

LEEDSVILLE/LINWOOD HISTORY

January 29, 2006

Prepared by Byron Garwood on behalf of the Linwood Historical Society

- 1664 King Charles II of England granted James, Duke of York, the region between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. James conveyed the land to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret.
- 1674 West Jersey was sold to John Fenwick, acting for Edward Byllynge.
- 1676 Thomas Budd acquired West Jersey land from Edward Byllynge and trustees.
- 1688 On behalf of Daniell Coxe, Governor of and Proprietor of West Jersey, Adlorde Bowde purchased land which included today's Atlantic and Cape May Counties [including present-day Linwood] from the Indian "Sackimackers". ①
- 1690s The first European settlers, Quakers, migrated to this area from Long Island, New York.
- 1694 The Proprietors of West Jersey granted land, including Leedsville, to Thomas Budd, a Quaker merchant of Philadelphia.
- 1695 A huge tract of land, including all of Linwood, was purchased from Thomas Budd by seven men. They were: James Steelman, Peter Cowanover, John Skull, Jonathan Adams, Jonas Valentine, John Somers and John Gilbert Sr.
- 1700 American Colonies population 275,000; largest city Boston; 700 houses in Philadelphia.
- 1716 Sea Shore Road [Shore Road] was laid out on part of an old Indian trail which ran from Port Republic to Somers Ferry [Somers Point].
- 1725 Quaker meetings began in John Scull's house on Sea Shore Road [Shore Road].
- 1737 Gloucester County population 3,267 [included all of Gloucester, Atlantic and Camden Counties].
- 1758 Friends Central Cemetery was founded.
- 1759 The first Quaker Meeting House in the area was built in Leedsville, next to Friends Central Cemetery.
- Late 1700s A dam was built across Patcong Creek where Central Avenue is now located, by John "the Miller" Somers, to form Bargaintown Pond, for the purpose of using water to operate a saw mill and grist mill.
- 1791 A customs house for the port of entry of Gloucester County, Somers Point was established in Somers Point. It was later moved to Leedsville, at 1444 Shore Road; it was discontinued as a customs house in 1913.

- 1796 Christopher Van Sant built a brig on the banks of Patcong Creek.
- c.1800 Formal education began in Leedsville with classes held in the Friends Meeting House [next to Friends Central Cemetery].
- 1802 Bargaintown Road was laid out. Some time after Central Methodist Episcopal Church was built [1860], the name was changed to Central Avenue.
- 1806 The Somers Point Post Office was established to serve the area from Somers Point to Central Avenue in Leedsville.
- 1817 A bridge was built over Patcong Creek at what is now Poplar Avenue.
- 1819 A bridge was built over Patcong Creek at Ocean Heights Avenue.
- c.1825 Cedar Grove Schoolhouse, at Shore Road and Garfield Avenue, was serving students in the southern part of Leedsville. Apparently, it was replaced by the Sea View School which was built in 1861.
- 1836 New Landing Road was built across the meadows to a small waterway which emptied into Scull's Bay. This road was later called Poplar Avenue.
- 1838 The last sale, in Leedsville, of a negro slave, Lucy Harris, was conducted from the auction block at the present-day site of the Masonic Hall, Shore Road and Poplar Avenue.
- 1843 Trustees of the Leedsville Academy bought 1/20th of an acre of land at Maple Avenue and Van Sant Avenue from Robert and Elizabeth Risley for \$7.50. A school was built here and it operated as a school until the Leedsville School was built in 1873, on what is now Poplar Avenue.
- 1848 Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church was built on land donated by Capt. Elmer English.
- 1850 Population of Atlantic County 2,689. A new road [now known as Seaview Avenue] was built across the meadows to Scull's Thoroughfare [later called Sod Thoroughfare].
- 1860 Central Methodist Episcopal Church was built on land donated by Francis Somers.
- 1861 The Sea View School was built to serve students in the southern part of Leedsville.
- 1866 The County School system was organized in New Jersey. Egg Harbor Township had 48 school districts. Leedsville had two districts: #19 serving the north end of the Borough [Central Avenue to Belhaven Avenue] and #20 serving the south end [Belhaven Avenue to Ocean Heights Avenue]; each district had its own District Clerk and Board of Trustees.
- 1873 Leedsville School was built on the road from Winner's Landing to "Patconk" Creek [Poplar Avenue]; the school's register shows that this was a one-room, ungraded school with a single teacher for 66 students, aged 5 to 19. It continued as an ungraded, one-room school until

1894. Use of this building as a school was discontinued in 1908 when Belhaven Avenue School was built.

Poplar Avenue was extended to Scull's Bay over Japhet's Creek Bridge.; the bridge deteriorated and was closed in 1985. A new bridge was built in 1991 or 1992 but it was washed away in 1994. It was retrieved and restored the same year.

1880 The community's first post office was authorized. Joseph R. Risley was appointed as the first postmaster and the post office was located in his home at 1031 Maple Avenue. The West Jersey Railroad built the Somers Point branch [through Leedsville] of its Atlantic City to Somers Point line.

1881 The name of our community was changed from Leedsville to Linwood. Union Congregation Hall, used by Leedsville Baptists for services, burned down and was replaced by the Baptist Chapel which was moved from Bakersville [Northfield] to Linwood.

Along Shore Road, a railroad was established by the Pleasantville and Ocean City Railroad. Freight and passenger trains ran four times daily between Pleasantville and Somers Point where connections were made with a steamboat service to Ocean City. This railroad was absorbed by the West Jersey Railroad in 1884.

1882 The Krumm family arrived from Germany and began to grow grapes which would make Krumm's Winery a significant part of Linwood's history. During the time that Prohibition was in effect [1920 to 1933], the Krumm Winery produced tonic wine, cooking wine and wine jelly under the name "Seaview Winery". Retail production was discontinued in 1975.

1883 The Keystone Masonic Lodge was organized and the Lodge hall was built on Shore Road at Poplar Avenue.

1884 George Washington Hagerthey came to Linwood and purchased a grocery store on Shore Road. Ralph Jones later operated it as Jones Market.

1887 A new Sea View School was built, for \$1700, on land donated by Capt. James Steelman. It replaced the 1861 building.

1889 Linwood withdrew from Egg Harbor Township to establish the borough of Linwood. The first meeting of the Mayor and Councilmen-Elect was held at the Masonic Hall on Shore Road and Poplar Avenue. Two weeks later, the Borough meetings were moved to Barrett's Hall on Belhaven Avenue.

1890 7 Civil War veterans and 1 Civil War veteran's widow were living in Linwood.

1893 Israel G. Adams was elected Mayor with a grand total of 27 votes.

1894 Linwood Board of Education was organized which replaced School Districts #19 [Leedsville Poplar Avenue School] and #20 [Sea View School].

- 1895 Linwood population 526; 116 houses. Capt. Lewis Bryant purchased land later called Dennis Farms. Poplar Avenue School was divided into two classes: Primary and Upper Grammar and High School. There were two teachers, one with 53 students, aged 5 to 13, and the other with 32 students, aged 10 to 18. The male teacher also had the title of Principal, with a salary of \$56 while the female teacher received a \$30 salary. Seaview School had 43 students, aged 5 to 18, in one ungraded classroom.
- 1897 The Borough entered a contract with the Water Company to construct Horse Troughs at Poplar and Seaview Avenues, with the company being responsible for turning them on in the Spring and off in the Winter.
- 1900 Linwood population 495.
- c.1900 The Crane family, owners of the Colonial Hotel in Ocean City, opened Colonial Florist on Shore Road at Ocean Heights Avenue; in 1915, the Cranes sold the business to the Meskers family who operated it until 1983 when they sold it to Fischer's Florist.
- 1901 Adolf Stuber opened a grocery store and bakery on Poplar Avenue at the railroad tracks. The bakery operation was discontinued in 1911. Adolf's daughter Elsie continued operation of the store after Adolf's death in 1941; she sold it in 1958 to Charles, William and Joseph Struse of New York. In 2004, this store is still in operation and has been continuously since 1901.
- 1904 The Atlantic & Suburban Trolley Company began operations on the tracks in the middle of Shore Road; operations ceased in 1929.
- 1905 Linwood population 503.
- 1906 The Shore Fast Line trolleys began operations from Atlantic City to Ocean City, operating on tracks through Pleasantville, Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point, along Wabash Avenue in Linwood; operations were discontinued in 1948. The bicycle path through Linwood was built on this right-of-way. The Board of Education presented a resolution to the voters to build a new school on land between Seaview and Asbury Avenues; the resolution was defeated by a vote of 27 to 10. At that time, the number of students in the two Linwood Borough schools exceeded 126.
- c.1906 Mechanics Hall was built on Elm Avenue by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics.
- 1907 The voters approved the purchase of land on Belhaven Avenue [\$600] and the erection of a new schoolhouse [not to exceed \$12,000 for the building and furniture].
- 1908 Belhaven Avenue "High School" was built [four rooms] to replace the Leedsville Poplar Avenue School and Sea View School. The Poplar Avenue School became Linwood City Hall. The Bargaintown Mill Pond [now called Bargaintown Lake] dam washed out on Central Avenue; it was replaced but washed out again in 1933 and once again in 1997.

- 1910 Linwood population 601. Voters approved the sale of Seaview School with the proceeds to be used for current expenses and the sale of Leedsville School for \$1, to be used for "Borough purposes"; it began operating as the Borough Hall and continued in that function until 1965.
- 1915 Linwood population 610.
- 1917 Edward Hagerthey began delivering kerosene which was the start of the Hagerthey Oil Company. Edward's brother Milton took over the business in 1929; the company's operations continued for another 50 years.
- 1920 Linwood population 637. Clara-Glenn Pet Cemetery was opened by Glenn and Clara White; Alex and Agnes Miller bought the property in 1955 and Mrs. Miller donated it to the Linwood Historical Society in 1986. Over 3,800 animals are buried here.
- c.1920 Shore Road in Linwood was paved.
- 1921 Linwood Country Club opened. At a meeting of citizens held at Borough Hall for the purpose of organizing a chamber of commerce, Linwood became the first mainland town to recognize women in civic organizations by giving them full right of membership and electing them to office. The Linwood Silver Moon Council, Degree of Pocahontas was organized.
- 1924 Linwood Volunteer Fire Company was organized. Mrs. G. Busby purchased the homestead and 20 acres of land from Col. Lewis Bryant's estate.
- 1925 Four rooms were added to Belhaven Avenue School. Fischer's Florist of Atlantic City built a plant in Linwood and developed a worldwide distribution for its African Violets; this plant was closed in 1988 and the land was sold for housing development [Fischer Woods].
- 1926 Central Hall [now called Adams Hall] was built adjacent to Central Methodist Episcopal Church for a cost of \$23,500. It found great use as a community recreation activities center. The first library was organized by the Women's Civic Club.
- 1927 Crestlea Park School opened; it closed in 1932 when new home construction slowed down during the Great Depression. This school was opened again in 1950 during a period of housing growth. It was closed again in 1983. In 1987, the building was renovated to accommodate the Linwood Library which had been operating in the 1873 Leedsville School Building.
- c.1927 New Road [U.S. Route 9] was completed through Linwood.
- 1928 Linwood Hardware Company was opened on Shore Road near Maple Avenue by Roy Black; a delicatessen occupied this building later and Schoppy's Trophies has occupied it since then. The Borough Council voted against creating a police department.
- c.1928 Fischer Flowers moved all of its operations from Atlantic City to a 20-acre parcel of land on Oak Avenue in Linwood [present-day site of Fischer Woods].

- 1930 Linwood population 1,514
- 1931 The Borough of Linwood incorporated as a city. Pleasantville High School opened, with Linwood students attending there, traveling by Shore Fast Line trolleys; before then, Linwood students attended Atlantic City High School. Jesse James was appointed as the town marshal; a few years later, his title was changed to Chief of Police.
- 1934 George Off created Brighton Florists, which began shipping orchids around the world.
- 1935 Linwood citizens voted on a referendum to allow liquor sales in the city; it was defeated by a vote of 346 to 287.
- 1937 Linwood Community Church was dedicated.
- 1940 Linwood population 1,479.
- 1945 Frank B. Off purchased Dennis Farms.
- 1947 All Wars Memorial Park recreation field was created, largely through the efforts of Mayor Charles Buckley.
- 1948 The Linwood Recreation Board was created, with Ken Frisbie, Belhaven Avenue School Principal, as the first president.
- 1950 Linwood population 1,925.
- 1951 The Van Duyne family opened a small boatyard to build lifeboats. By 1995, nearly every lifeboat on every beach in southern New Jersey had been built here.
- 1953 The Linwood Women's Civic Club erected a monument at the All Wars Memorial Park honoring Linwood men and women who served in all branches of the armed services.
- 1956 Linwood Little League was created. The Women's Club of Linwood was organized by four women who were interested in helping the newly-formed Linwood Little League; in 1961, this club joined the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs. Previously, there had been a Linwood Ladies' League and, as early as 1929, a Linwood Women's Civic Club.
- 1957 New Post Office building opened on Shore Road, just south of Edgewood Avenue, replacing the operation which had been in the rear portion of the building on the southwest corner of Shore Road and Edgewood Avenue.
- 1959 Boardwalk National Bank opened a branch in a new building at Shore Road and Central Avenue. It later became the First National Bank of New Jersey, then First Union Bank and in 1999, it became the Boardwalk Bank.
- 1960 Linwood population 3,847.

- 1961 The Baptists built a new church on Shore Road. Mainland Regional High School was opened, serving students from Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point. Prudential Insurance Company, on New Road, was dedicated; Prudential discontinued operations here in 1999.
- 1962 Dedication of new Poplar Avenue and Seaview school buildings.
- 1963 Linwood Convalescent Center opened in a new facility on the southwest corner of New Road and Central Avenue. It became part of Blue Star Health Care in 1981 and was purchased by David Wolf of Linwood in 1990. In 1999, Blue Star [including STAR Rehabilitation], Brandall Estates and Linwood Convalescent Center were purchased by Brandywine Senior Care of Exton, Pennsylvania.
- 1965 New City Hall was built at Poplar and Maple Avenues. The Linwood City Hall [Old Leedsville School on Poplar Avenue] became the library; previously the library was located in the old Fire House on Poplar Avenue. The Library moved to the refurbished Crestlea Park School in 1987. Our Lady of Sorrows Parish was established in Linwood.
- 1966 The last freight train ran through Linwood.
- c.1968 The bicycle path was opened part of the way through town on the old Shore Fast Line right-of-way.
- 1968 A new sanctuary was built by Central Methodist Church to replace the 1860 structure. The Linwood Rescue Squad was founded as an organization operated by volunteers. It was discontinued in 2002.
- c.1969 Prudential Insurance Company began operations in its new building on New Road; its operations here were discontinued in 1999.
- 1970 Linwood population 6,159. Our Lady of Sorrows Church building was completed.
- 1971 New fire house was dedicated, located on Lincoln Avenue, just off Poplar Avenue.
- 1975 Freund Brothers Opticians opened in Central Square.
- 1976 The Linwood Volunteer Fire company built a new firehouse replacing the one on Poplar Ave.
- 1977 Giovanni's Imports store opened in Central Square; it ceased operations in 1996. McCrafts Jewelry Store opened in Central Square.
- 1980s Bethel Methodist Church closed and it was sold and converted into a pizza shop.
- 1980 Linwood population 6,144.
- 1981 Linwood Historical Society was formed.
- 1982 Marine National Bank opened on New Road opposite Central Square.

- 1983 Fischer Flowers purchased Colonial Florists on Shore Road at Ocean Heights Avenue.
- 1986 Leedsville School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1988 Library moved to Crestlea Park School which had been renovated to accommodate the library's operations. New Rescue Squad building was completed on Patcong Avenue.
- 1990 Linwood population 6,866.
- 1991 The Police Department began operations from the new administration building addition to Linwood City Hall.
- 1993 La Pizzatega opened in Linwood Green Plaza.
- 1996 Talbot's Clothing Store opened in Central Square. Covenant Bank opened at 197 New Road, next to Central Square. Somers Point elementary school students started temporary use of Poplar Avenue School while new construction was in progress at the Dawes Avenue site. Dedication of expanded facilities at Seaview School.
- 1997 The bicycle path extension opened to complete the path from the Somers Point border to the Northfield border. Dedication of expanded facilities at Belhaven Avenue School.
- 1998 Thomas Jewelers opened a new store in Linwood Green Plaza. Moon's Tunes music store opened in Central Square.
- 1999 The former Prudential building and site on New Road were purchased by developer James Dwyer. Mitchell's, An American Bistro, opened in Central Square. Penguins Ice Cream store opened in Central Square. Minotola National Bank opened at 2106 New Road. chARTerTECH High School opened in the Poplar Avenue School building; in 2002, this school moved to a new building on New Road in Somers Point.
- 2000 Linwood population 7,172. Barrel's Restaurant opened in Central Square. Linwood Custom Jewelers opened in Central Square in the space previously occupied by Evan Prosser Jewelers.
- 2002 Linwood voters approved, 1641 to 1087, the retail sale of alcoholic beverages within the city. A fire in Central Square damaged six stores, including Barrel's Restaurant and Natalie's Bridal & Gown Boutique. The Linwood Rescue Squad was discontinued as a volunteer organization and the City's emergency medical services were assumed by a commercial health service organization.
- 2003 The first liquor license in Linwood's history was sold at auction for \$500,000 to the Cornerstone Commerce Center on New Road [formerly Prudential offices].
- 2004 The new City Hall opened. The Federal Aviation Administration became the first tenant of Cornerstone Commerce Center, signing a 10-year lease for 14,000 square feet of office space.

Notes:

- ① From “The 1695 Ownership of Land in Somers Point and Linwood”, by James F. Steelman, 1 August 1992.