

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

WINTER 2025



Bob Warrington, photo donor nonpareil, whose donations have appeared in our newsletters several times in recent years, presented us recently with the photo (above) taken on the Atlantic City boardwalk in 1925. The accompanying information and Letter of Authenticity stated that it was gum magnate, William Wrigley, Jr., holding the giant tube of toothpaste along with Mayor Edward Bader (second from left) and Commissioner Anthony Ruffu to the right of Wrigley. Also note the advertising in the storefront window behind the spectators.

A short time after Bob and his wife left our building, Mike O'Brien, trustee and volunteer that day, looked more closely at the photo. First, causing a few chuckles, he noticed the wording at the bottom of the "tube": Alcoholic Content 20%. We wondered if Wrigley consumers brushed their teeth with a big smile. No warning either about prohibited use by minors. Also, however, the "tube" read *Wrigley Pharmaceutical Company of Atlantic City*. This prompted Mike to Google the company.

Now, with a nod to Paul Harvey (for you old-time radio listeners), here's the rest of the story. It turns out that it was not the gum magnate, William Wrigley, Jr., on the boardwalk but a cousin, W.W. Wrigley, attempting to cash in on the name. The "imposter" formed the company in 1920, was apparently sued by the real Wrigley Company, without success, was ultimately sued by the US Post Office for mail fraud, and closed up shop in 1942. Some of the locals at the time might have said, "Yup, just business as usual on the boardwalk."

Thanks, Bob, for another great photo!

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.



HOLIDAY SWEET SALE

Saturday, December 20th

12:00pm – 3:00pm

\$11.00/lb

ACHS Building

907 Shore Road, Somers Point

ALSO FOR SALE:

**Vintage AC souvenir
memorabilia and postcards.**

**The Atlantic County Historical Society will be closed from:
December 17th through January 7th, 2026
We will reopen Thursday, January 8th
OPEN SATURDAY, 12/20
FOR “SWEET SALE” ONLY.**

March 16, 2026 6:30pm

ACHS 907 Shore Road, Somers Point

**Revolutionary Women: Women’s Experience During the
Revolutionary War. Presented by JuliaRose Violante**

A discussion of the wide-ranging hardships and tragedies women dealt with during the American War for Independence, as well as some of their invaluable contributions to the war effort, from Martha Washington down to the regular camp follower.

April 13, 2026 6:30pm

SHORE FAST LINE

ACHS 907 Shore Road, Somers Point

**Presented by Bill Elwell, *Adjunct Professor of History at
Monmouth University***

Explore the pivotal role railroads played in shaping the Jersey Shore into a sought-after destination for day trips and summer vacations.

April 26, 2026

ACUA EARTH DAY

6700 Delilah Rd., Egg Harbor Twp. 10:0am – 4:00pm

ACHS will have a table at the annual event. The Veterans History Project will be looking for veterans to interview. ACHS will be offering children’s activities.



Need to Contact Us?

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Email: ACHSinfo@comcast.net

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

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Ellen Hyatt

Contributors to this Issue:

Sid Parker, Cindy Mason-Purdie, Norm Goos, Diane Miller & Lynn Wood,
*The Atlantic County Historical Society has received special project grants
from the Atlantic County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs.*

Member News

IN MEMORIAM



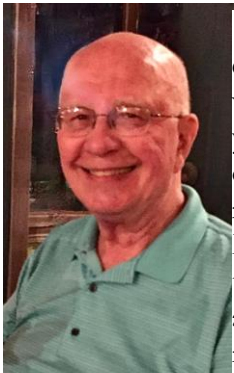
Lee Ellenberg,
Longtime Member & Volunteer
Donald C. Perry, DDS,
former Trustee & Volunteer

Welcome

NEW MEMBERS

Christine & Anthony Smith, Egg Harbor Twp., NJ
Jim Green, Northfield, NJ

Adios, Don**



Don Perry, trustee for a dozen years and my Saturday volunteer partner for those years, died at home in Northfield on November 7th, just a couple months shy of his 93rd birthday. He was especially known for three things: having an opinion and the willingness to express it, not always delicately or diplomatically, an eagerness for *me* to give museum tours while he “held down the fort” in the library and, lastly, always having a new joke or two, some even in good taste. While he had been retired from active ACHS participation for several years, he still continued his dental practice, part-time for old patients, three days a week until his passing.

Interestingly, a panoramic photo in our library shows the 1950 senior class trip members from Pleasantville H.S. at Mt. Vernon and included are Don Perry, Dick Squires, our long-time past president and Carolyn Patterson, our long-time member who was also the heart and soul of the Linwood Historical Society; all died in 2024 or 2025. Oldies but goodies. All gone but not forgotten.

****Whenever we parted over the years there was always a fist bump and “Adios.” Sid Parker**



Donations

FRIEND \$1 - \$49

Bruce & Barbara Aydelotte, Steve & MaryAnn Gring,
Jim Higgins, Judith Bayer, Tere Doebley, Jim Green,
Fred & Susan Reitmeyer, Charlene Canale
Frances Brewin, *IMO* Charles Brewin, Sr.,
Kathy Fritz, *IMO* Joan Frankel

PATRON \$50 - \$249

Ventnor Fountain Friends, Dale Lonkart,
Wayne Ernst & Megan Palos, Cathie Skinner,
Elinor Veit, Judy Schwartz, Bob & Carol Warrington,
Will & Amy Rozell, Susan & Fred Reitmeyer
Rosemary & Michael Wallace,
IMO Ellen & Richard Cain,
Cindy Mason Purdie for America 250 Project
Jerry Ueckermann, *IMO* Edward Stephenson,
Carol-Anne Heinisch, *IMO* Frank J. Ferry, Esq.,

IN MEMORY OF JOAN FRANKEL

Dale Lonkart, Cindy Mason Purdie, Colleen Basile,
Mary Rydzewski & Sarina Morrison, Diane Bassetti

SPONSOR \$250 - \$1000

Michael O'Brien
Sid Parker, *IMO* Joan Frankel & Donald C. Perry

ACHS ANNUAL LUNCHEON

At the Annual Luncheon on October 18th, the following nominees to the 2026-2027 Governing Board at the Annual Luncheon were sworn in by Mike Connor:

- 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



"The *Bringing History to Life Award*" was presented by ACHS President Sid Parker to Board Member & Newsletter Editor Ellen Hyatt.



And...a fascinating presentation on *Madam Sara Spencer Washington*, was made by ACHS Board Member Heather Perez (*& Stockton University Special Collections Librarian/Assistant Professor in the Library, Richard E. Bjork Library.*)

Washington, a cosmetics industry entrepreneur who opened Apex News & Hair Company in Atlantic City in 1913, was honored at the 1939 New York World's Fair as one of the "Most Distinguished Businesswomen" for her Apex empire of beauty products, schools, and publishing.



Washington gave back to her community and fought back against racial discrimination, whether delivering coal to her neighbors in Atlantic City, or building the Apex Golf Club in what is now Galloway Township - one of the first African-American owned golf courses in the nation.



The Library Committee wants to extend a huge thank you to all the ACHS members who helped in the present America 250 Project in transcribing handwritten Rev War pension applications. You all were incredible! Some of the originals were faded and damaged, so the team did a herculean job. The team effort transcribed 42 pension applications, some with as many as 20 pages.

We will now start to proofread them and compile the transcriptions and original images into a manual for printing early in 2026. We've decided not to include our collection of Rev War receipts and letters in the manual due to printing size constraints, but we are considering starting another similar project dealing with the Privateer records.

We'll be asking for volunteers again for that task. Below is a list of those who helped in the preparation of this first manual.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Colleen Basile | Geraldine McGowan |
| Joan Berkey | Diane Miller |
| Meagan Ernst | Heather Perez |
| Wayne Ernst | Deb Polk |
| Kathy Fritz | Bill Purdie |
| Marilyn Goos | Cindy Mason-Purdie |
| Norm Goos | Kathy Quinn |
| Barbi Harris | Mary Rydzewski |
| Sue Karibjanian | Judith Schwartz |
| Jim Mason | Joy Tucci |
| Dick McGeary | Kathleen Watkins |

**Thank
you!**

Looking Back through the Files.....

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

Editor's Note: This transcription is taken from an 8-page article which is found in ACHS Collection Box 50 (2008.128.090). It has no title [we have given it one] and it appears to be incomplete. The name of Robert Cobb is written in the top, right corner of each page, leading us to assume that he is the author. In 2024, Mr. Cobb authored a book entitled Privateers and Pine Robbers, Coastal New Jersey During the American Revolution (ACHS Call No. J1554), further pointing to the likelihood of him being the author. Information in brackets was added by this transcriber.

Jersey Privateers

Two hundred years ago the Jersey shore was not the peaceful place it is today. The American Revolution saw the heyday of the Jersey privateer. From 1776 to 1783 a host of patriots, profit seekers, and adventurers sailed from bases along the Jersey shore. In their small, swift vessels they raided British shipping, and in so doing challenged the most powerful naval establishment of their era.

Many misconceptions have grown concerning the privateers, but their swashbuckling saga is still one of the most colorful chapters in New Jersey history.

Simply put, privateers were warships, usually commerce raiders, owned and operated by private citizens. The privateers were, however, distinct from ordinary pirates. The owner or captain of a privateer vessel had to secure a "letter of marque" from either the state or Continental government.ⁱ This gave the privateer license to "...by force of arms attack, subdue, and seize all ships, vessels, and goods, belonging to the King or crown of Great Britain, or to his subjects...on the high seas..."ⁱⁱ The letter of marque also bound the privateer captain to respect the rights of neutral and friendly shipping.ⁱⁱⁱ

Courts of Admiralty were set up to oversee the capture and sale of prize vessels. This insured that the privateers were taking only vessels belonging to the enemy.^{iv}

Once the courts condemned a prize (captured) vessel as having belonged to the enemy, it went on the auction block. Once sold the profits went to the owners, captains, and crew of capturing ships in that order. Owners and captains could make their fortunes in such ventures, and if the prize were rich even a lowly cabin boy could make a tidy sum....

The large British army of Redcoats, Hessians, and Loyalists had to be supplied from England by sea. New York City was one of the most important British supply bases with most cargos being landed there, and then funneled to other locations. This meant the privateers could find many targets off the Jersey coast.

The British navy, although formidable on paper, did not have enough available ships to convoy all their merchantmen. Nor did the British have enough ships to adequately patrol the entire Atlantic seaboard. While main ports of America were at times bottled up, it was impossible for the British to watch every cove and inlet.

New Jersey offered many isolated, yet convenient, spots for the privateers to use as bases. Chestnut Neck, Toms River, Somers Point, and Cape May all served as bases in varying degrees.

Chestnut Neck on the Little Egg Harbor (Mullica) River became the most active privateer base in South Jersey. It served as a haven for not only local privateers, but the other colonies as well. Its vessels sailed as far as the West Indies in quest of prey.

The small port was well situated for its role. It was isolated from the mainland by thick forests and swamps. To approach it from the ocean one had to have a pilot experienced with the position of sand bars and the winding channel of the river. Yet Chestnut Neck was within easy wagon distance of Philadelphia where the captured cargos found a willing market....

While the larger prizes remained moored at Chestnut Neck, most of the smaller ones were taken up river to the Forks (present day Pleasant Mills). The Forks, on the last navigable reaches of the Little Egg, was another center of privateer activity. Although too far from the sea to serve as a front line port...it nevertheless played a role as a rear base. Mays Landing to the south served a similar purpose....^v

Even though there was a chance to turn a healthy profit, privateering was still a risky business. Financing the purchase and operations of a privateer required a substantial investment, one that could easily be wiped out by the sinking or capture of ones vessel.

Continued on page 6

Looking Back through the Files.....*continued*

Even an unlucky cruise that failed to turn up prizes could mean financial ruin for the owner(s).

While the owners took the risk financially, the officers and crew stood the chance of being killed or wounded in battle. Capture by the British usually meant confinement in one of the terrible prison ships moored around New York City.

Difficult to build and expensive to operate there were few large warships operated by Americans. Small sloops and schooners had long been the dominant vessel in colonial trade...With the outbreak of war many of these small craft were to be found in South Jersey. These were converted to privateering while later on others were built expressly for that purpose.

Vessels like the sloop Hornet of seventy tons burthen, mounting eight four-pounders and six swivels (small cannon), or the schooner Rattlesnake of forty tons burthen, mounting six two-pounders and six swivels, both fast sailers, were the typical South Jersey privateers. Both were based at Egg Harbor (the coastal area between the Great Egg and Mullica Rivers) and were locally owned.

The arch enemy of the privateers was the British frigate. These small warships were known for their speed and they carried from twenty-two to thirty-eight cannon...If the privateer captain was unlucky enough to come up against a British frigate, his only hope was to make a run for it...

Of course, the main job of the privateers was to capture merchant ships, but even here pitched battle was to be avoided. A battered prize would bring little money on the auction block. If ones privateer vessel were damaged, it would mean the loss of valuable sailing days while in port being patched.

The trick was to get as close to the enemy ship as possible without being recognized as a privateer. Then move in before he had time to fully react, grapple his vessel, and transfer an armed boarding party. Hopefully, a show of force would cause him to surrender without a fight, but if not, the matter would be settled with cutlass and musket.

For this reason most privateers carried a contingent of well armed marines to overpower opposing crews. Also, extra sailors were carried to form prize crews in charge of getting the captured vessels back to port.

This is not to say that full fledged naval engagements did not take place. An unyielding enemy, an armed merchantman, or the arrival of an enemy warship usually meant a fight...

Double-ended whaleboats from twenty to thirty feet long were also used by the Jersey privateers. A typical vessel of this type was the Skunk out of Egg Harbor. She had a crew of twelve men and mounted two swivels in her stern. One of her commanders was Robert Snell, a local sea captain. [Other sources name John Goldin of Cape May County and Samuel Snell of Mays Landing as commanders.] By 1779, the Skunk, as small as she was, was responsible for nineteen captures.^{vi}

The close proximity of British shipping lanes made the use of whaleboats feasible and their range could be increased by towing them...With all hands at the oars, a whaleboat might make twelve miles an hour. The crews were trained to operate as a well drilled team, and at night they could do so in complete silence and without lights. This allowed them to completely surprise enemy merchantmen...

The British tried many times to stop the privateers by destroying their bases. In October, 1778, for instance, they attacked and destroyed Chestnut Neck. Although such attacks made it more difficult for the privateers to operate, they were not successful. As late as 1783 privateers were still taking prizes off New Jersey.

The Continental Congress had authorized privateering because the colonies lacked any kind of naval power...^{vii} The many captured ships not only helped to disrupt the enemy's supply lines to America, but also served as an embarrassment to government and navy officials in London.

The large number of captures sent British marine insurance rates soaring. This caused an uneasiness among shippers and merchants who had to pay the increased costs. These businessmen then pressed the government for action, even an end to hostilities.

The cargos captured by the privateers also provided a valuable, if somewhat irregular, flow of goods to the blockaded colonies. These supplies were certainly not enough to sustain the United States' war effort, yet when everything was in short supply...the prize cargos helped to fill some of the deficiencies....

Continued on page 7

Looking Back through the Files.....continued



Left: Drawing of the privateer Rattlesnake, ACHS Collection Box 54; Right: Sugar Hill, Mays Landing, prizes captured during the Revolutionary War were stored here; ACHS Collection Box 13, folder 3

ⁱ A privateering license from Congress was preferred because it held more weight with foreign countries. “This was a factor of paramount importance in an age when a valid privateering license could be all that stood between a captured privateer and his execution as a pirate.” John F. Murphy, Jr., *Privateering Years: The Atlantic County Privateersmen in the American Revolution, 1776-82, 1983-84*, p. 12-13, ACHS Call No. J1552.

ⁱⁱ The origin of this quote is unknown.

ⁱⁱⁱ An example of a Letter of Marque issued by the Continental Congress can be found in ACHS Collection Box 28A, folder 2, Sally Shaler Le Mieux Collection. Issued on 20 March 1778, it commissioned Timothy Shaler of the County of Gloucester, as commander of the boat Chance, “to arm, equip and set forth to Sea, the said boat as a Private Ship of War, and to make Capture of Vessels and Cargoes belonging to the Crown and Subjects of Great-Britain, shall not exceed or transgress the Powers and Authorities which shall be contained in the said Commission, but shall in all Things observe and conduct himself, and govern his Crew, by and according to the same; and shall make Reparation for all Damages sustained by any Misconduct or unwarrantable Proceedings of himself or the Officers or Crew...”

^{iv} In the Court of Admiralty of New Jersey, dated 16 June 1778, the Bill of Timothy Shaler of the armed boat Chance against the British sloop Speedwell of Great Britain reads: “And the said Timothy Shaler doth...Charge that the said Sloop Speedwell was employed at the time of her Capture in carrying supplies to the Army of the King of Great Britain....Whereupon the said Timothy Shaler prays this Honourable Court that the said Vessel or Sloop called the Speedwell with her Tackle, Apparel, Furniture and Cargo may be adjudged and condemned as forfeited to the use of the captors...” – ACHS Collection Box 15B, folder 34, Thomas Camp Collection and ACHS Collection Box 28A, folder 2.

^v On 29 Sept 1778, the *New Jersey Gazette* advertised the sale of prize cargo at two locations: one at the house of George Payne in Chestnut Neck, the other in Mays Landing. All goods had been captured by the armed sloop Comet commanded by Yelverton Taylor. George Payne’s tavern, where the first-mentioned sale was held, was burned just one week later during the British raid of Chestnut Neck; unknown author, “Sales of Captured Prizes at Mays Landing, Great Egg Harbour during the Revolution,” ACHS Collection Box 13, folder 2, Kenneth N. Scull Collection.

^{vi} The *New Jersey Gazette*, in its 23 June 1779 edition, printed the following: “PHILADELPHIA, June 19 - An open boat, called the Skunk...belonging to Egg-Harbour, sent in there last Wednesday a vessel with a valuable cargo, which makes her 19th prize since she was fitted out.” – Robert Cobb, *Privateers and Pine Robbers*,

p. 385. Cobb comments that because the Skunk carried her guns in the stern to surprise her enemy, she was well named.

^{vii} The United States Navy recently celebrated its 250th anniversary marking the date of 13 Oct 1775 when the Continental Congress authorized the formation of the Continental Navy; Jeff Walter, “Strong Constitution,” *American Spirit*, Sept/Oct 2025, p. 5.

Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
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**DID YOU
RENEW YOUR
DUES IN
SEPTEMBER?**



**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.