

Allendale Retains Its 'Country' Mood

By PAT HALL

ALLEDALE — Between the Ramapo Valley and the Saddle River lies the small town of Allendale. Once a verdant woodland roamed by the various tribes of the Delaware Indians, the borough has grown to a population of 6,000 and boasts industry, a fine elementary school system with two schools, one of which was recently built, and a high school so modern, attractive and highly accredited that its reputation is widely known.

Yet Allendale manages to retain its basic soft, almost countrified and quiet atmosphere even in these modern, fast-paced times.

Much information on the history of the borough can be gleaned from a book published at the time of the borough's Tercentenary in 1964.

The tribes of Indians that in-

ANNIVERSARY FEATURE

habited Allendale were the Pompton, Tappan and Hacki Saks. They were not warlike; indeed, Chief Oritani was known to be friendly with settlers and offered them assistance.

In 1916 a wampum factory was discovered in Allendale. Thousands of pieces of wampum — cylindrical tubes about one half inch in length made of the purple, white

and blue clam shells — were found. It seems that a few settlers found that with their superior tools they could manufacture wampum better than the Indians with their primitive tools. The manufacturing settlers became rich trading wampum for furs and grain. According to records the factory was owned by Johannas Stolz in 1720. There are no known descendants of Stolz since it is believed that his family left the state when the Indians did.

Allendale was part of Franklin Township during the 1700s, and later of Orvil Township. Franklin Township was named for the son of Benjamin Franklin, while Orvil was named for Orvil Victor, a resident of Saddle River.

In 1894, by legislative act, the Borough came into existence. The town established its own mayor and council as well as its own school districts. The first council meeting was held in December of that year with Mayor Peter Rappilje presiding.

Railroad Comes

An important event in the history of the borough was the building of the railroad. The Erie Railroad in the 1800s ran from upper New York State to Suffern and east to Piermont, New York, on the Hudson River. The Paterson and Long Dock Railroad ran from Paterson to Jersey City. In mid 1800 the Paterson and Ramapo railroad was organized to connect the two systems. Surveys were conducted for the railroad. Into the borough came Colonel Joseph Warner Allen, a surveyor, after whom the borough was named. His father was the Colonel Allen who directed the adoption of standard time in 1883. The younger Allen was reported to have had a fabulous career and was accorded a hero's funeral in Trenton after he drowned off Cape Hatteras in 1862.

Henry J. Mallinson deeded land to the railroad company to erect a station, which was built in 1850. It was used until a new building was built in 1870.

One of the functions of the railroad was the transportation of strawberries from the borough to the city markets. Allendale was famous for its strawberries and workers came in the hundreds to pick them. Commission agents, salesmen and pickers would often seek refreshment at the Sherwood and Tallman's Hotel (now the Allendale Hotel). Another spot was Charlie May's general store across

the street, which also had liquid refreshment.

The period from 1800 to 1810 was a time when many turnpikes were being instituted, and it was in this period that the Franklin Turnpike was chartered. It ran from Waldwick (New Prospect) to Mahwah (Ramapough). It was a toll road until after the Civil War. A toll house stood at the corner of the turnpike and West Crescent Avenue until 1932. A nearby farmer would often lend his oxen to help those with heavily laden wagons grind up the hill north of the toll gate.

During the Civil War, most Allendale men were in the command of Col. Cornelius Fornett in the 22nd New Jersey Infantry Division.

At the close of the nineteenth century, Allendale was largely a summer resort, with many residents renting rooms to the summer visitors. The borough had much to offer in the way of swimming, fishing and boating areas.

Instrumental in the improvement of the town was the Village Improvement Association, which did its best to modernize things. In 1890 the association pioneered the first sidewalks and macadam road in the borough on West Allendale Avenue. Also 13 oil lamps were installed with J. Morton Southwick in charge of lighting.

As for business, there was a cider mill across from the present Methodist Church. It was a great place for talking and meeting. There was a grist mill on the present San Jacinto property and a sawmill across the street.

As more and more people moved into the borough farmland was bought for homebuilding; thus the demise of the strawberry fields.

In 1914 the council passed an ordinance for the issuance of a \$45,000 bond for the construction of water mains. Water was obtained from Ramsey until 1930 when the first test well was drilled in the borough.

In 1916 sidewalks were laid on the Franklin Turnpike. In 1900 a contract was made with the Rockland Electric Company for electricity. In 1922 the Board of Health was formed. A zoning board was created at the May 1924 session of the borough council.

In 1925 the Recreation Park was opened. Also in 1925 house numbers were assigned but it was not until 1954 that house to house mail delivery was started.

A few older buildings remain in Allendale. It is a town of a moving society with many residents living in the area only a short time. It is not a controversial town, has not often been the site of bitter political struggles. There has been growth, yes, but Allendale perhaps has the character of a slow moving river, picking up some of what it flows through, leaving some behind, not angry, but peacefully and surely moving toward its destination, its place in the future.

Clippings from Ridgewood Sunday News, July 20, 1969.