

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

FALL 2022

Then & Now!

Lynn Wood

Around 1870, the large home of James S. Smith (1808-1852) located on Neck Road (today's Ocean Heights Avenue) added an addition for a general store and post office. Mail was dropped off by horse and wagon and it became a popular gathering place for the locals. In 1879, Charles H. Smith took over for his father and continued until the post office closed in 1913. The store caught fire in 1927 and that part of the building had to be demolished. The residential part of the building has since been renovated and today it is the home of Ocean Heights Marina.



The early Blackman Meeting House, a small cedar planked structure built in 1814 on Andrew Blackman's land, became no longer large enough for religious meetings. So in 1821, a Building Fund was created, and a larger brick "Zion Methodist Episcopal Church" was completed in 1822. The wood from the original meeting house was used to build a shelter for the horses of weary travelers who came in their buggies from as far as 20 miles away.

Additions were made through the years but the interior remains the same as it was 200 years ago.

This is a reminder of Egg Harbor Township's deep religious history.



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

Events and Happenings

Program Logistics

Program Description

RISLEY HOMESTEAD

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



Saturdays & Sundays, 11am – 4pm

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 led by Molly Senack. Contact ACHS for details about large groups.

THE CRAB TRAP

2 Broadway, Somers Point

October 15th, 11:30am

Cost: \$32.00

Contact ACHS to purchase tickets

2022 ACHS ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Members and the general public are invited. Members will vote on nominees to the Governing Board at this time. Following the installation of the nominees to the 2023-2024 governing Board, “The “Bringing History to Life Award” will be presented.

BOSCOV'S DEPT. STORE

6725 Black Horse Pike
Egg Harbor Twp., NJ

Wednesday, October 20th 8am -11pm

Contact ACHS for Tickets

BOSCOV'S FRIENDS & FAMILY DAY

Tickets sell for \$5 each. Boscov's will give 25% off each store purchase to the buyer; even on sale prices. Tickets may be purchased from any Program Committee Member ahead of time or from their table set up in Boscov's that day. The ACHS is the recipient of the purchase price of each ticket.

Yard Sale

Saturday, September 24th
8:00am – 2:00pm

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

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



HOLIDAY SWEET SALE!

Monday, December 19th
3:00pm – 6:00pm

@ACHS
907 Shore Road
Somers Point

SHORE DINER

Present this bulletin on a Sat or Sun
and Shore Diner will donate 20% to
the Atlantic County Historic Society. Present this
on any other day, and we will donate 10%.

6710 TILTON ROAD,
EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NJ
609-641-3669

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Eat well & support the ACHS
at the same time!



Cut one out & turn it in when you pay your bill.
Thanking you, in advance!



Spotlight on the Shelves

a treasure hiding in plain sight...

By Brittani Mazzone

In the late nineteenth century, South Jersey experienced an influx of Jewish settlers due to unrest in the Russian Empire. Russia kept Jewish people alienated and oppressed by forcing them to live on The Pale of Settlement, which referred to the Western Region of the Russian Empire, where imposed restrictions upon Jews hindered most freedoms. Alliances and charitable organizations helped facilitate the immigration of Jews to the Americas. In *Growing America*, located on our shelves as (B2686), Tom Kinsella of Stockton University explores the journey of the Jewish population from Europe to our area, by way of historical context and first-hand accounts.

The Jews of the Alliance first arrived by train in Pittsgrove Township. With the help of the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society and the Leach brothers of Cumberland County, the primitive encampments turned into individual dwellings. The land was in great need of cultivation due to its sand-like composition, but help was enlisted from both local and Northeastern experts in agronomy. Although in close proximity to Philadelphia, which allowed established trade markets and access to kosher practices, many were forced to seek labor jobs during the initial harvest. By 1887, sub-settlements arose around the Alliance leading to not only an agricultural but industrial trade society. When the first naturalizations of citizenship occurred, a large portion of the Alliance community came together to pursue the same dream in Salem County.

Despite the labor-intensive lifestyle within the Alliance, it's interesting to know that pastimes such as swimming in the Maurice River or playing/watching local baseball teams were a cherished distraction from work life for all residents. New Jersey colonies of Jewish immigrants outlived any others established within the States. The preservation of archives, records, and photographs allow readers to relive this blossoming period in time.

Member News

The Atlantic County Historical Society will be closed:

Saturday, October 15th for our Annual Luncheon;

*Thursday thru Saturday, November 24-26th,
reopening on Thursday, December 1st., and*

Thursday, December 22nd through

Wednesday, January 4th,

reopening, Thursday, January 5, 2023

NOTE: OUR REGULAR HOURS ARE NOW:

Thursday – Saturday: 10:30 – 3:00pm

Welcome

New Members

Janice Cale, *Egg Harbor Township, NJ*
Ellen & Christopher Stone, *Haddonfield, NJ*



DONATIONS

IN MEMORY OF

WINIFRED "WINNIE" SQUIRES

Martha Dean Snellbaker, Sid & Pat Parker, Joan Frankel, Dale Lonkart, John Risley, Kathy Fritz,
Bill Hingston, Elizabeth Naylor, Tim & Jane Chelius, Sheryl Collins, Bob & Gwen Hagerthey
William J Hughes Tech Center Security Association,
Richard E Squires

FRIEND \$1 - \$49

Laura McArdle, Lee Ellenberg, Donald Shupp, Cathie Skinner, Paul & Joy Tucci,
Judy Braddock Smith, MaryLou Adams Crimbring,
Joyce Poley *In Honor of* her Grandchildren, Mary Sue Lovett *In Memory of:* Frank Tiemann
Gerri McGowan & Family *In Memory of:* John & Kate McGowan,

PATRON \$50 - \$249

Deborah & Lewis Barrett III *IMO* Lewis & Martha Barrett, Jr., Mary Peterson, Carolyn Patterson,
Sally Pietrofitta, Joan Frankel, Norman & Marilyn Goos, Charles Birnstiel,
Charles & Colleen Morgan, Walt & Lois Gregory, Diane I. Miller, Kathy Vitullo, Diane Bassetti,
Anne-Marie Glenn, Judith LaDrew Bayer, William T. Martin
Carol Zepfel *In Memory of:* The Zepfel Family, Elinor A. Veit *In Memory of:* Richard F. Veit,
Bruce & Barbara Aydelotte *In Honor of:* Edward Stephenson,
George & Carol Guiliano *In Honor of:* Sid & Pat Parker,
Dr. Kathleen Pullan Watkins *In Memory of:* Joyce Hampton Pullan,
Charlene Canale *In Memory of:* Edward Canale, Sr., Norma Higbee *In Memory of:* Virginia Dehn
Ralph & Marianna Larned *In Memory of:* Samuel E. Channell,
Rosemary & Michael Wallace *In Memory of:* Ellen & Richard Cain,
Dale Lonkart *In Honor of:* ACHS Volunteers, Babs Perry-Silva *In Memory of:* Carolyn Perry,
Judith Schwartz *In Memory of:* Olga & Alfred Amole
Joan Berkey & Scott Smith *In Memory of:* Kay Whitty

SPONSOR \$250 - \$1000

Sid & Pat Parker *In Honor of:* George Guiliano & All Veterans
Michael O'Brien

ANNUAL ELECTIONS

At the August Meeting of the Governing Board, the report of the Nominating Committee was presented and accepted. Members will vote for the nominees at the Annual Luncheon which will be held on Saturday, October 15, 2022 @11:30pm at the Crab Trap Restaurant in Somers Point. New Board Members will be installed at that time.

NOMINATIONS FOR OCTOBER 2022 to OCTOBER 2023

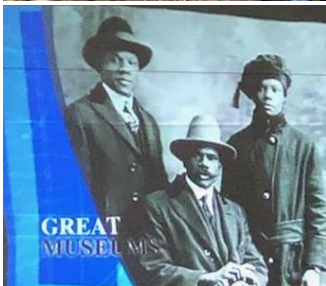
OFFICERS:

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

TRUSTEES: Lynn Wood, Will Rozell, Ben Brenner & Megan Ernst



Another successful Yard Sale at the Risley Homestead in June! Come out for a repeat performance on Sept. 24th.



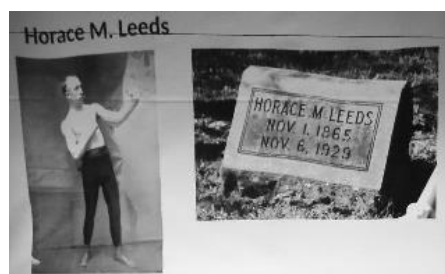
Librarian Norm Goos & Trustee Lynn Wood presenting "Coming to America through Ellis Island" in June.



Above: Sid Parker and Babs Perry-Silva man the outside sales location for the July 16th book sale; Left: Charlene Canale & Dale Lonkart keep an eye on inside transactions at the first book sale the Society has held. The first sale was so successful, another sale was held August 27th.



Left: John DiSanto and Matt Ward, authors of the book "Boxing in Atlantic City," speaking at the Atlantic County Historical Society on Monday July 11. They gave an interesting slide show presentation on the history of boxing in Atlantic City, noting in particular, Horace Leeds and Tommy Farley who were both Atlantic City natives.



Looking Back through the Files.....

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

The Relationship Between the West and Estell Families

By
Kenneth N. Scull

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of the Estell Manor article found in the Spring 2022 "Atlantic Heritage" newsletter. The mansion at Estellville mentioned throughout is currently the home of the Atlantic County Veterans Museum, 189 Route 50 South in Estell Manor. This transcription, though shortened, closely follows the typed copy on file. The full account is found in Collection Box 3B, folder 15c, Marjorie K. Cramer Collection. Items in brackets were added by the transcriber.

To gain a complete knowledge of the Village of Estellville one must study the Estell family and their relationship with another great land owner in this section in the early 1800's whose name was George West who settled in Hamilton Township between 1816 and 1820 and built the Village of Catawba and two Methodist Churches in this area of South Jersey.

The marriage of the beautiful Maria Inglis West, born about 1814 and Daniel E. Estell on September 30, 1831 was found in the old Estell Bible. Shortly after their marriage, on June 20, 1834 to be exact, after moving into their new home [the mansion at Estellville] she contracted tuberculosis and died. This couple had no children. Thereafter, Daniel E. Estell married Rebecca Smith, born 1821 and who died in 1904. Daniel died in the year 1858ⁱ and to this marriage had been born a daughter Anna Maria Estell who was born April 6, 1858 and died November 1, 1914.ⁱⁱ She married Anderson Bourgeois, born November 5, 1859 and who died on April 8, 1920. A Lawyer by profession he spent most of his time managing the large landed estate of his wife. One child, Rebecca E. Bourgeois, was born to this marriage on October 21, 1887. She had married a James Winston from whom she was divorced.

When Rebecca died in June of 1933, living alone in the Mansion at Estellville, she became ill and was unable to summon help. Having inherited the property, a strange seldom invoked rule of succession came into play at her death wherein it was necessary to trace the nearest lines of consanguinity [consanguinity] or blood lines to determine her heirs. This work was performed by Clarence G. Ledogar of South Jersey Title Insurance Company and he was several years working on this project and researching title to the lands of which she died seized. Title eventually became seized in Florence Bourgeois and her brother Dr. George Bourgeois and after Florence's death solely in Dr. Bourgeois.

At the time we were researching "Tall Pines At Catawba" in the 1960's, we happened to contact Miss Adeline Pepper an Author who was then gathering material for her book "The Glass Gaffers of New Jersey." We had written Dr. and Mrs. Bourgeois as we had their address from the Title Company records however no reply was forthcoming.

About the time our bookⁱⁱⁱ was published, a letter came from Mrs. Bourgeois who was then living in Frankestown, New Hampshire asking if she could help us and stating that my letter had been mis-placed and had just been found. It turned out the Bourgeois had trunks full of documents on the Estell family plus oil paintings and silverware some of it from the West family. Mrs. Bourgeois implored me to tell her the names of the people in the paintings "with which I have been living for 16 years."

Miss Pepper was more fortunate for she visited the Bourgeois's and most of her material on the Estellville Glass Works she got from their papers. After another rather long delay, we finally secured color pictures of the portraits, plus two black and white pictures... These were identified as

MARIA WEST who married Daniel Estell

DANIEL ESTELL

GEORGE SPENCER WEST JR.

REBECCA SMITH ESTELL

In case you are wondering how these people were verified, the artist who painted these portraits with the exception of Rebecca Smith Estell, which is a primitive, was George Washington Conarroe a well-known artist of Philadelphia (originally from Salem, N.J.)^{iv}...G. W. Conarroe also painted Edward Everett, the silver tongued orator who spoke two hours at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg. President Lincoln spoke less than 5 minutes and his Gettysburg address is remembered by everyone. Today, very few people know what Everett said that day....

Continued on page 6

Looking Back through the Files.....continued

No history of Estell Manor would be complete without mention of Daniel L. Risley.

Years ago, when the railroad came through Dorothy, Risley and Milmay, it caused a real estate boom in the area and Daniel L. Risley, a real estate promoter moved in, purchased much land from Mrs. Annie Estell Bourgeois, mapped up the area and started a boom which extended on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean for it may surprise most of you to know he had offices in Philadelphia, New York and Liverpool, England.

Daniel L. Risley, as the story goes and I believe it to be true, would have his salesmen meet the emigrants as they disembarked in Philadelphia or New York City. One Mays Landing man told me years ago that his grandparents got off the ship from Germany, were shown a beautiful map with 5 and 10 acre farm lots all fronting on a road with bi-secting streets every few miles. They purchased a farm lot from Risley and upon arriving in this area, found nothing but woods. I never did learn whether they ever found the lot they purchased.

What most of the people did not know was the fact that Risley had given back a purchase money mortgage to Mrs. Anderson Bourgeois and was selling lots left and right and not paying Mrs. Bourgeois for a release of the lien of her mortgage given to secure part of the purchase price of the land.

I should imagine several thousand of these 5 and 10 acre farm lots were sold and some owners were fortunate the lots had been released when Risley paid Mrs. Bourgeois, however others were not so fortunate....

Risley later served a prison term as a result of his real estate dealings and he finally wound up around Denver, Colorado, no doubt selling gold or silver minning [mining] stock for this type of promoter never gives up....^v

More recent years.

My neighbor's name is Frank Groeber and some years ago, Frank related an interesting fact about their land in the Risley tract near First Avenue.

Just prior to World War I, Frank's father decided the land on their farm would be suitable for growing champagne grapes. Somehow, the family raised the money and he was sent to Germany, their original homeland. Soil samples disclosed the soil from their farm was similar to the famous Rhine Valley and Frank's father spent sometime in the old Country learning the champagne business.

Upon his return home, the family immediately started planting their vines which finally reached the stage where a good crop of grapes was harvested. They made one batch of champagne and World War I ended and prohibition came into being ending the champagne making business for the Groeber family. Frank told me a bottle was placed between the weatherboards of the old house which was finally torn down 10 or 12 years ago [1965 or 1963, inferred from the 1975 date of Scull's presentation]. The Jersey sandstone wine cellar has also nearly disappeared, carried away by vandals....

My late uncle, Clark S. Barrett taught school in Dorothy around 1900 and once told me when World War I broke out, much licorice was raised in Turkey. This was used to flavor tobacco in those days and the supply having been cut off, several large corporations bought land in Weymouth Township and began to cultivate licorice. Several crops were harvested until Bethlehem Loading Company decided they needed the land, which I seem to recall was along Cannon Range Road, and another industry was nipped in the bud so to speak.

Speaking of Clark S. Barrett, when he taught school in Dorothy he roomed there during the week and would meet Anderson Bourgeois, Rebecca's father once a week when Mr. Bourgeois was in the area collecting rents. They would have lunch together and Mr. Bourgeois while a Lawyer, spent most of his time managing his wife's large landed estate.^{vi} He was good company and a good conversationalist.

Sometime prior to his death in 1921 [1920?], Mr. Bourgeois had installed a gas system in the Estellville Mansion. This system failed one night and he went to the cellar to check the trouble. Lighting a match, an explosion occurred which burned him horribly about the face. Mr. Bourgeois was scarred from this terrible burn the rest of his life and whereas he had been a kind, jovial man, his whole personality changed and he became surly and withdrawn.

Mr. Barrett often told me also of the last days of Rebecca Bourgeois...My mother visited Rebecca many times as a young girl when Rebecca would hold parties and sleigh rides at the Mansion House....

Continued on page 7

Looking Back through the Files.....continued

Living alone in the Mansion, Rebecca was taken sick and unable to summon help and was found several days after she had died. She died June 30, 1933 and was the first Mayor of Estell Manor and the first woman to become a Mayor in the State of New Jersey I have been told.^{vii}

ⁱ From the *Woodbury Constitution*, Dec 7, 1858, Deaths, Daniel E. Estell (Esq) died 10th of Nov. ult. at Estelville of consumption, age 58 - abstract in ACHS Obituary Collection.

ⁱⁱ These dates for Anna's birth and death don't match those on her tombstone (April 6, 1856 – November 1, 1919) as pictured in *South Jersey Magazine, Summer 1981*, p.11. Her obituary also appeared in the *Atlantic County Record*, Nov. 8, 1919 – abstract in ACHS obituary collection. Also, according to handwritten notes by Rebecca E. Bourgeois, Daniel E. and Martha Smith Estelle had another daughter, Martha, who died young- Bourgeois, Rebecca E., "Estell Family Genealogical Notes", p. 35. Martha is listed before "Anne." ACHS library call number: P220 Est.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kenneth N. Scull co-authored *Tall Pines At Catawba* with Clark S. Barrett, Sept. 1968. ACHS library call number C393.1. The same Mr. Barrett is mentioned later in this article as being Scull's late uncle.

^{iv} According to Barrett and Scull, *Tall Pines At Catawba*, p. 161, George W. Conarroe was Maria West Estell's brother-in-law.

^v Professor Avery Quinn of Appalachian State University authored a 40-page paper, "The Greatest Agricultural Colony on Earth," which describes how in 1894, Philadelphia real estate developer and Pleasantville native Daniel L. Risley started selling land of Estelle Colony, which he promised would be the "largest and most progressive agricultural settlement on Earth." Whether Risley was founder or fraud, in 1901, this resulted in one of the largest property lawsuits ever held in Atlantic County. The suit was filed by the Estell family, alleging that Risley had failed to repay mortgages held by the Estells on thousands of acres along the Tuckahoe River. This article was published in 2018 in *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* and is housed at ACHS in Collection Box 52, 2019.025 and on the library shelf, call number C2690. Professor Quinn spoke on this topic at ACHS.

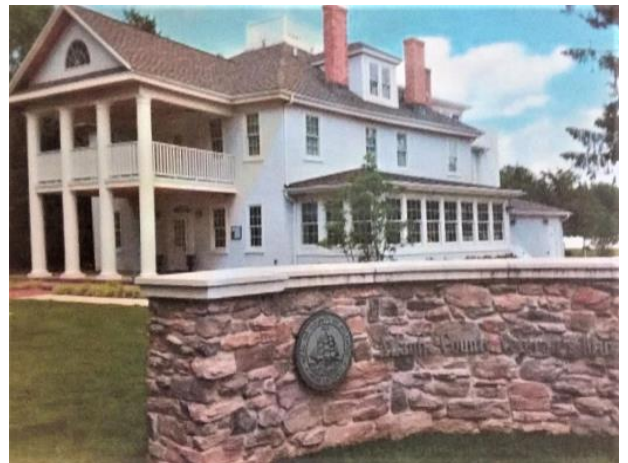
^{vi} From ACHS Obituary Collection, Anderson Bourgeois, *Atlantic County Record*, April 10, 1920, "A grad of the law dept. on the Univer. of Pa., though he never practiced, Mr. Bourgeois was held in high regard by the bar for his knowledge of realty statutes and during the purchase of the Bethlehem Steel Co. tract he negotiated many disputed titles."

^{vii} These firsts are supported in "New Jersey Women's Heritage Trail," Department of Environmental Protection, James E. McGreevey, Governor. ACHS library call number B2357.



Left: Daniel E. Estell (1801-1858) from the collection of Dr. George A. Bourgeois as it appeared in *The Glass Gaffers of New Jersey*.

Right: The Estell Mansion was built in 1832 for Maria Inglis West when she became the bride of Daniel E. Estell. It is now home to the Atlantic County Veterans Museum located on Route 50 in Estell Manor.



Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

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Assistant Librarian: Kathy Fritz

Curator: Joan Frankel

Asst. Curator: Kevin Little

Chaplain: Rev. Norman Goos

Historian: Diane Bassetti

Trustees: Ben Brenner, Mike Connor,

Tom Kinsella, James H. Mason, V,

Mike O'Brien, Heather Perez,

Will Rozell, Judith Schwartz,

Dana Shupp, Lynn Wood

Need to Contact Us?

Phone: (609) 927-5218 or

Email: ACHSinfo@comcast.net

Visit our Facebook page or website

www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org

Newsletter Editor, Layout & Graphics : Ellen Hyatt

Contributors to this Issue:

Sid Parker, Diane Miller, Brittani Mazzone

Lynn Wood & Charlene Canale

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



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.