

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC VINELAND



Founder's Day, 2004



Clara Barton (Rosanne Hughes) Explaining Civil War Nursing

Many people have worked for years to make Founder's Day a success, and there is no doubt that they have achieved their goal. It was a great day--actually a great two days. Even the weather cooperated this year. On Friday, when the school kids from the 3rd and 5th grade came to the event, the weather was perfect. We did change the format somewhat which made a big difference, and the kids

seemed to seem to enjoy themselves more than usual. Who knows, if we keep this up for another 20 years we might actually get it perfect!!!

As I said, the weather was perfect on Friday, then when it was all over it started to rain. It poured for about two hours, then stopped so that when we had "Camp By Candlelight," that evening, again the weather was perfect.

However, the next day started out as a problem as it was WINDY. Now do you know what that means? Have you every see a tent turn into a sail and go flying through the air and come crashing down? Well, we did! Also, many of the displays were blown over. We proceeded to stake down every tent with a one foot metal stake and clothes line rope, which solved the problem. But, then weather turned perfect as the day went on.

There were so many people that took part in the event that it will be impossible to thank them all in this article, but you know who you are and we do want to give you **A BIG THANK YOU AND HOPE TO SEE YOU AT FOUNDER'S DAY AGAIN NEXT YEAR!!**

We have started the drive for the 2005 calendar. We will highlight CITY GOVERNMENT in that calendar. We will have the picture of the first mayor and the current mayor of Vineland on the front of the calendar along with all the members of the City Council. We need your help and support. If you have not purchased an AD in the past and would like to do so this year, please call me. All supporters are given 25 calendars FREE in appreciation for their help.

THANKS SO MUCH!!!

(The following was written by Mr. Renzulli, my "old" 7'th grade school teacher from Minotola School. I have obtained permission from him to publish it in our News Letter. Considering the fact that I was born in Landisville and personally remember much of what he wrote, you can understand why I am so happy to publish his work. This is just the first part of a series, due to the fact that his publication is too long to put out in one News Letter. Frank De Maio, M.D.)

A Walk Back In Time in the History of My Town

By: Bruno F. Renzulli

This is the story of Landisville, Minotola and the surrounding area as I remember it as I was growing up. I have lived here my entire life which goes back to 1911, so you might say I have seen it all. The story dwells on the first fifty years of my life with only reference made to later years.

In reading this, remember that during those early years we either walked or rode on a wagon pulled by a horse. Occasionally we rode a train. We did not venture too far from home. We knew our immediate surroundings quite well. We did not go to Richland or Milmay very often. They were far away. A trip to those towns was more like an adventure. It took most of a day to go there and back by horse and wagon. It wasn't until the automobile age that we got to know those towns and residents. We had classmates from those areas so we knew where the towns were located and a little bit about them.

Contemporaries may remember the same episodes and incidents of which I write somewhat differently

but the physical make up of the towns during those times cannot be changed. This is not a story about my life but about past times as I remember them. There is no special sequence; as events were recalled in my mind, they were recorded. It is hoped that you will enjoy this tour as we share our memories of things that happened long ago. March 27, 2002

The Story

This is the story of my town, the town in which I grew up, it's neighboring towns, it's people, and it's culture and it's past. As I grew I saw it grow; I've seen it at it's lowest depth and saw it rise again. For me it's been a good little town and although I've been to many parts of this world I was always happiest when I came back to my family, friends and to My Town, Landisville. There wasn't much here but it was always good to come back.

I was born here on the farm my parents had settled in four years earlier. The farm-house was located on the northwest corner of Arbor Avenue and Clara Street. Our farm ran along Clara Street to the railroad, along the railroad about 500 feet west and back north about 1500 feet, west about 800 feet then north to Weymouth Road and east back to Clara Street. Clara Street was a dirt road from Weymouth to Arbor Avenue; from Arbor to the railroad no road existed. Clara Street was extended to the railroad during the early 1930's. An imaginary line separated our farm from our neighbors Antonio and Carmela Rucolo a childless couple. Bache Street, the first street west of Clara was open from Arbor to about half the distance to the railroad where the Bondi family lived. From their home to the railroad there was a

footpath which ran through a wooded lot. The Bondi children were our playmates until the family moved to Bridgeton in the early twenties. Then Fred and Lucy Leone moved into that home. They too were a childless couple. (We lost our playmates.)

At about the same time Bache Street was completed to the boulevard. John Trasferini built a fertilizer mixing plant on the lot in the northeast corner of South Boulevard and Bache Street. He would mix and prepare fertilizer according to the formula a farmer wanted. He operated the plant for about 20 years. The building was later demolished. That land now has buildings used as packing facilities and is owned by the Landisville Farmers Cooperative.

Just further up the street Auburn Ave. came to a dead end at Arbor Avenue. In the southeast corner was located a concrete block making plant. It was owned by a Mr. Polica (some used the name Policardi). Behind the block plant was a sand pit from which the sand was dug and used in block making. It involved quite an ingenious and interesting process. Inside the building was a small shallow pit. At the very edge of the pit a very narrow gauge railroad ended. The railroad extended down into the sand-pit. A cart with a v-shaped container sat on the rails. The cart had a brake lever on the outside of one of the wheels and as it went down into the pit a worker rode on it and by applying pressure on the brake lever could control the speed of the cart going down into the pit. At the bottom of the pit the cart was filled with sand. When filled with sand a large beautiful Belgian draft horse was hitched to the cart and at a command the horse pulled the cart up to the upper pit.

Continued On Next Page

The interesting part was that when the horse reached the external part of the building it stepped aside and the cart kept rolling until it reached the pit. At that point the cart hit a barrier and the v-shaped container tilted and emptied the sand into the inside pit. At this point workers mixed sand and cement with water, shoveled the mixture into molds while overhead rods worked up and down pounding the mortar into the mold holes to firm it into a solid form. After a short drying period the blocks were taken outside and laid into piles for further drying. The blocks were molded into many shapes and sizes. The foundations of most of the older homes in our area are made from the blocks made at this plant. There were various types and shapes of blocks made, plus columns in Gothic and Roman style. The power to operate the mechanism was furnished by a one cylinder, water-cooled, gasoline motor.

Probably no other machinery epitomizes the beginning of the mechanization of the American farm than the one cylinder water-cooled gasoline engine. It was designed to generate from one to much more horsepower. With its two side fly wheels it usually gave more horsepower than its designated power. This gasoline motor pumped water, ran the first power driven washing machines, made possible the first irrigation of farms, sawed wood for our wood burning stoves and furnaces, powered our first electric generators and did many more chores formerly done by hand. Entire manufacturing industries developed around the use of this motor. A book could be written on changes brought about by this odd looking piece of machinery.

For us in our town it served us well. Looking back, it is impossible to figure the hours of back

breaking labor it saved many farmers. Logs for our kitchen ranges had to be about 18 inches long and were cut by two people using a crosscut saw. The gasoline motor mounted on a wagon frame, connected by a flat belt to a circular saw would cut more wood in one hour than the two men could cut in a day. There were two such rigs in our town, one operated by Domenic Martinelli and sons and the other by Mercoli brothers. In the fall of the year both were very busy as they went around from home to home sawing firewood for the annual supply.

In the late 1920's the "block factory" as we called, it was sold to Joseph Lolli, A few years after he bought and operated the block factory Joseph Lolli was killed in an accident. The truck he was driving was hit by a freight train at the railroad crossing on Harding Highway in Landisville. Andrew Lolli and the Lolli family continued operating it as a block making facility for several years until it became too expensive to make the blocks; competition could make them much cheaper. It was sold again to a family who converted it to the Landis Building Supply and after several years operating at that location moved the business to Main Road in Vineland.

The original owners of the Block Factory, the Polica's, returned to Italy and spent the remaining years of their lives there.

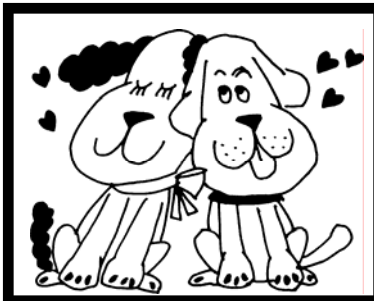
Along Clara Street was located the Rucolo farm and behind it was the Battelini farm. Plymouth Road extended from Route 54 across South Boulevard and Central Railroad to Weymouth Road. On land at the northwest corner of Plymouth Road and Central railroad and behind the Battelini farm was situated the Francis H. Legget Can-

ning Factory. While I do not know exactly when it was built, it was there as long as I can remember. It probably was built in the late 1800's. It employed a good number of workers throughout the year. During the canning season extra workers were employed. Every morning at exactly 7:AM the canning house whistle blew; again at exactly 12:00 noon and at 1:00 PM and at 5:00 PM it blew for the last time of that day. Workers started to work at 7:00 in the morning, had an hour for lunch, returned to work at 1:00 and ended their day's work at 5:00 PM. The water tower with the name Legget, Landisville Plant printed on it served as a beacon for many years. The whistles that could be heard for miles around told us that a new work day had begun; clocks were set by them and certain chores and activities were performed at the sound of these whistles. When the fire company was started in Landisville and Minotola the canning house whistle blew a series of long and short blasts that would indicate the area where the fire was located and would summon the volunteer fireman to the fire. The whistles were silenced after World War II. Sirens replaced the fire whistle. When the sounds of the whistle were silenced they were greatly missed by the residents of our community. The whistles of Legget's Cannery also became a footnote in the history of My Town.

Legget's Cannery, Jonas Glass Factory, Hamberger's Clothing Shop and the Block Factory were the main employers in our area in the early 1900's. (The family name we were told was Hemberger.)

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT EDITION)

We want to do out dog-gone best to thank all the people that contributed money towards our activities during the last year. The list is as follows:



Without your donations, we could not continue!

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