

Allendale scenes from the long ago

By PAT HALL

ALLEDALE — The town as it used to be was vividly painted in words by Mae Selfridge, Laura Barrett Haviland, William Buhlmann and Russell Mallinson, as they reminisced about their youth during a special program by the Allendale Historical Assn.

The four speakers were members of founding families, whose ancestors had been in the borough for more than 100 years.

Also at Monday's program was a fine collection of clippings and pictures of early

Allendale. Many saw faces they had not seen in years, such as old school chums.

The program consisted of informal recollections. Mallinson remembered the four corners at Allendale Avenue and Franklin Turnpike, where a cider mill, blacksmith and wheelright shop were located.

He recalled when his family operated the cider mill and he as a child helped out. The business netted a cent to a cent and a half a gallon and produced 400 to 600 gallons of cider a day. Each farmer brought his own apples and took home his own cider.

Mrs. Haviland recalled how the children used to stop on the way home from school for a drink of cider at the mill. One cup hung on a nail and they would pass it around to drink the fresh cider until the school decided each had to bring his own cup. She recalled the children also stopped to watch the shoeing of horses as they returned from school.

Of course, there were one-room school-houses in Allendale's early days. One such was on Franklin Turnpike, where the former municipal building stands. Later the school house was moved to Cottage Place.

Mallinson remembered the house where he lived as a child. The Van Houten Realty office stands there today.

It was a nine-room house built in 1870. He recalled there were eight doors in the kitchen, including one into a closet, one outside, one to the dining room, used only when company came, and another into the living room, called the parlor. The house featured all-chestnut woodwork about two inches thick.

Mae Selfridge recalled when the children used to gather chestnuts from the trees growing in numbers from Crescent Avenue up to the Ramsey line. A few years later the trees were destroyed by a blight.

Mallinson recalled that the family water came from an open well about five feet deep. He reflected the water must have been pure enough, since no one ever got sick from drinking it. His father always kept a trout in the well to kill bugs.

Mallinson also recalled when the town barber cut little boys' hair for 20 cents until

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Laura Barrett Haviland leafs through pages of a scrapbook filled with stories and photos of early Allendale. Looking on are (from left, Mae Selfridge, William Buhlman and Russell Mallinson. All are members of the Allendale Historical Assn. which got together to talk over the good old days Monday. (Photo by Rich McBride)

Scenes

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he told mothers the price would have to be raised to a quarter.

Mrs. Haviland's father ran a livery stable at the site of what is now the Central Exxon Station. Garrison's pond was back of what is now the A & P and was surrounded by apple orchards.

But it was strawberries for which the borough was famous. Buhlman recalled when buyers from all over came here and stayed at the Allendale Hotel. Farmers from other towns also brought their berries here and the buyers would make their selections. Berries were shipped out daily by train.

Speaking of trains, another recollection was when the rail station was moved from one side of the tracks to the other.

The four also remembered Dr. Rodman, who made his house calls in a strange-looking car with no windshield. It was Dr. Rodman, along with Mallinson, who established the town's first American Legion post.

At the end of World War I, a party was held to welcome home all the returning veterans.

The four recalled that Allendale was once called Orville. Years ago there was a grange hall in Ramsey and one in Saddle River. Entire families would go out together. While the adults danced in the hall, the little ones fell asleep upstairs in the hayloft.

Mrs. Haviland recalled when the Franklin Turnpike was blacktopped. It was a big job and residents had to stay inside during the blasting which then was necessary prior to the paving. After it was completed, she and her friends often rollerskated to Ridgewood. But horses found the blacktop tough on their hooves.

Local young people used to take the trolley to Ridgewood High School. And swimming used to be at Long Rack swimming hole. The girls used to bring a blanket to make a shelter to change.

San Jacinto used to be Hutches Pond, in the early days of Allendale.

Lots of names were recalled Monday including Ackerson, Ackerman, Zabriskie, Smith, Winters and others.

Somehow, the four speakers seemed able to capture the feeling of Allendale's yesteryear for the appreciative members of the Historical Assn., many of whom could also recall the events and people when the borough was young.

