

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

SPRING 2023

GOOD BYE, PAT



Long-time Life Member and board member, Assistant Treasurer, Patricia Parker, died December 27th, somewhat unexpectedly, after several medical issues and hospitalizations over the last 14 months. She had a good couple weeks in early December and made it to our board meeting where Lynn Wood took this photo.

Pat came to the Society in the late 90's when her husband, Sid, became president and she was the brains behind the purchase of our first two Gateway computers and our PastPerfect software for the library and museum. She stayed in the background until Charlene Canale became treasurer at a critical time in 2008. The two of them had worked together and retired from Egg Harbor Township City Hall and Pat was “conned” into the job, vowing that she’d hurt Charlene if she ever had to do her job. It only happened for a couple months this past fall while Charlene dealt with her own medical issues.

Pat’s other major contribution was as Chairman of Volunteer Training, **not**, as she claimed, because she knew anything about the various jobs but because she liked being the boss running the show and getting the veterans to do the actual teaching. When she was too busy managing her son’s business she showed Sid how to do *her* full-time Society job taking care of donations and memberships.

It appears her claim to fame was “delegater par excellence” but she brought sensible ideas, enthusiasm, dedication and some light-hearted humor to the Society. Pat will be missed by her Society family. (P.S. Applications are being accepted for the board position so hurry before it’s gone!)

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.

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point

Sunday, March 5th, 2:00pm



WOMEN'S HISTORY SHOWCASE

Wonderful power-point presentation on a few of Atlantic County's most notable women. A display on their accomplishments will be available for viewing in the upstairs museum throughout the month of March.

The eight women being highlighted are: Vera King Farris, Rebecca Estell Bourgeois, Sonora Webster Carver, Arnette Webster French, Peace Pilgrim Mildred Norman, Nellie McGurran, Anita Metzger & Madame Sarah Spencer Washington.

ATLANTIC COUNTY UTILITIES AUTHORITY

6700 Delilah Rd., Egg Harbor Twp.

Sunday, April 23rd, 10:00 – 4:00

ACUA EARTH DAY

The ACHS will have a table at the 31st annual event. Veterans History Project volunteers will be looking for veterans to interview for the Library of Congress. ACHS will be recruiting new memberships, handing out ACHS shopping bags and offering free tattoos for children.

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point

Monday, May 8th, 6:30pm

HISTORY OF LINWOOD & ITS SCHOOLS

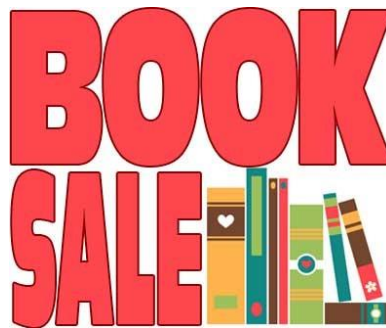
Presentation by Judy Branin, with DVD by Carolyn Patterson.

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road
Somers Point

JULY & AUGUST BOOK SALES

Inside and outside the ACHS.
Saturdays –
Dates to be determined.
Stay Tuned!!



Yard Sale

Saturday, June 17th
8:00am – 2:00pm
(Rain date, June 18th)

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

Member News

The Atlantic County Historical Society
will be closed:

Friday and Saturday, April 7th & 8th

**NOTE: OUR REGULAR HOURS
ARE NOW:**

Thursday – Saturday: 10:00 – 3:30pm

Welcome

New Member & Returning Members

Jim Schroeder, *Port Republic, NJ*
Connor Jones, *Margate, NJ*
Susan & Robert Jamrogowicz, *Linwood, NJ*
Joe Schiavo, *Northfield, NJ*



DONATIONS

FRIEND \$1 - \$49

Kathleen Connor

In Memory of: Pat Parker

Ed & Marie Borillo, Suzanne Smith

PATRON \$50 - \$249

Kathleen Pullan Watkins, Norman & Marilyn Goos, Judy & Gary Newton,
Jim & Lucille Leeds, Judith LaDrew Bayer, Charles & Colleen Morgan,
Paul Schopp, Steve Jasiocki, Joan & Larry Frankel *In Honor Of: Donald Perry*

In Memory of: Pat Parker

Michael Connor, Jeannine Ingenito, Carol Zepfel, Michael O'Brien, Lynn Wood,
Dale Lonkart, Carol Gaffney, John & Barbara Reed, Michael & Valerie Morello,
Peg McGowan & Tim McGowan, Peter Holter, Joan & Larry Frankel, Kathy Fritz,
Richard Squires, David & Donna Bozarth, Barbara Perry-Silva, Ellen Hyatt,
Richard & MaryLou Monihan, Cynthia Mason-Purdie, George & Carol Guiliano,
Charlene Canale, Diane & Tony Bassetti, Ed & Wanda Shafer

SPONSOR \$250 - \$1000

Susan Karibjanian

In Memory of: Pat Parker

Sid Parker, Alan Kligerman



**2022
HOLIDAY**

**SWEET
SALE!**

**MISH
MASH**



**SAVE THE
DATE!!**



**HOLIDAY SWEET
SALE**

Monday
December 18th
(more details to come)

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



The Suburban Policy Commission announced the placing of two men on each car.

Alfred M. Heston, author of "Jersey Wagon Jaunts", offered the profits of his publication to the Atlantic County Historical Society for a building fund, with which the society hoped to erect a building on the property donated by Edward Ryon at the intersection of Tilton road and Shore road, Northfield.

Mrs. H. J. Kendall and Mrs. Benjamin Risley raised \$137.50 to buy storm coats for Absecon firemen.

Announcement was made that the construction of the Decatur avenue school was completed. The

ATANTIC CITY PRESS 1924...

<p>SHORE DINER</p> <p>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%.</p> <p>6710 TILTON ROAD, EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NJ 609-641-3669</p>	<p>SHORE DINER</p> <p>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%.</p> <p>6710 TILTON ROAD, EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NJ 609-641-3669</p>
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Looking Back through the Files.....

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

MARY A. RIDDLE'S CHELSEA BEACH CO.

Editor's Note: As is often the case when working on a project, we were distracted off course by a 1980 article written by Bert Wilson with the title, "The Riddle Saga." On its first page, appeared a photo of Mary Riddle with a caption reading, "Mary developed and named the downtown section of Chelsea" which is now a neighborhood of Atlantic City. Unfortunately, the original publication in which this article appeared is unknown.

Knowing that this topic would coincide with March's Women's History Month, we were off and running to find out more about Mary Riddle. To help flesh out this article, several other sources within the ACHS collection were consulted. The Wilson article is found in the ACHS Vertical File – People, Politicians and Office Holders #1.

According to the article mentioned above, Mary Riddle "would have been the darling of the equal rights movement" when she formed a corporation in 1883 headed by 7 officers – all women, with herself as president. Through this company called the Chelsea Beach Company, she was largely responsible for the development of the southwest section of the city which she named Chelsea.

Mary was born Nov. 13, 1834 in Philadelphia as Mary Ann Durnell. In 1880, she moved to the seashore. Forced to look for business opportunities when her husband William died, she formed the Chelsea Beach Company on July 18, 1883 after buying options on property owned by the heirs of John C. Da Costa, Daniel Morris and the estate of John T. Alburger. Writing in 1904, A. M. Heston said the company was composed of the following ladies: Mary A. Riddle, Julia M. French, Rebecca C. Hallowell, Huldah A. Carter, Caroline E. Riddle, Julia P. Brown and Mrs. Henry Mosebach. (It is interesting to note that the 1885 Bard & Shaner's Atlantic City Directory has the home of Mrs. Mary A. "Riddell," widow, at 1 S. Pennsylvania Ave. Under the Physicians heading of the commercial listings, Rebecca D. Hallowell has the same address, though her home is listed at 1212 Pacific Ave. in the same directory.)

The women's plan was to improve the land situated just beyond what was then the southern line of Atlantic City. At that time, there was only one house in Atlantic City below Georgia Ave. which was called the Halfway House. Located at what is now Richmond Ave., it sat amongst immense sand dunes and cedar trees which characterized the island below what was then Atlantic City proper. It was a land of little market value at that time.

In his 1952 *Book of the Boardwalk*, Frank Butler said that these women ventured to develop between what are now Brighton and Montpelier Avenues, "where no man would take a chance." The original tract was later extended westward to Albany Avenue and eastward to Iowa Avenue.

Described by Heston as a woman of "keen foresight and rare business ability," he wrote that Mary believed she could establish a resort on this land that would surpass anything in Atlantic City if the proper restrictions were put in place. Her select suburb was laid out with wide streets and large lots. Those fronting on Pacific Avenue were 60 feet wide, with the corner lots 65 feet. Deeds restricted all houses to be set back at least 20 feet from the street with only one dwelling house permitted on each lot. No liquor saloon or other "undesirable places" were allowed and "stringent regulations" governed the "sanitary arrangements."

Heston wrote that the growth at first was slow. For one reason, Pacific Avenue wasn't built to Albany Avenue until 1889. He said, however, that the women succeeded beyond their expectations. At the beginning, a few very attractive cottages were built and the value of building lots saw a steady appreciation. Lots on Pacific Avenue which had sold for \$500 in 1883 were worth \$12,000 and \$15,000 in 1904. Lots on the cross avenues, south side, were worth \$6,000 to \$8,000, while on the north side the prices ranged from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

Wilson wrote that Mary originally wanted to name the suburb Argyle, but she finally decided on Chelsea, an area of England where her favorite composer lived. She also liked the "sea" in Chelsea.

In 1904, Heston described Chelsea as "the finest residential section of Atlantic City, and some of the 'cottages' are really not cottages, but seaside mansions." He summed up the suburb as "a monument to the energy and forethought" of Mrs. Mary A. Riddle.

Continued on page 6

Looking Back through the Files.....continued

Mary died in 1893 and was interred in the Atlantic City Cemetery, Pleasantville. Her tombstone, which doesn't agree with other accounts of her birth, says that she was born March 5, 1834 and died on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1893. Her son, William Riddle, who was elected mayor of Atlantic City in 1912, is buried in the same plot located in Section A-4, an older section of the cemetery.

Bibliography:

- Atlantic County Historical Society Genealogical Records Committee, *Tombstone Inscriptions of the Atlantic City Cemetery, Pleasantville, N.J. Volume 1, Sections A, B, C, D*, 1976 (ACHS Call No. P401.6 v. 7)
Bard & Shaner's *Atlantic City Directory, 1885* (ACHS City Directory Shelf)
Butler, Frank, *Book of the Boardwalk*, 1952 (ACHS Call No. C105.1)
Heston, A. M., *Annals of Eyren Haven and Atlantic City, Volume II*, 1904 (ACHS Call No. D115.2)
Souder, H. J., *Who's Who in New Jersey, Atlantic County*, 1925 (ACHS Call No. L282.2)
Wilson, Bert, "The Riddle Saga, An Atlantic City Family Dynasty," unknown publication, 1980



Above: Mary A. Riddle



Above: 1884 Map of Atlantic City showing little development below Georgia Ave.

Then & Now!

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



Incorporated in 1867 by George Wood and Sons, the Mays Landing Water Power Company and Cotton Mill manufactured fabrics from raw cotton that came in by railroad from the south. The photo on the left shows the store across the street was owned by the Mays Landing Water Power Company and operated by R.D. Wood and Sons. You could buy things necessary for daily living, clothing, fabrics, food, furniture, stoves, hay, tools, animal feed, etc. The company's employees could buy on credit with payment coming out of their wages.

Today (photo on the right), the building is the location of the (former) Masonic Temple Unity Lodge No. 96.

OLD NEWS

By Dale Lonkart

This column will appear for the next several issues of the Newsletter. It is a look back at “happenings” from our old newsletters. What an amazing history we have – thanks to our volunteers and members!

1982- 1983

Winter 1982

We established the Olive Conover Rundstrom Memorial Fund. ACHS voted \$500 to launch the Fund, hoping to reach a minimum \$5000. Librarian Elaine Abrahamson visited the Oceanville School, participating in a week long study of colonial times. Children, teachers, and 16 adults took part in workshops on subjects like storytelling, baking, candle making and woodworking. Mrs. Abrahamson dressed as a colonial housewife and told 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders about Christmas traditions brought to Galloway Twp. by settlers from other countries. Some of the children were later brought to visit us and the Somers Mansion.

Spring 1982

Two very important donations were received. The Merrigen Collection of 500 colored 34mm slides of historic sites and blueprints of the town of Belcoville with plans of workers houses. The VanSant family reunion will be at The Flanders, Ocean City, and will include a visit from about 150 VanSants to our building.

Summer 1982

The spring luncheon of the DAR General Lafayette Chapter featured a modern fashion show, accented by a special vintage fashion show in which some of our clothing was modeled by our volunteers.

March 1983

A two day book sale was planned, offering about 500 books. Proceeds will be used to purchase new volumes and supplies for our library. The Olive Conover Rundstrom Fund reached the goal of \$5000. The first applications will be available for those doing historical research. A new security system for all three stories was installed.

May 1983

We assisted the NJ State Dept. of Transportation by sharing materials relevant to Weymouth Furnace. Plans are being made to widen Rte. 559, but first a study must be done of any cultural resources that may be affected. The US Navy presented us with 22 items from the USS Somers DDG-341, which had been decommissioned.

September 1983

1983's Olive Conover Rundstrom Fund award will be presented at the annual luncheon to an Atlantic County resident whose project must involve county history or genealogy. Several volunteers were busy copying record books from the Surrogate's office in Mays Landing.

Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

President: Sid Parker

Vice-President: Cindy Mason-Purdie

Recording Secy: Barbara Perry-Silva

Treasurer: Charlene Canale

Asst. Treasurer:

Financial Secretary: Ellen Hyatt

Librarian: Rev. Norman Goos

Assistant Librarian: Kathy Fritz

Curator: Joan Frankel

Asst. Curator: Kevin Little

Chaplain: Rev. Norman Goos

Historian: Diane Bassetti

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Megan Ernst, Tom Kinsella,

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Heather Perez, Will Rozell,

Judith Schwartz, Dana Shupp,

Lynn Wood

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Visit our Facebook page or website

www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



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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.