

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

SPRING 2018

Spring Has Sprung!

According to Alfred Lord Tennyson, "In Spring, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love." Here at the ACHS, our fancy has turned to thoughts of being back in the saddle again! Things are getting back on track, post construction, and a lot is and has been happening.



Above: The Senator Frank S. Farley Exhibit has been completed and is ready for viewing.

Right: The 1820 Grandfather clock, donated by Alfred K. Frambes has been relocated to the auditorium for better viewing access.



Work on the extension of the bikepath past the ACHS is nearing completion – expected in March which should further level the ACHS parking lot.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A team from the Atlantic County Historical Society is busy preparing a program for the *Third Thursday* series at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in Oceanville, Galloway Township. The event is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., May 17 at the Forsythe visitor center auditorium. The program, *Life on Our Salt Marshes*, will be a mixed media presentation: a Power Point which will include images from the ACHS collection. as well as tangible museum artifacts.

The event is free and no registration is required. For more information, please call the refuge at 609-652-1665 or ACHS at 609-927-5218. The Power Point researchers are former librarian, Dale Lonkart, and assistant librarian, Diane Miller. It will be presented by Atlantic County historian and ACHS librarian, Norm Goos.



Salt haying, Wesley Sampson, pitching, and Isaac Steelman, loading. From ACHS image collection, folder 380.

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The Atlantic County
Historical Society
will be closed:

Friday, March 30th &
Saturday, March 31st



Events and Happenings

Program Logistics

RISLEY HOMESTEAD

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



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 for individual and small group guided tours. Contact ACHS for details.

Program Description

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point, NJ

Wednesday, March 21st

3:30pm – Auditorium – (elevator available)

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The Veterans History Project is presenting the “*Do Something to Motivate, Impact, Inspire.*” program by Pleasantville teacher and Army National Guard Veteran Tamar LaSure-Owens. Ms. LaSure-Owens is the 2018 NJEA Life Changer of the Year.

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point, NJ

Monday, April 2nd

6:30pm – Auditorium – (elevator available)

LEO B. SCHOFFER

Schoffer, author of *A Dream • A Journey • A Community: A Nostalgic Look at Jewish Businesses in and Around Atlantic City*, will talk about his book, past and present businesses and their ties to the community.

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point, NJ

Monday, April 9th

1:30pm – Auditorium – (elevator available)

VHP TRAINING SESSION

Training for all interviewers and potential interviewers.

ATLANTIC COUNTY UTILITIES AUTHORITY (ACUA)

Delilah Rd., Egg Harbor Twp. *Inside the Tent*

Sunday, April 22, 2018 - 10:00am – 4:00pm

EARTH DAY @ ACUA

The Atlantic County Historical Society will have a booth at the Earth Day EcoFair at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority's annual event, which draws thousands of adults and children. Come out to see us and get acquainted with all that the ACHS has to offer.

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point, NJ

6:30pm – Auditorium – (elevator available)

Monday, May 14th. Donna Drayton, long-time collector of wedding memorabilia, will discuss and display antique wedding dresses from different eras, along with accessories.

Monday, June 4th. Local historian Carl Farrell will discuss his book on Estell Manor.

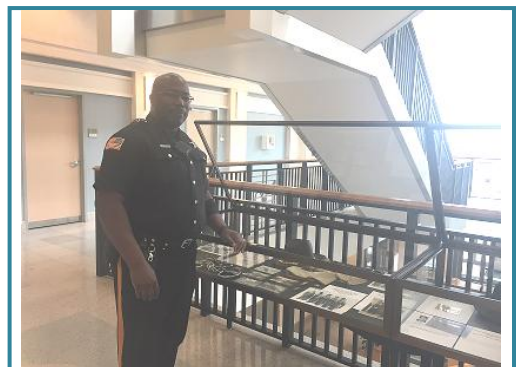


Spotlight on the Shelves

a treasure hiding in plain sight...

There are two books on the shelves that are volumes of pension records- records for the War of 1812. The records were transcribed by Virgil D. White, who also transcribed Revolutionary War Pensions. Mr. White worked with the microfilm records in the National Archives in Washington D.C. The series is based on the claims of service between 1812 and 1815. The claims for the Act of 1871 are for specific service and being faithful to the United States in the Civil War. The Act of 1878 was more liberal terms for service- to veterans and widows. For those veterans in New Jersey the books are helpful when used in conjunction with a previous Spotlight book- Records of Officers and Men of New Jersey in Wars 1791-1815. If you had someone in the Revolutionary War, you probably have one in The War of 1812!

Mary Beth Ortzman



Atlantic County Sheriff's Officer Mike Bright was a recent guest curator for two of our exhibit cases at the Courthouse. Mike has a great collection of law enforcement artifacts. This is the second time Mike has helped us with an exhibit and some of the stories that go with his collection are really interesting!

THANKS, EVERYONE

Each year during our Annual Appeal many of you step forward with your generous donations. We'd like to express our gratitude to the following members who were extremely generous this year.

Friend \$1 - \$49

William & MaryLou Crimbring

Patron \$50 - \$249

Sid & Pat Parker, Anne Ronne, Kathy Vitullo,
Cindy Mason-Purdie, Jim & Lucille Leeds

IN MEMORIAM

Andy Bozarth, Northfield, NJ



Welcome

The Atlantic County Historical Society
is pleased to welcome our new members:

Marjorie Greis-Garwood,
Egg Harbor Township, NJ
Heather & Jose Perez, *Absecon, NJ*
Dana Shupp & Lynn Curtier Rinaldi,
Egg Harbor Township, NJ
Donald K Shupp, *Palmyra, PA*
William Purdie, *Linwood, NJ*
Dr Stephen & MaryAnn Gring, *Ocean City, NJ*
Marsha Masone, *Clifton, VA*
Matthew McGrath, *Atlantic City, NJ*
Susan McCauley, *Mullica Hill, NJ*

LIFE MEMBER

Mark VanSant, *Monmouth Beach, NJ*



Library & Museum Accessions

Norman Goos, Librarian
Diane Miller, Assistant Librarian



Accession# **Source / Description**

2017.028	Gift of Keystone-Belcher Lodge # 153: Receipt - to W H Keats, Treasure of Keystone Lodge from Job Somers 1894.
2017.029	Gift of Marcie and Charles Diener : 8 Photos - Atlantic City.
2017.030	Gift of Dee Morgan: 62 Books, 16 Pamphlets.
2017.031	Gift of Benjamin Brenner: Photos - 4 Atlantic City, buttons, match books, metal pin, bank.
2017.032	Gift of Vincent Perrotta : Plaque for wagon used for transportation.
2017.033	Gift of Howard W. Gant : Book - History of the Gant / Steelman Family.
2017.034	Gift of Elizabeth Naylor: 5 Photos - 1944 Hurricane.
2017.035	Gift of John Dilks: CD - Early Radio, Atlantic City.
2017.036	Gift of Barbara A. Kluckas: 17 Photographs.
2017.037	Gift of Alvin Schaut: Postcard - Million Dollar Pier.
2017.038	Gift of Anthony Musarra: Unico booklets, certificates, letters, tickets, etc.
2017.039	Gift of E. J. Kenyon: Oster Family Genealogy.
2017.040	Gift of Molly Paes: Photos - Miss America Parade 1925, 1926, 1927. Photos - Shriner's Parade 1927.
2017.041	Gift of Jane Charles: Doll - Atlantic City mermaid doll.
2017.042	Gift of Cape May County Historical Society: Map - Atlantic City and Vicinity. Map - Atlantic City and Atlantic County 1980. Map - Atlantic City and Atlantic County 1989. Map - Atlantic City and Atlantic County 1992.
2017.043	Gift of Joseph Broski: 5000 Postcards - Atlantic City 1896 - 1929. 50 Photos - Hess Photos. Ephemera - Miscellaneous subjects.
2017.045	Gift of Judith Schwartz: Paper weight - Absecon Lighthouse , Tea cup and saucer, Atlantic City souvenir.
2017.046	Gift of Carolyn Patterson: Scrapbook - Leeds Ave. Parent Teacher Assoc. 1935 -1936.
2017.047	Gift of Mary Beth Ortzman: Book - SoJourn, Summer 2017.

Looking Back through the Files

Editor's Note: This paper about the Westcoat Free Burial Ground was transcribed from our Genealogy Files - Family Records, Kenneth N. Scull Collection, folder 123, pp. 2-5. Mr. Scull was a historian and first vice-president of the Atlantic County Historical Society in 1972.

Though filed under genealogy, the subject of a burial ground deviates from the family records one would expect to find here. While we don't know when this paper was written, we do know that it has been in the ACHS library since 1981.

This article has been transcribed as originally written with editorial additions enclosed in brackets. The footnotes were added by the transcriber.

THE WESCOAT FREE BURIAL GROUND

If someone should stop you on Main Street between the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and inquire as to the location of the Wescoat Free Burial Ground in Mays Landing chances are you could not tell him how to get there even though you would be standing practically on the spot. This name was once well known to every resident in Mays Landing. Most people in the area today believe the property between the two churches belongs to the Methodist Church of Mays Landing although this is not the case as we shall presently see.

During the Revolutionary War, Colonel Richard Wescoat [1733-1825] lived at the Forks, now the Pleasant Mills-Sweetwater area. He was wounded at the Battle of Trenton and moved to Mays Landing in 1783 where he opened a general store and also acquired an interest in two mills, one on Babcock's Creek and another mill located on Far-Away Branch of the Great Egg Harbor River about 13 miles North of Mays Landing which was called Canady Mill. Colonel Wescoat's store was close to the site of the present County Buildings [in Mays Landing] and about the year 1785, he hired a man to trim a number of oak trees near the store and for a distance of half a mile therefrom. These trees were the stately trees which surrounded the [former] Court House and vicinity.

The original ledger kept by Colonel Wescoat after he opened his store here was for many years in the possession of the late William N. Mattix of this place who was a direct descendant of Colonel Wescoat. After the death of Mr. Mattix, the ledger was kept by his widow, Mrs. Louisa S. Mattix until her death at which time it disappeared. This old account book contained a veritable census of the people living in this area from 1783 including their purchases, records of goods bartered in exchange for provisions and clothing and many other interesting entries.ⁱⁱ There seem to have been some real two-fisted drinkers in the area in those days as some purchased rum by the hogshead.ⁱⁱⁱ

Colonel Wescoat owned thousands of acres in the South Jersey area. Much of his acreage had been obtained by proprietary grants while some was represented by individual purchases. In 1812, the burying ground at Mays Landing, between the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches was conveyed by him to Elijah [or Elias] Smith, John Wicks, James Wescoat, John Wheaton, Abner Gaskill, Thomas Smith and John Steelman, Trustees, and their successors "to be chosen from time to time on the death or resignation of any of them by the surviving trustees for the express purpose of a burying ground and place of divine worship, to be used by the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Quakers and all Christian Societies, in their public or private assemblies for social and divine worship, whether in the ministry of the word or otherwise, and for a burying ground for all people without exception and for no other use or purpose whatsoever."

This deed was witnessed by John Pennington and John Williams. At one time, the original deed was in the possession of the Reverend Allen H. Brown, Secretary of the Board of Trustees.^{iv} The original deed later turned up in the records of the Union Cemetery Association but has again disappeared.^v

A building which stood on the premises at the time of this conveyance was used as a meeting house by both the Presbyterians and Methodists and also possibly by the Baptists. The building was torn down soon after the erection of the original Methodist Church which was destroyed by fire in 1887.

Bishop Francis Asbury visited Mays Landing on three separate occasions. His third and last visit was on April 17, 1809 and of this visit he wrote "The people told me (at Tuckahoe) that the time of my absence was twenty five years. I feel the heat and labor, and painful weary nights appointed to me; but God, even my God is with me. I hear of several spots where the work of the Lord is reviving powerfully. At Mays Landing, Great Egg Harbour there was power in the word whilst I lectured on Hebrews XII:25." It was undoubtedly in the original meeting house very close to or perhaps on the site of the present cemetery, that Bishop Asbury preached. Other early preachers or exhorters here were Chester Potheridge, Solomon Smallwood, George West and Samuel Herbert.

Looking Back through the Files *continued...*

The most unusual grave in the cemetery is that of Martin Snynnott [or Ssynott] who died on Monday, October 26, 1812 aged 36 years, 9 months and 29 days.^{vi} Martin Snynnott and Andrew Smiley, who is buried nearby, were partners in a counting house known as Snynnott and Smiley. This business venture was in connection with the early sea-faring trade in this area. It has been reported that Martin Snynnott lost one fortune and had re-couped much of his loss by the time of his early death in 1812. A relative, the venerable Thomas W. Snynnott of Wenonah, N.J., who built a Presbyterian church in that town in memory of his mother, offered to pay a portion of the cost of purchasing and erecting an iron fence to enclose the burial ground if the inhabitants of the town would raise the balance. The necessary sum was raised and Mr. Snynnott paid his agreed share. This is the iron fence which has for years enclosed the Methodist Church and the burial ground.

Proof that early burials before the year 1812 were made in this cemetery may be found by a very small tombstone containing the name of Daniel Frazier [or Frazer] which stands nearly in one of the small paths leading through the cemetery. Daniel Frazier was a Revolutionary War soldier who died in 1797. Should you care to verify this date, you may now find it indecipherable as I copied it many years ago.^{vii} The late Charles Woolbert of Mays Landing once said this Daniel Frazier was killed by lightning along the Great Egg Harbor River. The Frazier grave is the oldest monumented grave in the cemetery and no doubt stood very close to the earliest meeting house where Bishop Asbury preached in 1809.

Other families buried here are named Smiley, Souden, Ford, Steelman, Walker, Rape, Pennington, Penn, Polley, Skelly, Bowen, Smallwood, Kindall, McKendry, Harberts (Herbert), Vaughn, Wescott, Wescoat, Taylor, Adams, Wheaton and Austin. These names are all familiar South Jersey names. The Weymouth Furnace time books which have survived mention several burials at Mays Landing.^{viii} These burials were undoubtedly made in the Free Burying Ground.

The lot which is enclosed by an iron fence, contains the remains of the Walker family. Lewis M. Walker managed the forge at Weymouth for Samuel Richards and from about 1816 to 1840, operated the forge at South River known as Walker's Forge or Monroe Forge.^{ix} John Walker, who for many years was connected with the Trenton School for Deaf Mutes, was the last of the family in this area.

On Friday, April 10, 1846, Barker Cole, a surveyor [the words "from Port Elizabeth, N.J." have been crossed out], Lewis M. Walker and Joseph E. Potts, began the survey of the Methodist Meeting House lot at Mays Landing. This description follows: Beginning at a stone in the middle of the Highway, corner of Rejoice Treen's lot bearing from a large white oak tree on the South West side of the old grave yard, South 83 degrees West -- distance 30 links from the chimney of the Presbyterian Church, North 80 degrees West from the Westerly chimney of the Mansion house of Nicholas Rapes [Rape] North 87 degrees East and running from thence (1st) along the public road South 60¼ West 1.16 chains to a stone in the middle aforesaid road (2) North 37¼ East 2.13 chains to a stone (3) South 53¾ East 1.14 chains to the corner of Rejoice Treen's lot .15 Northwest of the corner of the old burying grounds (4) along the same South 37¼ East 2.00 to the beginning. Containing 24/100ths of an acre. J. E. Potts and B. Cole, Witnesses of the deed.

Upon attempting to protract this description, I found it did not close. The unknown scrivener who transcribed this from Barker Cole's field book undoubtedly made several errors.

In the 1890's, a record book discloses Joseph Smith, Charles Barrett and Aleck Vaughn were paid a total of \$11.12 for cleaning the Wescott (Wescoat) Burying Ground. The money for periodic cleaning was raised by soliciting residents of the town for contributions, the usual amount being .25 per person. Lucien B. Corson was Treasurer of the Board of Trustees at that time. The Trustees seem to have been active until the year 1910 or shortly thereafter when the various Trustees gradually died off and no new ones were appointed to carry out the provisions of the original trust imposed by Colonel Wescoat in the deed.

The late William S. Applegate of Mays Landing was one of the last surviving trustees.

Daniel Frazier's grave is the only known grave of a Revolutionary soldier in the cemetery. There are undoubtedly graves of veterans of the War of 1812 and several Civil War markers attest to veterans of that war resting here. As the cemetery is reported to have been filled many years ago, there has not been a burial here in the memory of anyone now living, the last recorded burial being that of Elizabeth McKendry who died in 1872. Like so many country cemeteries, no record of any burial plan has ever been found.

Looking Back through the Files *continued...*

Colonel Richard Wescoat died on March 9, 1825, aged 91 years, 5 months and 4 days but he was not interred in the ground which he had donated for the public use. His grave may be found in the Wescoat lot in the Presbyterian Cemetery.^x

The next time you walk down Main Street and a stranger asks you to direct him to the Wescoat Free Burial ground take him there, point out the old graves and land-marks, expound at length on its history -- after all, you know as much as I do about it now.

Kenneth N. Scull

ⁱ Year of birth was figured from age at death found at the end of this article using Age Calculator at freepages.family.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~fgris/brown/agecalc.html.

ⁱⁱ The ACHS library contains an old, handwritten record book of Richard Wescoat, "Surveys and Business Records", Manuscript Books, CA-1, ACHS Vault. With its last entries dated 1771, this appears to predate the account book described in this article.

ⁱⁱⁱ Definition of hogshead, 1: a large cask or barrel, 2: any of various units of capacity; especially a U.S. unit equal to 63 gallons (238 liters), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hogshead>.

^{iv} A newspaper article published in *The Record*, Feb. 18, 1882, lists the succession of the cemetery's trustees, and names the election of the Rev. Allen H. Brown as secretary in that year, "Clippings of Papers from Rev. Allen H. Brown", Scrapbook 13, ACHS vault. ACHS also houses a series of the Rev. Brown's diaries, Manuscript Book AA-1.1 (May 1836) and forward, ACHS Vault.

^v A copy of the original deed dated May 22, 1812 is in the Kenneth N. Scull Collection, f. 123, p. 7. This copy names Thomas Doughty and not Thomas Smith as a trustee.

^{vi} *Tombstone Inscriptions of Mays Landing Cemeteries*, ACHS Genealogical Records Committee, 1971, p. 94. (P401.6, Vol. 3).

^{vii} *Ibid*, p. 96 gives his date of death as July 14, 1791, aged 40 years.

^{viii} The ACHS library houses Weymouth Time Books, Manuscript Books, JB-4 (ACHS vault) and Collection Box 11B.

^{ix} Lewis M. Walker, born Aug. 16, 1791 in Oley Township, Berks County, PA, died Nov. 4, 1853, *Tombstone Inscriptions of Mays Landing Cemeteries*, p. 97. The Walker-Weymouth Collection can be found in ACHS Collection Box 32.

^x *Tombstone Inscriptions of Mays Landing Cemeteries*, p. 74.



Mays Landing Main St., bordered by the stately white oak trees – shows Methodist and Presbyterian Churches with burial ground in between. ACHS Glass Plate Negative Collection, no. 323.



The old Mays Landing Court House and the beautiful white oaks. ACHS Glass Plate Negative Collection, no. 329.

Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

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Library Corner

Norman Goos, Librarian ~ Asst. Librarian, Diane Miller

REACHING OUR COUNTY THROUGH MEDIA

“Times, they are a changin’!” says the old quote. My mother is now 95 and I suspect things are sometimes almost too much for her to comprehend. It’s the same for me. I wrote letters home when I was in the military in the 60’s. I called home in the 70’s and 80’s. I emailed and used Skype in the 90’s. I spoke to my grandchildren by my iPhone in the decade of 2000-2010. Now my grandkids and great grandkids message and text me on Face Book. To make matters tougher, now the younger ones are moving to Messenger, Instagram and other platforms. “Times, they are a changin’!”

But for most of us between 30 and 90, we’re now used to the Internet and Face Book. We’re learning that these two platforms are the media through which we need to promote ACHS, especially through Face Book, but to be honest, we’re just learning how to do it effectively. It’s one thing to put up a lot of old photos on Face Book and receive oodles of compliments. We know how to do that thanks to Jerry Gordon. But it’s still another thing to get these folks to come to the building to attend our programs and use our research facilities. It’s that process that we are now working to learn. Please help us.

We’re learning what we think is a good lesson. We tried “boosting” interesting Face Book photos to reach more people in Atlantic County. “Boosting” means we pay a small sum to have the post appear on almost everyone’s Face Book page in the area, at least those that fit the demographics of the folks that tend to visit ACHS. One of our members has anonymously donated a few \$50 gifts to pay for these 7-day boost campaigns. So far we’re averaging about 17,000 people who get our boosted posts and about 700-800 interact with them in some way. We recently boosted an advertisement with photos to spread the news about John Dilks’ “Ice Cutting in Atlantic County” presentation on March 5th. You can check out our Face Book page to see this. Just go on Face Book and search for Atlantic County Historical Society. Great photos!

So how can you help? First, you might consider donating \$50 as a designated gift to boost a post to help us in this experiment. We need to find more new members as well as get more of the public to attend our programs. Just send the check in marked “Face Book project.” Second, you might want to come out to an event and help welcome folks. A bigger crowd always looks more exciting than a small one. Our event schedule is on our Face Book page and on our web site (Publications link). Third, you might want to go on your phone, tablet or computer and “like” our Face Book page so it will link to all those on your Face Book page. This will help us reach more people and it won’t intrude on anyone’s privacy. You can also forward the ACHS posts to those on your contact list. We have 1351 “likes” as of late February and we’d like to ask you to help us get to 2000. The more “likes” we get, the more people will see our posts.

We’ll update you next quarter as to how this experiment worked. Thank you in advance and best wishes,

Norm Goos, Librarian

Need to Contact Us?

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Email: ACHSinfo@comcast.net

Visit our Facebook page or website

www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
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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.