated. After the tours, the students wrote essays. Their class teachers sent the best five from each class to the commission to be judged. The winners were selected and their certificates and prizes were sent to the JMT School and awarded to the students.



On May 20, 2023, the Delores Allen Memorial Library and Research Area was dedicated. Members of the Allen Family were present to take part in the dedication. Commission Chairman, Jeff Gellenthin, and Deputy Mayor Pete Scirrotto, delivered speeches and remarks.





Dedication of the Dolores Allen Memorial Library and Research Area

May 20, 2023 – Address by Jeff Gellenthin

Welcome members of the Township Committee, the Township Historical Commission, and family and friends of Dolores Allen.

To start, let me walk you from our past into the present.

The Mantua Township Historical Commission was created after the Mantua Township Bicentennial Committee had served its purpose. Much work and planning were involved as the Committee organized events associated with the celebration of the Bicentennial of the United State of America. A large undertaking was the writing of the book “A Bicentennial Look at Mantua Township”. This book was developed with the help of historians, scholars, librarians, and local residents that dug deep into the

archives to bring to light the rich history of our community.

The following is as stated in an ordinance of the Township Committee of the Township of Mantua: *“Whereas, interest in the bountiful history of Mantua Township was kindled as a result of the Bicentennial years, and Whereas, Mantua Township Bicentennial Committee, which in large measure was responsible for the renewed interest in the history of Mantua Township will cease to function officially as of June 30, 1977, and Whereas, a substantial percentage of the membership of the Bicentennial Committee is interested in continuing the exploration and propagation of the history of Mantua Township, now, Therefore, be it ordained by the Township Committee of the Township of Mantua that there is hereby created the “Mantua Township Historical Commission”. Be it further ordained that said Commission shall be established as of July 1, 1977.”*

Since 1977, the Mantua Township Historical Commission has continued to grow. In 2006, the restored Mantua Academy (Union Schoolhouse) became the home of the Commission’s Museum, Library, and meeting place. The museum houses many artifacts and bits of history that have been donated by residents of our area. The library was started by a founding member.

Dolores Allen was a life-long resident of Barnsboro, NJ. She was a member of Barnsboro United Methodist Church and was the churches historian for many years. On the 100th & 125th anniversaries of the Church she wrote a book commemorating the event. She also wrote a book about Caroline West VanHelden who painted the picture that hangs in the church, "Christ and the Little Children" on its 100th anniversary. She was Secretary of the Mantua Township Historical Commission and a founding member of the Mantua Township Historical Museum. She was also a member of the Harrison Township Historical Society, Salem County Historical Society, Heritage Glass Museum, Gloucester County Historical Society, and a life-member of the Pitman Manor

Auxiliary. She was also a member of the Mantua Township Senior Citizens.

Dolores Allen was truly dedicated to her community and to the preservation of our past. Her work is present here in our library and research area, as she researched and recorded the genealogy and history of many prominent, historic families of the area. She further researched and compiled binders full of records and articles pertaining to long-ago events, landmarks, and moments of Mantua Township.

Barbara Tuchman, an American historian, and author observed: “Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill.” She further observed: “Books are companions, teachers, magicians, bankers of the treasures of mind.”

These words are fitting of the many books and documents that are presented in this library.

Since Dolores Allen’s work, the library has expanded beyond the genealogy of many prominent historic families of Mantua Township. It now includes a collection of books covering local, County, State, Regional, and our Country’s history, research binders that cover persons, places and things from days gone by, local graveyard and cemetery lists of residences and many of their stories, historic pictures of streets, structures, and people of the area, and much more.

It is through Dolores’ example that we hold true to our mission to “Preserve and Share the Rich History of Mantua Township.”

Let us now officially dedicate this area as the “Dolores Allen Memorial Library and Research Area” with the cutting of the ribbon.

On May 24th, the Mantua Township Historical Commission participated in the JMT Multi-Cultural Event and Art Show.



On June 10th, the Commission participated in the South Jersey History Fair held on the grounds of the historic Gabreil Davies Tavern in Gloucester Township.



RECENT DONATIONS

Michael DiGamberardino – Vintage school books, Souvenir Glass from Mantua Township Fire

Department Golden Jubilee, Grandfather’s Ashtray Collection, and Ike Campaign items

Lance Peters – 1899 U.S. and Territories and Insular Possessions school room wall map

Sandy Kirkbride – J. Mason and Clement Tomlin photos, photos of students at the Barnsboro Academy and miscellaneous photos

Barbara Ledden – 12-inch school ruler belonging to Orol Ledden, Mantua Township Glass Paperweight, several “The Cat’s Meow” local landmark plaques

Kathy McGregor – Westinghouse 4126 “Little Jewel” radio from 1946, Books: Women of the War (1866), Sick and Wounded Soldiers (1865), The Life of Chevalier Jackson (1938) and J. Harris Underwood

THANK YOU

Mayor Robert Zimmerman and the members of the Mantua Township Committee, for their continued support.

Glenn DeMers, Public Works Superintendent, for all the things he and his team do to keep the building and grounds of the Union Center safe and operating.

The J. (John) Mason Tomlin LEAP students along with their teacher, Kiersten Chinnock, promoted a Chick-fil-A fundraiser supporting the Mantua Township Historical Commission. Their efforts created a donation to the MTHC in the amount of \$358.16. Thank you to the LEAP students, Kiersten Chinnock, and the public for supporting this activity.

TRIVIA ANSWER

In 1869, there was a map created called the Lake and Beers Map. This map covered Philadelphia and the surrounding vicinity. These places were on that map. They were all located in the area that became Centre City almost 90 years later.

**Contributors, Authors and Editors of this
Bulletin**

Jeff Gellenthin

Herb Hood

Michael DiGiamberardino

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mantua Township Historic Commission

Location: 145 Mantua Boulevard

Mantua, New Jersey 08051

Mailing address: 401 Main Street

Mantua, New Jersey 08051

Hours are first and third Saturdays of each month
from 10 AM to Noon or by appointment

856-630-9704

mthc1977@gmail.com

**Our mission is to preserve and share the rich
history of Mantua Township**

Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/MantuaTownshipHistoricalCo
mmission](http://www.facebook.com/MantuaTownshipHistoricalCommission)

MEMBERS

Jeff Gellenthin – Chairman

Herb Hood – Vice Chairman

Carolyn Olsen – Secretary

Kathy MacGregor

Carolyn Harris

Debbie Gellenthin

Tom Downing

Barbara Heitman

Kevin Hale

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The Mantua Township Historical Commission is always accepting donations of pictures, documents and stories concerning the Township's history.

