

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

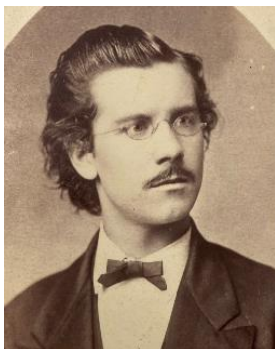
SUMMER 2023

“Having fun... wish you were here”

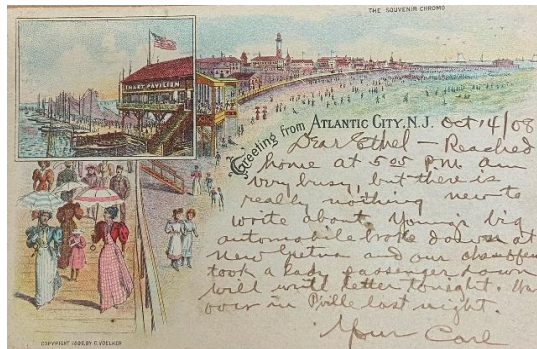
by Cindy Mason-Purdie

For fans of crossword puzzles and Jeopardy, here’s a new word to know: “deltiology” - the hobby of collecting postcards. Recently the Society was gifted by Mary Lou Crimbring a large group of postcards, mostly Atlantic City related, that were collected for many years by her mother, Helen Adams. Before we take a look at a few of the unique cards, a little history. Congress passed an act on May 19, 1898, which allowed private printers to publish and sell cards to be posted at the 1-cent rate and stipulated the rules for printing postcards. This new law went into effect on July 1, 1898. Subsequent amendments to this law were made and by 1907, postcards featured divided backs, allowing for both an address and a written message.

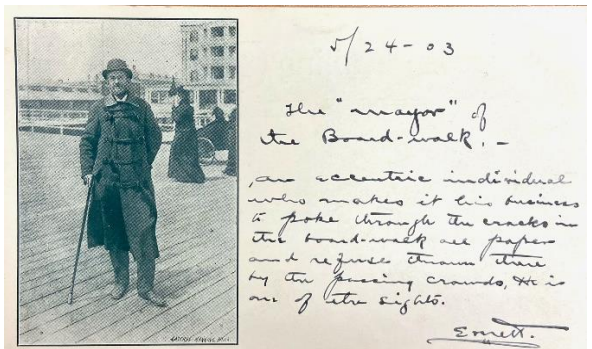
Mr. Carl Voelker is said to have introduced the color postcard to Atlantic City. This card (#1) states “copyright in 1896 by C. Voelker” at the lower left. Mr. Voelker emigrated to the US from Alsace, France in the 1870s. The 1880 census lists him living in Egg Harbor City and operating a photography business. By 1891 Voelker had moved his family to Atlantic City and was publishing a German language newspaper (with assistance from his wife Caroline) and working on the Sunday Gazette, both part of Atlantic Job Printing Co. at 1208 Atlantic Avenue. This particular card is postmarked October 1908 and sent by his son Carl M. Voelker to his wife Ethel (Higbee) a month after the death of Carl Sr.



Carl Voelker, Sr.



Color postcard (#1, above)



Black & White postcard (#2, below)

#2 is the earlier black and white type of card. Postmarked 1903, the sender’s message is intriguing: “The “Mayor” of the Board-walk - an eccentric individual who makes it his business to poke through the cracks in the boardwalk all papers and refuse thrown there by the passing crowds. He is one of the sights.” The man in the photo is John L. Young, a real estate and amusement impresario. Prior to his first real estate investment in 1885, Mr. Young had worked as a carpenter, lifeguard, policeman. At the date of this postcard Mr. Young was the owner of various properties including Young’s Hotel (later, and through many name changes, it would be known as the Mayflower Hotel and would become the first Atlantic City site of Stockton University.) He also owned Young’s Pier at the foot of Tennessee Ave on the Boardwalk which was acclaimed for twice daily net hauls of fish. This popular activity would be duplicated at his most notable property: “Million Dollar Pier” which would open to the public in July of 1906.

Continued on page 7

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. Contact ACHS for details about large groups.

THE CRAB TRAP

2 Broadway, Somers Point

October 21st @11:30am

Cost: \$32.00

Contact ACHS to purchase tickets

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 2024-2025 Governing Board at this time. Please check Facebook and/or the ACHS website for more information.**

BOSCOV'S DEPT. STORE

6725 Black Horse Pike
Egg Harbor Twp., NJ

Wednesday, October 18th 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, June 24th

8:00am – 2:00pm

(Rain date, June 25th)

and

Saturday, September 16th

8:00am – 2:00pm

(Rain Date: Sept. 17th)

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

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road

Somers Point



JULY & AUGUST BOOK SALES

Inside and outside the ACHS

Saturdays

July 15th & August 19th

SAVE THE DATE!!



HOLIDAY SWEET SALE

Monday
December 18th
(more details to come)

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

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Contributors to this Issue:

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Brittani Mazzone, Dale Lonkart & Charlene Canale

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

Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

President: Sid Parker

Vice-President: Cindy Mason-Purdie

Recording Secy: Barbara Perry-Silva

Treasurer: Charlene Canale

Asst. Treasurer:

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Curator: Joan Frankel

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Megan Ernst, Tom Kinsella,

James H. Mason, V, Mike O'Brien,

Heather Perez, Will Rozell,

Judith Schwartz, Dana Shupp,

Lynn Wood

Member News

The Atlantic County Historical Society will be closed on the following Saturdays: June 24th, July 1st, September 2nd and 16th & October 21st

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

Welcome

New Member & Returning Members

Brian Gery, *Ventnor, NJ*
Ventnor Fountain Friends, *Ventnor, NJ*



DONATIONS

PATRON \$50 - \$249

Judy Schwartz, *In Memory of: Patricia Parker*
Norman Mayall, *In Memory of: Judith Lee Reilly*



We hope you will find our Annual Appeal appealing. If not, however, we kind of understand. Sort of. Maybe. We know we're not the only organization trying to reach into your pockets, hoping to find more than just lint. We made it through this past winter without having to replace our boiler but we know we are on borrowed time. Our AC units required some hefty repairs but we seem to be in good shape now as we face the summer heat and humidity.

We'll never rival the endowment funds of Ivy League schools but your donations will help build our treasury so we can face future fiscal challenges with less trepidation.

In advance, *thank you!*



Several of our members are REALLY big newspaper aficionados. Whenever we have our old bound Atlantic City Press volumes in the library, everyone loves to browse, notwithstanding the mustiness of some volumes. There's nothing like checking out the 100-year old ads, entertainment attractions, society events or the local news throughout the county.

For all of you who are relatively local, you should be aware that we are selling these volumes—for two reasons. It costs us \$2600./year to store these newspapers offsite in a heat/temp control facility.

More importantly for all researchers, near or far, there are several newspaper sites now available, for a fee, unless you access the Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*. *Newspapers.com* is available to *Ancestry.com* members. *Newsbank.com* is fairly expensive. The Press of Atlantic City has a new offer of \$19.95 for 6 months access to their archives. We have some *Evening Union* volumes and *Gazette Reviews* also.

If you're interested, email the Society for purchase details. Generally, volumes are either \$20. or \$25. each.



ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

On Thursday, March 23, a team from ACHS delivered an exhibit and Power Point presentation to about 60 people at the Four Seasons Community Center in Smithville. The subject was “Fascinating Females of Atlantic County” in observance of Women’s History Month. The team researchers and exhibit compilers were Dale Lonkart, Carol Zepfel and Diane Miller, and Norm Goos was the presenter.

The program/exhibit has gotten a lot of exposure. It was given at ACHS on Sunday, March 5. The Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Association of University Women have incorporated the exhibit into their meetings, and part of the exhibit has been on display at the County Courthouse in Mays Landing.

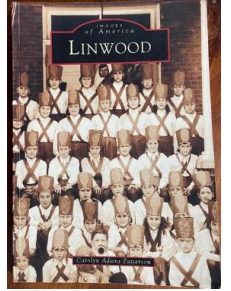


Eat well & support the ACHS at the same time!
Cut one out & turn it in when you pay your bill.

Thanking you, in advance!



On Monday May 8th, the Atlantic County Historical Society presented a video created by Linwood historian Carolyn Patterson on the history of the Linwood schools. It was made in 2008 when Belhaven School was turning 100 years old. (Built in 1908) . It was a special treat to have Carolyn and her two daughters in attendance! Judy Branin, from Linwood Historical Society, and Lynn Wood introduced Carolyn and read excerpts from her Linwood Arcadia book.



Top Left: Carolyn Patterson prior to the presentation. Bottom Right: Carolyn & her daughters, Karen & Sharon.



Have you ever been to a place where everything catches your eye? My first visit to the Atlantic County Historical Society museum was just such an experience. I wanted time, lots more time, to gawk and absorb this display of life in Atlantic County in years past. I could imagine our great grandparents’ work lives and the homes of folks in times past.

To my left, a sitting room evokes the life of a well-to-do family 140 years ago. Paintings, furniture, carpets, books and clocks provide a peek into life before radios, cars and air conditioning. Children were rarely seen or heard! I could imagine making a meal in the kitchen area. Many tools spoke of the manual labor involved in growing, gathering, and preparing food for the family. Dairy, groceries and baked goods could be sourced locally. The ice box kept food cool and canning and preserving provided variety and nourishment through cold months. Seashore residents would have enjoyed fish, shellfish and crabs.

In my imagination I could smell a freshly baked peach pie sitting on the window sill and a loaf of bread in the oven. The beautifully set table bids a welcome to family and guests. Wouldn’t it be fascinating to spend a May day at this gracious home?

Catharine M. Karsten, ACHS Volunteer

Looking Back through the Files.....

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

Editor's Note: The following story, one of tragedy and extraordinary heroism, is found at ACHS in the WPA Papers Collection, folder B-2, Brigantine-Buena Vista-Business. Its original author was A. M. Heston in his book, Absegami Annals of Eyren Haven and Atlantic City, Vol. 2, which was published in 1904. Heston's book is part of the ACHS library, shelf number D115.2 This article has been transcribed as it appears in the typed WPA copy on file.

Tragedy on Brigantine Beach

Soon after midnight on January 1, 1863, a tragedy was enacted on Brigantine Beach. It was a clear, starlight night and the moon shone bright—a night of such exceptional beauty that this fact is the first mentioned by every narrator of the appalling event. There was a party at “Bill” Holdzkom’s.ⁱ In Atlantic City there was an entertainment at the Methodist Church and almost the entire population of the new resort was present. Following the entertainment was a “watch meeting”, and the good people of the town prayed the old year out and the new year in. As some of the loiterers were wending their way homeward their attention was attracted by a big blaze on Brigantine Beach. Towards morning a messenger reached Atlantic City with a summons for Dr. Lewis Reed, the only resident physician and this messenger told of the horrors of the night.



Smith Hotel or Brigantine House



1892 Map of Brigantine – Holdzkom House is located by the red dot; Brigantine House is below Quarter's Thoro.



Holdzkom House

Jesse Gandy, a youth, the son of John Gandy, had killed Daniel Turner, another young man, at the house of Benjamin Turner, who was a-way at the time in Philadelphia, and whose wife was also absent, visiting friends at Leedspoint. Young Gandy, it was said, had called Turner to the door and invited him to go gunning. As he approached, Gandy hit him in the head with an axe. Eliza Tuner, a young woman and sister of the victim, was a witness of the crime. With rare courage, strength and alertness, she sprang forward and disarmed Gandy throwing the axe out of doors. She likewise threw out a gun that was leaning against the wall of the room, and then carried her wounded brother upstairs. While ministering to him she heard a noise on the veranda roof, and looking towards a window saw Gandy aiming a gun at her. She quickly seized a chair and hurled it at him. The same instant he fired. The chair struck him in the face, knocking him down, and the shot of his gun took effect in Miss Turner's arm. Though badly injured, she leaped out of an opposite window, and ran to the Smith Houseⁱⁱ, where she found Jere Horner, who spread the alarm. Meanwhile, Gandy set fire to the house, which burned to the ground. Daniel Turner, who had been probably mortally wounded, and Georgia Smith, a little girl sleeping in one of the upper rooms, the daughter of Mark Smith, perished in the flames.ⁱⁱⁱ

By the dawn of the day there was a large delegation of Atlantic City folk on Brigantine Beach, viewing the ruins and conjecturing as to the whereabouts of the perpetrator of the foul deed. About sunrise it was reported that Gandy's boat was a drift in one of the bays. It was cautiously approached, and its owner was found lying in the bottom, with his head nearly blown off. He had committed suicide by placing the muzzle of the gun against his head and pushing the trigger with his foot.

The heroine, Miss Turner, afterwards married Mark Smith, the father of the little girl whose life was lost in the fire. The “sharpie” with its ghastly cargo, afloat on the smooth bay, and the peaceful New Year's morning, was a long remembered picture.^{iv} What was the motive of the crime? Was it jealousy or was it greed of gold? It was a matter of common rumor that Benjamin Turner concealed gold in his house^v, and it was also

Continued on page 6

Looking Back through the Files.....continued

true that Daniel Turner had crossed the path of Jesse Gandy's love affairs. It has been said by some, that Gandy called to ask young Turner to go gunning, and by others that he was moved, not by the passion of avarice, but by that which Thomas Moore describes as "all the best and worst of man." Gandy was in love with the daughter of Benjamin Turner, but the latter objected, and on the night in question, when Gandy called at the house, Daniel Turner, his son, may have objected and ordered him away. A quarrel ensued and in his rage Gandy struck Turner with the axe.

i The 1860 U.S. Census for New Jersey, Atlantic County, Galloway, shows that "William Holdskom" was an innkeeper. (Brigantine was part of Galloway Township at this time.) His father, Isaac Holdzkom of Leeds Point (1796-1856), acquiring about 15 acres in the Steelman survey, had moved to Brigantine in 1838. Here, he established the Holdzkom House, the island's first hotel. After it was destroyed by fire in 1851, Isaac and his sons, Isaac, Jr., Charles Alfred (known as Alfred) and William (called "Captain Bill"), rebuilt a larger hotel of 50 rooms on the original site. Most of the hotel's early clientele was maritime-related, but as the 18th century progressed, it became a popular getaway for sportsmen, nationally known statesmen, business leaders and family vacationers. In 1960, Paul Burgess wrote that the land where the hotel stood is now under the sea at what would be 21st Street, North. Sources: Baker, Kimball, "From Refuge to Rescue: The Holdzkom Family Saga", p. 3, unpublished, ACHS Family Records, H Misc. #2; Burgess, Paul C., *Brigantine Beach, New Jersey*, 1960, p. 5, ACHS shelf number C-408.2; Burgess, Paul C., *Annals of Brigantine*, 1997, pages 41 and 69, ACHS shelf number C-408.3. Stored safely in the ACHS vault, is an original "Holdzcom House Guest Register" from 1886 to 1892, Manuscript Book JH 2.2.

ii The "Smith House" likely refers to the Smith Hotel, also known as the Brigantine House, which was built in 1857 by Henry D. Smith on land willed to him by his grandfather, James Baremore. The property was located between Sixth and Eighth Streets, north of Beach Avenue. While digging the hotel's foundation, Indian remains were discovered, along with tools and an acre of burned shells where the Indians had dried their clams. The hotel's menu was supplied with fresh food from a farm in Smithville, where the Smith family wintered. Once a navigational guide for mariners with 100 rooms and the destination of national political leaders, it was demolished in 1926. Sources: Burgess, *Annals of Brigantine*, p. 43; Burbank, Blanche R., "Brigantine Beach", ACHS Yearbook Vol. 1 No. 4, 1951, p. 144-145.

iii The 1860 census also shows that the key players in this tragedy were neighbors on the sparsely settled island of Brigantine: William "Holdskom", dwelling no. 1756; John Gandy, dwelling no. 1759; Mark Smith, dwelling no. 1761 and Benj Turner, dwelling no. 1763.

iv The death records of the three young people who died in this tragedy are recorded in the New Jersey State Archives in Trenton, NJ: Daniel Turner, age 20, bay men, born in Higbeeville, cause of death: fire; Georgeann Smith, age 3, born in Smithville, cause of death: fire, and Jesse Gandy, age 20, bay men, born in Smithville, cause of death: suicide. Accessed on Ancestry.com, 2 March 2023.

v For several days after the fire, "a large sum of money in gold coins was raked from the ashes where the house had stood." Burgess, *Annals of Brigantine*, p. 19.

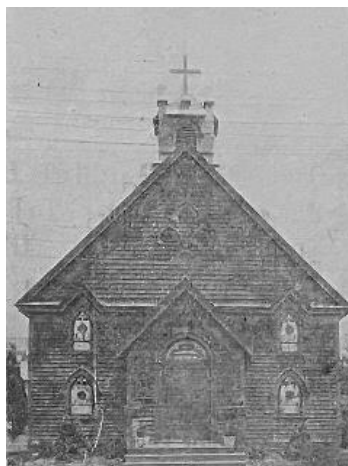
Then & Now!

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

ST. PETER'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, PLEASANTVILLE



The Church Hall where the first Pleasantville parishioners attended Mass.



Ground was broken for St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in June 1899.

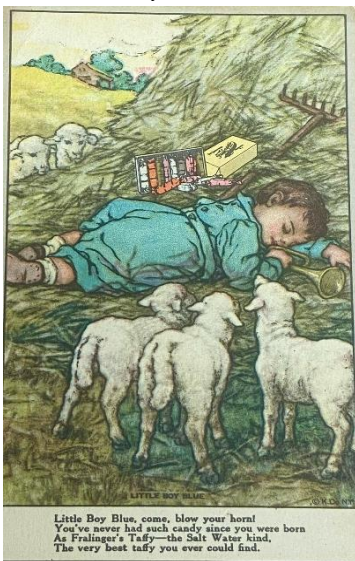


Today, St. Peter's is known as Our Lady Star of the East Mission. (Black Horse Pike & Chestnut St.)

“Having fun... wish you were here”

continued...

#3 is a sample from a series of unique early advertising cards by Fralinger's Salt Water Taffy. Displaying colorful scenes from a variety of children's nursery rhymes, each has some taffy or a candy box worked into the image. Plus the rhyme itself has been reworked to include a mention of the candy. “Little Boy Blue, come, blow your horn! You've never had such candy since you were born as Fralinger's Taffy - the Salt Water kind, the very best taffy you ever could find.” In addition, each card had a large letter printed on the reverse, (this card has a “T”) with the following directions: Anyone bringing in 24 cards the letters in the left hand corner of which spell “Fralingers Salt Water Taffy” will receive a five pound box of taffy free.



Little Boy Blue, come, blow your horn!
You've never had such candy since you were born
As Fralinger's Taffy—the Salt Water kind,
The very best taffy you ever could find.

Hoping to make a SPLASH!

An energetic group of architectural history buffs are seeking to restore the wonderful 1923 fountain in front of the Ventnor Water Works building. They are working in partnership with the City and have created a non-profit organization to accept donations for the project. Check out their website VentnorFountainFriends.org for more info or to donate.



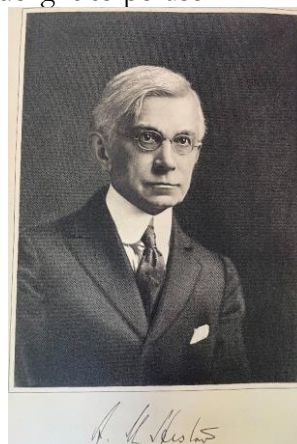
Spotlight on the Shelves

a treasure hiding in plain sight...

by Brittani Mazzone

“Atlantic City! Place of Pleasure! Haven of Rest!
Queen of the Coast!” - Sir Oracle

Before the days of travel guides and most certainly pre-dating modern means of communication, businessmen, tourists, and wanderers alike would rely on the tales of the traveler & melodies of the troubadour to enlighten them of faraway places. One of the men who embarked on a pilgrimage to Atlantic City also became one of the first in his time to create a printed visitor's companion to the area. Alfred M. Heston, born to the original Quakers from Bucks County, PA, had a career in the newspaper industry that unfolded in the Philadelphia/Camden region. After marriage to Ms. Mitchell of Camden, Heston took up residence in our fair town of Atlantic City. The late 1880's gave birth to a publication entitled, *Heston's Hand Book of Atlantic City*, which detailed sites, businesses, hotels, attractions, churches, & more. Complete with illustrations, photographs, maps, and advertisements, this was considered the ultimate travel guide to the area. Once referred to as the “new-born rival to Southern Europe,” Heston eloquently and poetically describes the hustle and bustle that was a sought-out destination for all ages. Heston's influence on Atlantic City was profound, as he was not only the city's Comptroller, but also responsible for purchasing *The Atlantic City Review & The Atlantic Journal*. His legacy lives on today as the founder of Atlantic City Hospital and the Atlantic City Free Public Library. Our library has quite the collection of Heston's guides (on our shelves as C115.1902-1904, among others); intact but delicate, and quite a delight to peruse.



**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



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**ANNUAL
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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
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.