

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

FALL 2024

U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS TRAINING CENTER NO. 7 “CAMP BOARDWALK”

By Michael Connor

Atlantic City played a vital and important role in the World War II efforts of the United States. While the Navy and Coast Guard had a significant presence, the Army had by far the largest. An exponential increase in personnel numbers was necessary. To provide a frame of reference, at the outbreak of WW II the Dutch had a bigger army than the United States.

While many temporary training facilities were constructed throughout the country, Atlantic City had the necessary infrastructure already in place. The transition to a war economy impacted the resort business. The draft, rationing, defense hiring, reallocation of rail cars, and similar wartime disruptions led then New Jersey Senator William H. Smathers, Atlantic City Mayor Thomas D. Taggart, Jr. and other local politicians to promote Atlantic City as a training site.

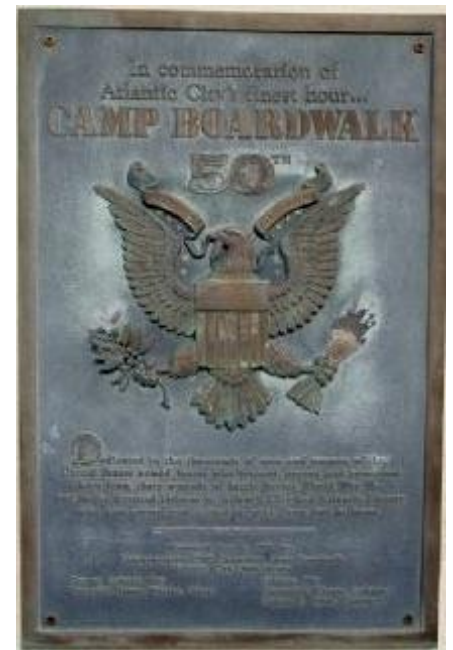
Atlantic City was selected as a training site in January of 1942. The first trainees arrived July, 22, 1942. This Basic Training Center was under the command of Colonel Robert P. Glassburn. A Saturday Evening Post article of February 27, 1943, entitled “Camp Boardwalk” gave us what is now the popular name for this training facility. That article quotes Glassburn as saying the following:

“If the B.T.C. had to take over hotels to house its men, it was much better to take over the strictly entertainment-type hotels rather than ordinary commercial ones. Then, too, where but in a resort town could we have found so many of this particular type of hotel clotted together in an area small enough to make training possible?

The time factor was the most important of all. Here was a camp already built, and the critical materials necessary for a whole new installation could not have been procured rapidly, if at all. In addition to eating and sleeping space, we found utilities ready and waiting, such as sewage disposal, ash and garbage removal, electricity, gas and fire protection, all geared for expansion overnight to take care of as many men as we wanted to bring in.”

Many of the beachfront hotels of the time had their own electric power plants and artesian wells for their water supply. These supplemented the municipal water utility and the Atlantic City Electric Company. The Atlantic City Sewerage Company (an independent public utility) provided this necessary service.

Ultimately 45 hotels were leased for the training center. An agreed rate of one dollar per day per room for not less than one year was negotiated. While this was far less than the then typical \$10-12 per day high



Continued on page 4

Events and Happenings

Program Logistics

RISLEY HOMESTEAD

8 Virginia Avenue
(near 400 block of Shore Rd)
Northfield, NJ



Saturdays & Sundays, 11am – 4pm

Program Description

The [Risley Homestead](#) is one of two 18th century houses in Atlantic County individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was home to many generations of Risley oystermen. The ACHS received the Homestead and its furnishings by bequest from Virginia Risley Stout in 1989. The Homestead is open Saturday & Sunday for individual and small group guided tours. Contact ACHS for details about large groups.

THE CRAB TRAP

2 Broadway, Somers Point

October 19th @11:30am
Cost: \$32.00

Members and the general public are invited. Following the installation of the nominees to the governing Board, “The “Bringing History to Life Award” will be presented

Members will vote on nominees to the 2025-2026 Governing Board at this time. Please check Facebook and/or the ACHS website for more information.

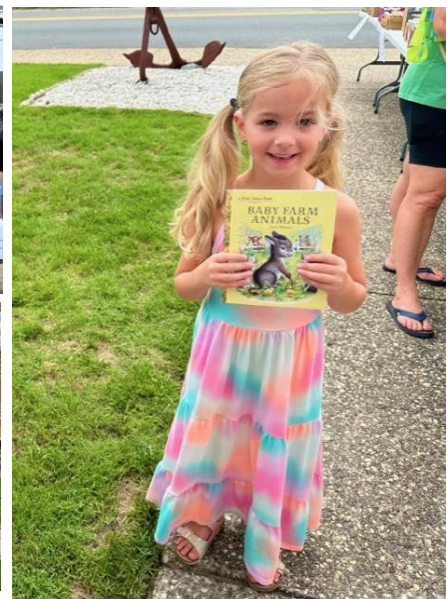
Yard Sale

Saturday, September 21st
8:00am – 2:00pm
(Rain Date: Sept. 22nd)

Many items for sale,
including extra Library books.
All proceeds benefit
the ACHS

Risley Homestead, 8 Virginia
Avenue, Northfield, NJ
(near 400 block-Shore Rd)

HAPPY YARD SALE & BOOK SALE PEOPLE!!



SAVE THE DATE!!



HOLIDAY SWEET SALE

Saturday
December 21st
12:00pm – 3:00pm
Atlantic County Historical Society
907 Shore Road
Somers Point

Member News

ACHS ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Members will vote on nominees to the 2025-2026 Governing Board at this time. The following are presented for reelection at our annual meeting:

Vice President: Cynthia Mason-Purdie
Assistant Librarian: Kathleen Fritz
Treasurer: Charlene Canale
Curator: Joan Frankel
Financial Secretary: Ellen Hyatt

Trustees:

William Rozell, Esq. Benjamin Brenner
Megan Ernst Lynn Wood

Following the installation of the nominees to the governing Board, “The “Bringing History to Life Award” will be presented. Guest Speaker Joel Mott, Principal Public Programs Specialist at the NJ Pinelands Commission, will present “History of Pinelands Protection”.

Welcome

New Members

David Talarico, Jr., *Margate, NJ*
Matthew Marciano, *Hackettstown, NJ*
David W. Betterton*, *Long Beach, CA*
**(Renewed Member)*

Life Member

Paul V. Olsson, *Middlebury, VT*

IN MEMORIAM



Dr. Edward T. Stephenson, Jr.,
LIFE MEMBER



Donations

FRIEND \$1 - \$49

Elizabeth Naylor *IMO* Richard E Squires, Kathy Fritz *IHO* Sid Parker, Dana Schupp,
Sheryl Collins *IMO* Jeffrey Lee Collins, MaryLou Adams *IMO* Helen M. (Mrs. Stanley) Adams,
Roger & Judith Scull *IMO* Our Parents and *IHO* Our Family

PATRON \$50 - \$249

Rosemary Wallace *IMO* Suzanne Smith, Elinor Veit *IMO* Richard F Veit, Dale Lonkart *IHO* All Society Volunteers,
Sid Parker *IHO* George & Carol Guiliano, Charlene Canale *IHO* Edward Canale, Sr.,
Robert D Warrington *IMO* Dudley L. Phillips, Sr., Bruce & Barbara Aydelotte *IMO* Edward Stephenson,
Babs Perry-Silva *IMO* Carolyn Perry, George & Carol Guiliano *IMO* Pat Parker & *IHO* Sid Parker,
Judith Schwartz *IMO* Olga & Alfred Amole, Diane Bassetti *IMO* Suzanne Smith,
Milton Siglin, Michael Connor, Joseph Hiers, Walt & Lois Gregory, Mary Peterson, Diane Miller,
Robert Francois, Joan & Larry Frankel, Carol Zepfel, Charlie & Colleen Morgan

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD E. SQUIRES

Lynn Wood, Thomas A. Wolcott, Joan Berkey & Scott Smith

SPONSOR \$250 - \$1000

Michael O'Brien, Sid Parker *IMO* Pat Parker,
General Lafayette Chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution

CAMP BOARDWALK, *continued...*

season or \$5-7 per day off season rates it was payable 365 days a year. Additional rental was paid for dining rooms, kitchens, meeting rooms and public space used for classrooms and recreational facilities.

Convention Hall sometimes referred to as the Atlantic City Municipal Auditorium was at that time the largest structure of its kind in the world. In addition to the indoor accommodation of some 4000 trainees, it was used as the Headquarters of Basic Training Center No. 7. The multiple rooms other than the main hall and ballroom became offices.

Convention Hall was occupied by the Army prior to any negotiated lease. The Army proposed to pay one dollar per year plus operating expenses. According to a Press/Union article of July 23, 1942, operating costs, salaries and interest on ten million dollars in bonds was \$100,000 per year. Mayor Taggart claimed that lease and contract agreements with outside parties made it impossible to enter into a voluntary agreement with the government. Ultimately some form of condemnation proceeding was needed.

The primary function of Camp Boardwalk was to provide six weeks of basic training. This consisted of:

1. Basic military general orders, military conduct, close order and open order drill
2. Familiarization with all standard weapons, assembly, cleaning and utilization
3. Physical Training with obstacle course
4. Gas mask training and procedures
5. Rifle range qualification
6. One week of field training

Advanced and technical training was conducted at facilities elsewhere. One form of specialized training was conducted on site. The demographic reality of the time was that many trainees were illiterate and innumerate. The 565th Technical School Squadron was activated with a mission to teach elementary reading, writing and arithmetic. The goal was to achieve fourth grade proficiency.

After approximately one year Basic Training Center No.7 was phased out of existence. The "Camp Boardwalk" name continued to be applied to subsequent Army functions in Atlantic City. The Army Air Forces Redistribution Center was established to "evaluate and reassign officers and enlisted men on their return to the United States from service overseas." Care for the wounded led to the establishment of what became the Thomas M. England General Hospital. A planned later newsletter article will cover this.

For those interested in further reading the book "Southern New Jersey: Pulling Together During World War II" by Marston A. Mischlich and Gail Mischlich is highly recommended. We have this book in the ACHS library. A vertical file folder entitled Atlantic City-Camp Boardwalk has clippings and articles.



Marching at Camp Boardwalk



Camp Boardwalk Rifle Range at Brigantine Beach

**The Atlantic County Historical Society
will be closed on the following days:**

September 21st, October 19th and November 28th, 29th & 30th

OUR REGULAR HOURS ARE: Thursday – Saturday: 10:00 – 3:30pm

Prisoner of War Bracelet



If only this bracelet could tell us where it's been. It was discovered in the midst of a jumble of merchandise collected for ACHS's June yard sale; donor unknown. Fortunately, it was brought to our staff's attention and set aside for preservation. On it is engraved, "LCDR Dale Doss, 3-17-68."

Research tells us that the bracelet was worn by LCDR Dale Walter Doss while a prisoner of war in North Vietnam's bleak Hoa Lo Prison, also known as the "Hanoi Hilton." The Birmingham, Alabama-born Doss was flying his 54th mission as a bombardier navigator on March 17, 1968, when he and his pilot were shot down and forced to eject over North Vietnam. He was taken prisoner, tortured, placed in solitary confinement for two years and imprisoned for a total of five years.

In the adjoining cell was John McCain, with whom he developed a close bond. While in solitary confinement, the two would tap code to share stories. He was caught four times and beaten by his captives as punishment, but he didn't stop. The support of his fellow inmates was crucial for survival. Half a century later, Doss still had a callous on his right forefinger from tapping on the concrete walls.

The 37-year-old father was released during Operation Homecoming on March 14, 1973, and returned to American soil on March 17th of that year, exactly five years after his capture. He retired from the Navy as a captain in 1983, a decorated veteran whose awards included two Silver Stars, two Purple Hearts, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Meritorious Service Medal and a Bronze Star. He kept in touch with his fellow POWs, including John McCain.

Though the bracelet does not have an Atlantic County origin, it now has a local home at the Atlantic County Veterans' Museum in Estell Manor.

Then & Now!

By Lynn Wood & Ellen Hyatt

Then & Now is a regular feature in our Newsletter, showcasing some of the photos in the ACHS collection.



The early Moose Lodge located at 800 Bay Avenue in Somers Point was built in 1884 with classic Victorian architecture. It became a hang out on the 3rd floor for "Nucky" Johnson during prohibition days. "It was a brothel in the 1800s where mobsters would hide massive quantities of alcohol during the days of prohibition." (*Quote from Sam Trocki, proprietor*)

It became the Moose Lodge as depicted in the early photo (left), which appears to be in the 1920s, according to the cars in the picture. *Photo courtesy Arnie and Christine Garwood.*

In other incarnations it was the Grand View Hotel, with Mrs. M. Cormey as the proprietor, then became the Point Tavern. For awhile it was run by the Latz family, who popularized the Knife & Fork restaurant in Atlantic City. In 1962, it was purchased by Ernest Corletto of Philadelphia. He ran Corletto's Marina there (bottom left), popular with local fishermen and boaters, for 35 years until it was sold to John Mayer (of Somers Point's Mayer's Marina) in 1996. Mayer was responsible for its refurbishing into a bed & breakfast style inn & marina.

The "today" photo (bottom right), taken by Lynn Wood, shows that the building is now called Tavern on the Bay. You'll notice a few changes in the renovations throughout the years.



Spotlight on the Shelves

a treasure hiding in plain sight...

By *Brittani Mazzone*

“A Collector worth his salt is a person of parts.”

Regarding the topic of antiquities, Atlantic County Historical Society has had its fair share of encounters with tools and trinkets of old. Robert J. Sim of the New Jersey Agricultural Society (1949), cleverly presented curious readers with his work entitled, *Pages From the Past of Rural New Jersey* (B-552.1). The book focuses on the importance of the preservation of everyday objects (now museum pieces) for future generations. Sim sought to bridge the gap between folklore and practical uses, highlighting craftsmanship. He states, “A wise producer of any craft, though looking forward, will be firmly seated in the works and methods of his predecessors”. Aside from the intriguing nature of the book, it could also be useful to antique dealers of sorts. Sim stresses the responsibility of the collector as becoming the authority of the object, and therefore retains a certain obligation to the integrity of the item.

The various trades of New Jersey are frequently discussed, covering everything from the Wistarburg glass house of South Jersey (which produced glass for Benjamin Franklin’s electrostatic machines) to the namesake of items such as the Barking axe (51.105.msc), to which the phrase “flying off the handle” can be attributed. Many of the items mentioned can be seen throughout the museum here at ACHS. As for wooden tools, Sim states that carpenter’s tools were cherished and passed down from one generation to another (Wood and Iron Auger 2001.004.140; Auger 68.32.wv). In essence, he stresses the appreciation of wood that comes with time, presenting a mental image of traveling down a wooden staircase, pondering all the hands that brushed the polished banister before one’s own.

As one would expect, Sim touches on the vast shore communities that engaged in trades such as clamming, eel fishing, and whaling. You can see some of these items up close at ACHS including an eel spear (88.11.1), clam rake (90.nny), clam basket (89.21.1), and even a large whale bone. An old-timer from Atlantic City made sure that Sim knew that the surf clam or “skimmer” lay in great colonies, washed up on to the shore in hordes. They are to be used only as bait and “in the makin’ of excellent flitters”. Leed’s Point was a popular spot for both professional and layman clammers. Larry and Casper Strickland would come with their day’s quota and it was remembered as a wholesome and friendly environment.

A lengthy discussion of duck decoys leads to the topic of salt meadows and the salt-hay men that fostered them. The meadows were long ago mowed with a common scythe (78.30.msc) and the salt-hay men used oxen and horses to haul their bales. The Local family of the surname Sooy from Weekstown (Egg Harbor City) favored a thin, flat, rounded cast-iron horse “mud-boots”. Cranberries and huckleberries were foraged from the bogs and collected in a cranberry basket, such as the one downstairs in our museum (55.3).

The book is written with great ingenuity and thoughtfulness. Sim makes sure to leave the reader with a pertinent message regarding the State’s substance: *“New Jersey, for all her modest square-mileage, is jam-packed with folklore, implements, and oddments hoary with age”*.

WE’RE FAMOUS!

Well, at least our clock is, sort of. Pictured nearby is our tall case clock, built in 1785, by well-known Philadelphia clockmaker, Edward Duffield, who was both a contemporary and a close friend of Benjamin Franklin. There are only 55 known, authenticated, surviving clocks built by Duffield.

A recently published book by the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia and written by noted clock historian, Bob Frishman, documents the life and work of Duffield and contains photographs of many of his clocks including ours, which was donated to us by local resident, David Jones Somers, in 1995. Yes, it keeps time and chimes perfectly, but it is wound up only infrequently so as to preserve the brass parts, some of which are wearing thin. For more information on the Duffields, visit EdwardDuffield.com. and visit us to view our gem.



GROWING NATIVE PLANTS IN OUR GARDENS

There was a packed house for local arborist Dave Parker's talk on the importance of planting native plants on your property.... on Saturday April 6th. Refreshments were enjoyed before and after the talk. Lots of audience participation and questions addressed. A very informative presentation!

Thanks Dave!



OLD NEWS

A look back at "happenings" from our old newsletters
What an amazing history we have – thanks to our
volunteers and members!

By Dale Lonkart

December 1984

Our building was closed for several months for renovation of the vault, including painting, installation of new shelves, files and lights, and a dehumidifying system.

Spring 1985

The Society received a large collection of manuscript books, newspapers and assorted papers about Egg Harbor City through the efforts of Mayor Jack Woerner, City Clerk Ellan Johns and City Council. A "Look Back" column to 1916, when the Society was 3 years old, included 12 "firsts" for the Society. We were one of the co-sponsors of the 1985 Annual Technical Seminar for Local Historians conducted by the NJ Historical Commission at Atlantic Community College.

Summer 1985

NJ Green Thumb Program awarded us a grant for a full time office worker. Julio Licata is on duty 24 hours a week, during the time we are open to the public. He wrote an interesting article in this newsletter about Atlantic City's first Little Theater group, of which he was a member. The NJ Historical Commission gave us a grant of \$500 to purchase equipment to properly dehumidify our vault.

Fall 1985

Transcription of an Article of Indenture (Nov. 24, 1831) apprenticing Ephraim Shaw, 9 years old, to Nicholas Frambes and heirs.

Need to Contact Us?

Phone: (609) 927-5218 or

Email: ACHSinfo@comcast.net

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook or on our website www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org

Newsletter Editor, Layout & Graphics : Ellen Hyatt

Contributors to this Issue:

Sid Parker, Dale Lonkart, Mike Connor

Diane Miller & Lynn Wood,

The Atlantic County Historical Society received an operating grant from the Atlantic County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs.

Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
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907 Shore Road
Post Office Box 301
Somers Point, New Jersey 08244-0301

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
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SOCIETY**



Where Atlantic County History Comes to Life



Our Mission:

- To collect and preserve historical materials exemplifying the events, places, and lifestyles of the people of Atlantic County and southern New Jersey.
- To encourage the study of history and genealogy.
- To provide historical and genealogical information to our membership and the general public.