

# ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

FALL 2025

## REST IN PEACE, JOAN

The Fourth of July is a day of celebration for the nation but, for our Society this year, it was a day of sadness when we unexpectedly lost our long-time and very devoted Museum Curator, Joan Frankel, who served us in that capacity for the past dozen years.

Joan grew up in New York City, graduated with a sociology degree from Hunter College (all girls back then) and lived in the Philly area with husband, Larry, and family before settling in Margate. Before her move to the shore, she served as President and docent of the Ebenezer Maxwell Museum, the only authentically restored Victorian house and garden in Philadelphia.

It was obvious to all who knew her that she had a great love of antiques, witnessed by her and Larry's antique business and their membership in the local Antique Collectors Club. She was also a collector and dealer of vintage jewelry and devoted much time to our museum, on site and from home. Joan also mentored and sponsored a couple graduate students on specific projects in the museum.

There are not sufficient words to say how much her absence will affect us so we'll just say, "We'll sure miss you, Joan."



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

September 27<sup>st</sup>, October 18<sup>th</sup> and November 27<sup>th</sup> thru the 29<sup>th</sup>

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

# 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.

## Yard Sale

Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup>  
8:00am – 2:00pm  
(Rain Date: Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>)

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)

## ACHS ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>  
Crab Trap Restaurant @11:30am

At the August Meeting of the Governing Board, the report of the Nominating Committee was presented and accepted. **Members will vote on nominees to the 2026-2027 Governing Board at the Annual Luncheon.** The following are presented for election at our annual meeting:

President: Sid Parker  
Recording Secretary: Babs Perry-Silva  
Asst. Treasurer: Charles Morgan  
Asst. Curator: (vacant)  
Librarian: Norman Goos

### Trustees:

Michael Connor, Tom Kinsella, James Mason, IV,  
Mike O'Brien, Heather Perez, Judith Schwartz  
Dana Shupp

Following the installation of the nominees to the governing Board, “*The “Bringing History to Life Award”*” will be presented. A presentation on *The Ascent to the Apex: Researching and Writing About Madam Sara Spencer Washington* will be made by ACHS Board Member Heather Perez, *Stockton University Special Collections Librarian/Assistant Professor in the Library, Richard E. Bjork Library.*

Contact ACHS to purchase tickets @32/each. Check Facebook or the ACHS website for more information.

## SAVE THE DATE!!



## HOLIDAY SWEET SALE

Saturday  
December 20<sup>th</sup>  
12:00pm – 3:00pm  
\$11.00/lb  
ACHS Building

*Boscov's*

FRIENDS  
& FAMILY

October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Tickets are \$5 each. Boscov's will give 25% off each store purchase to the buyer; even on sale prices. Tickets may be purchased from any ACHS Board Member ahead of time or from their table set up in Boscov's that day. ACHS is the recipient of the purchase price of each ticket.

## Member News

### IN MEMORIAM



*Joan Frankel*  
ACHS Curator  
& long-time member

## Welcome

### New Members:

Marie McGovern, *New York, NY*  
Seth Grossman, *Somers Point, NJ*  
William & Bj Adams, *New Gretna, NJ*  
Gary Sigmund, *Pitman NJ*  
Paula Demarest, *Galloway, NJ*  
(Renewed Member)

### Life Members:

Robert L. Reid, *Absecon, NJ*  
Dr. Gerald "Max" Slusher, *Somers Point, NJ*



## Donations

### FRIEND \$1 - \$49

Matthew Ward, Donald Shupp, Carol Zepfel, Joyce Poley, Betsy Naylor, Sally Pietrofitta,  
Bruce Guthrie *IMO* Leslie Anne Conover Guthrie, Jeannine Ingenito *IMO* Suzanne Smith

### PATRON \$50 - \$249

Elinor Veit, Diane Miller, Paul & Joy Tucci, Larry & Joan Frankel,  
Judith LaDrew Bayer, Virginia Lee Ellenberg, Steve Jasiocki, Mary Peterson,  
Wayne Ernst & Megan Palos, Judy Smith,  
Bruce & Barbara Aydelotte *IMO* Edward Stephenson,  
Kathleen Fritz *IHO* All Veterans, Robert D Warrington *IMO* Dudley L Phillips, Sr.,  
Elinor Veit *IMO* Richard F Veit, Charlene Canale *IMO* Cathy Berkly,  
Paul W Schopp *IHO* Thomas Kinsella, Mary Sue Lovett *IMO* Carolyn Patterson,  
George & Carol Guiliano *IMO* Pat Parker & *IHO* Sid Parker,  
Michael & Valerie Morello *IMO* Atlantic County Sheriffs, James Cimino & Daniel Conway,  
Judy Schwartz *IMO* Olga & Al Amole,  
Carol Zepfel, for purchase of lobby brochure rack

### IN MEMORY OF JOAN FRANKEL

Sid Parker, Antique Collectors Club & members,  
Dr Stephen & MaryAnn Gring, Catherine Karsten

### SPONSOR \$250 - \$1000

Tom Kinsella, for the America 250 Project, Michael O'Brien *IHO* Our Veterans  
Don Perry & Babs Perry-Silva *IMO* Carolyn Perry  
Sid Parker *IMO* Pat Parker & *IHO* Special Friends - George & Carol Guiliano

# MishMash

*a little bit of this  
a little bit of that*



The photo above, donated by Bob Warrington, is dated July 9, 1910 and shows the Wright Flyer airplane flown by Walter Richard Brookins at the Atlantic City Aero Meet when he became the first pilot to fly higher than one mile. He reached 6,175 feet, breaking his own record of 4380 feet set one month earlier. While descending from the record height his engine stopped entirely at 5600 feet and he glided to safety, landing on the beach. The airplane produced about 32 horsepower, could fly 37 miles per hour and he spent one hour, two and one half minutes in the air, with about 57 minutes in a circling ascent to the record altitude.

Brookins was the first civilian pilot trained by Orville Wright for the Wright Brothers Exhibition Team and his prize money of \$5000. was turned over to the company. For much of the time until his death in Los Angeles in 1953 he was active in the aircraft industry.

## BOOK SALE SUCCESS!!



ACHS volunteer Carol Zepful made a special donation for the purchase of a brochure literature rack. It was her idea to give our fellow historical societies a central location to advertise.

### Need to Contact Us?

Phone: (609) 927-5218 or

Email: [ACHSinfo@comcast.net](mailto:ACHSinfo@comcast.net)

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook or on our website [www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org](http://www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org)

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*The Atlantic County Historical Society has received special project grants from the Atlantic County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs.*

# Looking Back through the Files.....

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

## What Caused a Quaker Boy to become an Armed Soldier of the American Revolution?

*Editor's Note: In the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, Quakers were an early and dominant segment of West Jersey's population. Yet despite their pacifist beliefs, many Quakers took up arms for the Patriot cause for a variety of reasons. A handwritten account found in the Marion A. Reitmeyer Collection relates an incident which some believe resulted in converting Jeremiah Leeds of Leeds Point from Quaker to fighting soldier of the American Revolution. According to John F. Hall, Jeremiah himself used to tell this story in his later years about how his father, John, received an unwelcome visit from the foraging British just before the Revolution.<sup>i</sup> This story is found in ACHS Genealogy Folder 221A, p. 250.*

*Brackets were added by this transcriber.*

A British vessel entered Great Bay in full view from Leeds Point. Two barges with soldiers and sailors came ashore for fresh meat. The Captain ordered the Quaker farmer to drive up his cattle which were grazing in the meadow nearby. This was done where upon two fat steers were selected from the herd and quickly knocked in the head; their bodies quartered, loaded on wagons and taken to the barges and to the ship. "All right. That's all," was the farewell greeting of the captain to the farmer who considered himself lucky in losing so little to the uninvited visitors. The steers happened to be the personal property of Jeremiah [Leeds] and his brother, and were worth perhaps at that time six or eight dollars per head. This event had its effect in making a soldier of the Quaker boy in the War of the Revolution which soon followed.

.....  
*Editor's Note: To better understand the significance of this event, we've included some background information.*

In 1892, Anna C. Collins wrote that by the year 1676, more than 400 families of Friends had emigrated from England to find homes in West Jersey. She described them as people of "generous hospitality, sturdy integrity and quaint, gentle manners." Though the date of their earliest meeting is not known, the Friends Meeting at Leeds Point was probably established about 1698. As early as 1726, there were three places for holding Friends' Meetings in what became Atlantic County: Japhet Leeds' at Leeds Point, Peter White's at or near Absecon and John Scull's near Somers Point.<sup>ii</sup>

The Friends of Great Egg Harbor and Cape May felt greatly inconvenienced by not having a monthly meeting to manage their business affairs, and thus in 1726 they requested permission from the Quarterly Meeting of Gloucester and Salem to form their own Monthly Meeting. Their request was granted, and they were ordered to meet alternately at Richard Somers' on the Egg Harbor side and Rebecca Garretson's on the Cape May side. This union continued until 1804, when Cape May joined with Maurice River and became a branch of Salem Quarterly Meeting. From this time, the Friends on the Egg Harbor side met alternately at Egg Harbor and Galloway, often called "the upper meeting house" in the records, and were a branch of the Haddonfield Quarterly Meeting.<sup>iii</sup>

In 1744, Friends at "the upper end of the shore" submitted a request to build a meeting house. This house with its adjoining burial ground was probably "the first house for public worship in this section." It stood directly west of the present Methodist [Emmaus] church in Smithville. The two villages of Smithville and Leeds Point were apparently considered as one.<sup>iv</sup>

Into this faith-based community, Jeremiah Leeds was born on 4 March 1754 to John and Sarah (Mathis) Leeds of Leeds Point. Jeremiah's parents were life-long Quakers who both served as ministers from the Leeds Point meeting house.<sup>v</sup>

## Looking Back through the Files.....continued

By 1776, however, Jeremiah and his brother, Vincent, were angry. Though their father felt that the family had been fortunate in losing only two cattle to the British foragers, who were a constant problem, the livestock had been the boys' prized possessions. The reason for Jeremiah's conversion to armed soldier is an unverifiable family story, but we do know that the brothers' names appear in the minutes of a Monthly Meeting held at Cape May on 5 Feb 1776, when Evi Smith reported that Jeremiah and Vincent Leeds "has been in the practice of bearing armes in the military way..."<sup>vi</sup>

On 4 March 1776, at a Monthly Meeting held at Egg Harbor, Robert and Jesse Smith were appointed to visit Jeremiah and Vincent Leeds "to treat further with them and report their sense to next meeting..."<sup>vii</sup>

From the minutes of the Monthly Meeting which followed at Egg Harbor on 6 May 1776, we read that "it appears to be the sense of this meeting that Jeremiah Leeds should be disowned and testified against until he shall become sensible of his misconduct and make satisfaction to this meeting..." Jesse Smith was appointed to inform him of his privilege of appealing, while the affair of Vincent Leeds was continued.<sup>viii</sup>

About four months from its onset, the case of Jeremiah Leeds was concluded in Cape May at a Monthly Meeting held on 27 May 1776, when Jesse Smith reported that he had informed Jeremiah Leeds of his being disowned and that "he signified that he should not appeal."<sup>ix</sup>

His brother took a different path by taking the olive branch offered to him. At a Monthly Meeting held in Egg Harbour on 1 July 1776, Vincent Leeds produced an acknowledgement for bearing arms. Dated 18 May 1776, it read: "Dear Friends Whereas I have transgressed the good order of friends in bearing armes in the military service I hope Dear friends you will overlook this past transgression and I will endeavor to lead my Life and Conversation more agreeable to the good order used amongst friends for time to come this from your friend Vincent Leeds."<sup>x</sup>

Two months after his brother's acknowledgement was accepted, Jeremiah Leeds began his official military service when he entered New Jersey's 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Gloucester County militia, under Colonel Richard Somers as a private in Sept 1776. On 18 Sept 1777, he was commissioned a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. His final round of active duty was in late October 1778 following the military actions at Chestnut Neck and subsequent events. Throughout his tenure, he served under Colonel Somers.<sup>xi</sup>

Jeremiah Leeds is considered to be the first permanent resident of Absecon Island in what is now Atlantic City. He died 10 Oct 1838 at the age of 84, and is buried in the Steelman family burying ground in Northfield's Oxford Circle. He had married in 1776, as is first wife, Judith Steelman, daughter of Frederick Steelman 1<sup>st</sup>. After being disowned by his Quaker monthly meeting, he later became a Methodist church member.<sup>xii</sup>

The Monthly Meeting at Leeds Point didn't long outlive him. In 1843, it was closed. Effective 14 June 1843, the minutes state that "upon solid consideration and free expression of sentiment [we] do with much unanimity agree to propose the discontinuance of their Monthly Meeting and attach the remaining members to Haddonfield Monthly



This stone marks the site of the Friends Meeting House at Leeds Point, ACHS photo file #1408



Resting place of Jeremiah Leeds (stone on left of photo) in the Steelman Burying Ground, Northfield, ACHS photo file #948

## Looking Back through the Files

....continued

Meeting.” The meeting for worship on First and Fifth days was continued as before until about 1865.<sup>xiii</sup>

When Anna Collins wrote in 1892, the Friends’ Society of Leeds Point had been absent little more than a generation, and a few of its older residents could remember when it was in a “prosperous condition.”<sup>xiv</sup>

<sup>i</sup> John F. Hall, *The Daily Union History of Atlantic City and County, New Jersey*, 1900, p. 412, ACHS Call No. D113.1

<sup>ii</sup> Anna C. Collins, “The Friends at Leeds Point,” 1892, Atlantic County Historical Society Yearbook Vol. 1, No. 1, 1948, p. 28

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid, p. 28-29; Sarah W. R. Ewing, “Early Friends Meeting Houses in Atlantic County,” ACHS Yearbook, Vol. 9,

No. 3, 1982, p. 126-127

<sup>iv</sup> Collins, p. 28-29

<sup>v</sup> Georgiana C. Blake, “Pension Papers of Jeremiah Leeds,” Atlantic County Historical Society Yearbook, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1952, p. 203; Norman Reeves Goos, “Born a Peacemaker, Became a Patriot,” *Sojourn, Summer 2018*, p.113, ACHS Call No. So Journ B2700

<sup>vi</sup> *Abstracts from Great Egg Harbour and Cape May Monthly Meeting, p. 38, ACHS Call No. P401.8 Friends, GEH; Men’s Minutes of the Egg Harbour-Cape May Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1776-1843, Vol. II, 1973, p. 12-13, ACHS Call No. P401.8, Vol. 2*

<sup>vii</sup> *Abstracts, p. 38; Minutes, Vol. II, p. 13*

<sup>viii</sup> *Minutes, Vol II, p. 14*

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid., p. 15

<sup>x</sup> Ibid., p. 15-16; *Abstracts, p. 39*

<sup>xi</sup> Blake, p. 198-199; Goos, p. 107, 110, 113

<sup>xii</sup> Blake, p. 203, 205; Goos, p. 113-114

<sup>xiii</sup> *Men’s Minutes of the Egg Harbor-Cape May Monthly Meeting of Friends, 1726-1843, Vol. III, 1973, p. 84, ACHS Call No. 401.8 Friends, GEH, Vol. 3; Collins, p. 30*

<sup>xiv</sup> Collins, p. 28



## Then & Now!

By Lynn Wood

*Then & Now* is a regular feature in our Newsletter, featuring photos from the ACHS collection.



The early grist mill and ice house stood along the dirt path between Bargaintown and Linwood. Notice the tracks in the dirt made by the horse and wagons, the mode of transportation up to the early 1900s. In the early days before electricity, blocks of ice were cut on Bargaintown Pond, stored in the ice house and insulated with salt hay or saw dust. Farmers brought their wheat to the grist mill to get it ground into flour. Neither building remains today.

The ‘today’ photo shows Central Ave. heading into Linwood.

### Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

President: Sid Parker  
Vice-President: Cindy Mason-Purdie  
Recording Secy: Barbara Perry-Silva  
Treasurer: Charlene Canale  
Asst. Treasurer: Charles Morgan  
Financial Secretary: Ellen Hyatt

Librarian: Rev. Norman Goos  
Assistant Librarian: Kathy Fritz  
Curator: (vacant)  
Asst. Curator: (vacant)  
Chaplain: Rev. Norman Goos  
Historian: Diane Bassetti

Trustees: Ben Brenner, Mike Connor,  
Megan Ernst, Tom Kinsella,  
James H. Mason, V, Mike O’Brien,  
Heather Perez, Will Rozell, Judith  
Schwartz, Dana Shupp & Lynn Wood

**ATLANTIC COUNTY  
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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.