

# Friends of Historic Vineland

## Fall Edition



I think that most readers know by now that Kevin Kirchner is rebuilding the Palace Depression. What most probably do not know is that next to it runs a stream that was used by George Daynor as a source of water and, according to him, a source of food.

As you all recall, this has been one of the driest summers on record. Yet, the stream never dried up. This must make one wonder where the constant source of water comes from.

Well, we have a brilliant local man by the name of Mark N. Demitroff that has written a number of articles that explain that, plus a number of other geological questions.

Mark explains how "The pine region of southern New Jersey is a landscape of subtlety and nuance. There are no grand landmarks, such as lofty mountains or mighty rivers. The region is an uninspiring flatland, a monotonous plain of pine and oak forest. Demand for lumber, naval stores and charcoal was great during the Colonial period both domestically and for export to England. In search of forest products specific features would point to areas that were better for exploitation.

This gave rise to terms that explained the landscape such as "sprungs, cirpoles, blue holes and savannahs."

The first explorers noted the Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey as an arid, inhospitable wasteland. The dry, sandy sterile soils of the Pine Belt gave the in-

habitants the most marginal of existence." The loose sandy and gravelly soils allow rainwater to quickly infiltrate and recharge the shallow aquifer that exists beneath the sandy soil. In this desert, the groundwater is never far beneath the surface averaging 3 to 6 feet in depth. The Cohansey aquifer has excellent hydraulic characteristics and holds prodigious quantities of pristine water. Wherever the porous sands are punctured, wetlands and streams appear. Most stream flow is the result of groundwater seepage from the Cohansey aquifer. The numerous depressions and pools that are known as *sprungs* also derive their water from the aquifer."

So there you have it folks. The reason why the spring does not go dry. Also, the above explains where the water comes from when they have a sandwash. There is one sandwash in Vineland that most consider a lake, yet there is no stream that feeds it. The water comes entirely from the aquifer.

This also explains why the government is so interested in the wet lands. These lands are not to be developed but allowed to remain uninhabited so that all the water from rain can sink into the soil and replenish the aquifer. If this does not happen, the aquifer would run dry and then the spring next to the Palace Depression would also run dry, and WE CERTAINLY DO NOT WANT THAT TO HAPPEN.

Stop by, see the stream, and **LAY A FEW BRICKS AND STONES AND HELP KEVIN FINISH THE PALACE!!!**

## *The History Of Landisville, By Mr. Renzulli, Continued:*

For several years every spring 'Peg Leg Pete' as we called him, came to town. He never explained how he lost his leg but he got around very well with his artificial wooden substitute. Every one knew him and they all looked forward to his coming. Families fed him and allowed him to stay in an out building, gave him some money and after several days he would silently disappear. One year he didn't return and no one ever knew what fate befell him.

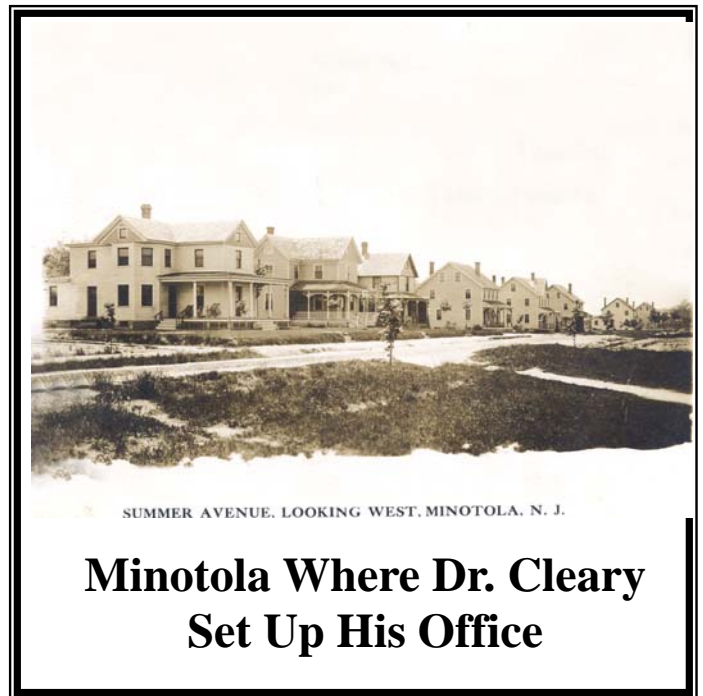
Around 1930 the first lunch wagon came to town. It was located on the land between the Tarquinio store and Frank Cugino's home on Harding Highway. Stanley Fisher of Mays Landing was the chef. Hamburgers and hot dogs cost 10 cents and a cup of coffee was 5 cents. It stayed at that location for a few years but business was not too good and the lunch wagon was pulled away. Later the Proccacino Brothers established the Landis Diner. Peter and Salvy Luchesi established a coffee shop next to the Luchesi Building (now the post office) in the 1930's and operated it for several years. This building was later torn down.

My Town, Landisville, was a hub for the many farmers who settled here and in surrounding towns. It was to Landisville that the farmers came to sell and "ship" their produce. It was here too that they came to shop for their food and farm supplies, shoe their horses, repair their wagons, and buy the feed for their hogs, horses and chickens. Starting in the late twenties they came to buy their medicines at Matlack's Drug Store as well and to keep an appointment with Dr. Cleary when they were able to go to his office.

The first doctor to establish a practice in our area was a Dr. Dubler who opened an office in Minotola. He stayed a few years then moved his practice to another town. His wife remained here and became quite a character as she walked through town with her entourage of 6 or 7 dogs following her wherever she went. A couple of other doctors followed but they too left after a short stay. About 1925 Dr. J. P. Cleary came and set up an office in the building next to Giuliani's grocery store. He stayed at that

location for several years then moved his office to the small building on the corner of Arctic and Central avenues. He remained there and practiced there until his death. In his will he left an amount of money which was to honor outstanding citizens of the area for their contribution to the community. The Buena Vista Township School # 1 in Minotola was renamed the Dr. J. P. Cleary School in his honor. Dr. Cleary was a humanitarian in many other ways.

The great depression showed its head in our area long before it hit the nation's cities. As in all previous depressions and recessions agricultural and rural areas were the first to feel it's pangs. The closing of the Glass factory in 1920 was the first big blow. The Post World War I recession in the cities caused

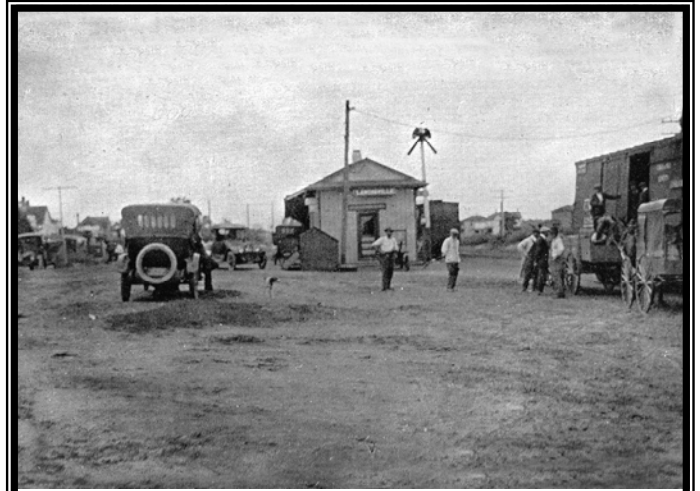


a decrease in sales of farmers' products. Jobs were lost and farm income declined. There was a lot less money to spend in My Town. It was in this perspective that Dr. Cleary showed his humanitarianism. His fees for a home visit (all doctors' visits were home visits in those days) was \$2.00. This often included the pills needed to treat the ailment. Due to the hard times of that era, many did not have the money to pay him. Some promised to pay and kept their promise; some due to prolonged hard times were not able to pay; some paid in kind such as farm eggs, a basket of peppers or some such exchange. He in turn gave this accumulated "wealth" to poor families. There were many babies delivered

in our area by Dr. Cleary that the delivery service was paid for in kind. He was a true humanitarian and it is my hope that Dr. J. P. Cleary's name and his deeds will be remembered in perpetuity.

In the summer time Landisville was a very busy town. The railroad station that was located just across from the Giuliani General store, on the south side of the railroad tracks was the busiest place. All produce was shipped by rail. The produce was either bought by brokers or shipped by them on consignment to buyers in New York. In such cases the farmer did not know what price he might receive for his produce until the buyer sent him a check or as happened in many cases a bill for freight because the merchandise could not be sold. (The farmer had no way to verify this claim.) During the months of July and August as many as 20 freight cars of produce were shipped from Landisville and all had to be properly identified as to who shipped the produce, quantity shipped, what type of produce and to whom the shipment was to go. At this time the railroad station was also a very busy place with as many as 15 or more clerks working, making out sales slips and manifests. The regular working force at the station during the remainder of the year consisted of 4 or 5 persons. Mr. Ralph Norton, well liked and a personable gentleman, was station agent until the station was closed in early 1950.

As mentioned above Landisville and the surrounding communities were mainly farming areas. When the farms were purchased a part of the farm was in trees, stumps or brush which had to be removed to increase acreage for growing crops. The trees were cut with an ax, stumps were dug with a shovel; all work was done by hand. Clearing land was slow, tedious and tiring work. The main crops grown in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup>.century were: broccoli raabe, strawberries, peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, black berries and peaches. Felice Donato and Tullio Pernazzi started the first commercial peach orchards. Donato also started the first mushroom farm. Most of the farms had a small vineyard and a wood lot. From the vineyard farmers made their wine and the wood lot provided firewood for cooking and heating. Commercial fertilizers were not readily available, were



***Railroad Station Located Just Across  
From The Giuliani General Store***

very expensive and the farmers did not have much faith in them. The preferred fertilizer was horse manure, it was inexpensive and it did enrich the soil. It could be brought in from New York (where it was plentiful and the residents were glad to get rid of it) by rail and at any time it was needed. The big demand was in the spring. A special railroad siding was built by the Central Railroad north of and alongside the main track. It started at Willow Street and ended between Bache and Clara Streets. The manure came in flatbed cars. Farm wagons parked along side of the car and were loaded with manure and hauled to the farm. Usually several farmers would help each other with this task. The horse drawn wagons followed each other and became known as "the manure brigade". This went on for several weeks in early spring each year. Gradually farmers began to use commercial fertilizers and when trucks replaced horses, the annual "manure brigade" became a footnote in the history of farming in My Town. Farmers' produce eventually was hauled entirely by trucks so the railroad siding was removed. A new industry, trucking, evolved and became an important part of the local commerce and economy.

***Folks, there is a lot more of this  
amazing story by this amazing man.  
More in the next issue!!***

## So What's So Great About History??

The first thing to consider is that most people have a distorted opinion of what one means by *history*. How often one hears people say that they "hate history" or how they cannot "remember all those dates." Well, if that really represented history, few of us would be interested either. History is really much more. For example, when grandma tells her grandchild that he "looks just like uncle Harry that died last year" she is really teaching history. Remembering your birthday, your anniversary, or when your grandparents immigrated from, say, Poland, is all history. And it can be fascinating.

The real reason for the fascination of history is the universal trait of humans to know and understand who they are, what they are, where they came from, and what is expected of them. This has been true over the ages from an individual point of view and from the point of view of nations and races. The telling of the heroic tales of the Greeks such as the Iliad and the Odyssey takes the telling of history back to antiquity and to people with great culture. But the Viking sagas told over and over again by the Scandinavians and of the great ex-

ploits of their Godlike heroes, tells us that such activity also took place among people with little culture.

We might not appreciate it, but the telling of the story of the first Thanksgiving, the tall tale of George Washington and the cherry tree, and reading about Thomas Jefferson not only relate to who we are as Americans, but also who we want to be.

When does this all start?? Actually, at a young age. Have you not heard kids ask: "Why is the sky blue? What makes the wind? Where did I come from?" Well, I had similar thoughts, but coming from Landisville, I wondered why Landisville had the same name as Landis Ave., why Landis Ave. was so wide, why there were only Italians in Landisville and why a part of Vineland was named "Nuova Italia" and the streets had such names as Venezia and Dante Ave.

I wondered for a long time. And then I got involved in the history of Vineland—I started to acquire old postcards of Vineland showing what the old town looked like, read the biography of Charles K. Landis and why and how he started Vineland, and read as many of the available books on the history of Vineland that I could find. Soon everything started to make sense.

Now you might still say: "So What!! What real good will that do?" Well, again, going back through the ages and considering that people have not really changed, just the technology has changed, it makes a lot of sense to see how successful civilizations, and successful people have used the past to both learn and to shape their character and destiny. We all know such sayings like, "If you don't know where you've been, you don't know where you are going." Or, "People who don't know the past are destined to repeat it!" But there is more. Going back to grandma, think of how important it becomes in the destiny of a young person when she tells such stories like: "You know, your grandpa was a great man. He worked hard, raised a big family, never lied or cheated and was really appreciated by his neighbors!" Now, that tells you where you came from and what is expected of you, or at least what is a desirable goal.

So, history can be a great shaper of character, and a great way to have fun!

So, hope you enjoy it!

**Frank De Maio, M.D.**

### DO YOU WANT TO JOIN??

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**"FRIENDS OF HISTORIC VINELAND"**

The Friends have no connections with the Vineland Historical Society or any other society!

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