

Woodbridge Township- New Jersey's oldest township with a history richer than any other. Although the township is home to over 99,585 people, the vast majority of these people have no knowledge about the history of the township they live in. Settled in the early autumn of 1664 and chartered in on June 1st, 1669, Woodbridge Township is greatly different from today in aspects such as appearance, government, and the population. One of the greatest changes over time is schooling, which began in Woodbridge in the early nineteenth century. However, one of the major changes within schooling is how students lived life then, and how they live it in the present time. Children/students in 1925 took a part in Boy/Girl Scouts, camps, and had more freedom, yet they faced the terrible effects of poverty and cold temperatures.

Back in 1925, Avenel students did not have to stay in school for lunch; they could leave during lunch to go to the Avenel Variety Store. "...the Avenel Variety Store, which is close to the school, will serve hot soup and hot chocolate to the kiddies for lunch for the sum of 5 cents each" (Woodbridge Independent, October 16, 1925). In the present time, students cannot leave school premises to get food; they must bring their own lunch, buy from the cafeteria, or have a parent sign them out to take them to lunch. In the past, there were scarce to none school shootings in the country, but nowadays, security measures have to be tightened in order to ensure the students are safe- hence the reason why we do not have the privilege of going out for lunch. Although the students had the freedom to leave school on their own preference, students did not have heaters in all of the classrooms as they do today, leaving them freezing in the bitter cold during class. Students began to raise money for their school with a school bank account so that they could pay for necessities such as heating. "Four hundred, and seven students attended school at Port Reading on Tuesday of last week. Four hundred and seven deposits were made on that day...Port Reading, \$158.16, 100" (Woodbridge Independent, November 27, 1925). These students were determined to raise money for their school, just like how students today are determined to raise money for their school in order to get something.

Boy/Girl Scouts was a popular activity to join in 1925 and remains a prominent activity for students to join today. Troops within Woodbridge Township included the Avenel, Woodbridge, Fords, Colonia, and Iselin.

The Avenel Troop went to many summer camp sessions, including Camp Cowaw in the summer of 1925, to learn scoutcraft (wood crafting knowledge and skills required for the wild). The same year, Avenel Troop's assistant scoutmaster, Walter Brytsczuk, was awarded Boy Scout's highest honor- the Eagle Scout Badge- for he had earned all 21 badges necessary to earn this badge earlier in the year (Woodbridge Independent, December 11, 1925). Another activity for students to go to was Kiddie Camp, which is still running today (commonly known as Kiddie Keep Well Camp and is located by Roosevelt Park in Edison, NJ). Kiddie Camp was a camp funded by Middlesex County to provide a camp for children who do not have the money to go to camp and to restore the health of boys that were undernourished, underweight, and were on the edge of consumption (Woodbridge Independent, December 22, 2014). Avenel and Port Reading children who had terrible health/were in poverty attended this camp during the summertime.

In 1925, poverty was an ongoing issue prominent in many families. One notable Port Reading family suffering from poverty that year was one with eight children (, a mother, and a unemployed father. One of the sons in the family, a twelve year old boy, wrote to Mrs. Lyon- a writer in the newspaper who 'talked to Santa'- in hopes she could talk to Santa about giving his family warm clothes for Christmas. "The seven children, instead of asking for toys, all said that their biggest want was warm clothing" (Woodbridge Independent, December 24, 1925). Poverty not only affected the family in means of food and shelter, but it also affected the children of the family because they do not have all the privileges that their friends have. While all their friends are wishing for unnecessary items, this family is wishing for basic necessities most would assume they already had. When Mrs. Lyon showed the letter to the Woodbridge Rotary Club, and the members voted that the Boys' Work Committee would investigate, and if they learned what was written in the letter was true (which it was), they would replace Santa and provide the family with clothes (Woodbridge Independent, December 18, 1925).

Although students and children felt the effects of poverty and cold temperatures, they were able to enjoy life by joining activities such as boy/girl scouts and camps. Thinking about it, life in 1925 isn't too different

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from life today. Although the working methods are different, the working ethics from 1925 to present day are similar. The only reason children's lives are different today is because the world around them changed. Back then, children had to fight for what seems basic in the present time. If the children in 1925 had lived the life we live today, then they wouldn't be fighting poverty and risking their health just to live.