

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

WINTER 2019

Pioneers + Power = Profit!

THE 9 EARLY AMERICAN MILLS of NACOTE CREEK

Atlantic County Historical Society's Librarian and Official Atlantic County Historian, Norman Goos, presented this program in September to a packed house!

Saw mills, grist mills and fulling mills were some of the indispensable financial engines that drove the colonial and early American economy in what we now know as Atlantic County. Almost every pond you find in the area was once the home of a mill of some sort from the very early 1700's up to at least the late 1800's.

One of the area's largest concentrations of these mills was in the Nacote Creek Watershed in Galloway and Port Republic. Nacote Creek is comprised of three beautiful feeder streams that have their sources in the oddest of places: one stream goes through Smithville, one goes through the Stockton Campus and creates Lake Fred and one meanders through the vegetable farms west of Stockton. Audience members were treated to maps, old and new, topographical and LIDAR tracking all three streams of these pristine waterways, many of which show the remnants of some of the nine old mill pond dams themselves, and photos showing the scenery along the stream beds from their sources to where they finally reach the Mullica River. Also covered was information on how these mills operated, who owned them and what they later became.

Some of the ponds see very few visitors today because most people simply don't know they exist. We wanted to introduce them to you.

This presentation was originally developed for the NJ DEP's Pinelands Short Course held at Stockton University last March. The big difference this time around is that there was absolutely no charge for those who came to learn about this fascinating piece of our local history!



The ACHS will be closed:
Tuesday, December 17th
through Wednesday, January 1st.
We will reopen on Thursday January 2nd

Enjoy the Holidays!

INSIDE THIS EDITION

Page 2 - Upcoming Events

Page 3 - Member News

Page 4 - Mish-Mash

Page 5 - SS Carolina

Page 6 - Looking Back Through the Files...

Events and Happenings

Program Logistics

RISLEY HOMESTEAD

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



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 Homestead is open for individual and small group guided tours. Contact ACHS for details.

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!



JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY SWEET SALE!

Monday, December 16th 3:00 – 6:00pm.

@ the Atlantic County Historical Society

Featuring Home Baked Cookies, Fudge, Candy & many other treats!

ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

907 Shore Road, Somers Point, NJ

January 6, 2020: 3:00 – 5:00pm
Auditorium– (elevator available)
Light Refreshments served

LOCAL AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT.

Pictures displayed will be from the South Jersey area: Sunrises, sunsets, birds, wild life, seascapes, scuba diving, pets, children; and more. At the opening reception the presenters, including Lori Jo Jamison, Kevin Little, Lynn Wood and Steve Jasiecki, will be present to discuss the backgrounds of their pictures and take orders for their works that will be available by exhibit closing day, Monday, February 24, 2020. All monies to be paid in advance.

ANNUAL VHP MEET & GREET



Left to Right: Emcee Tom Born, VHP Volunteer; VHP Volunteer Steve Jasiecki, providing some VHP history.

L-R...Alvin Zimmerman, Robert Pierce, John Large, George Cappuccio Capt. James Cali and seated, 94 Yr.Old WW1 Veteran Joe Casserta; John Large receiving his Quilt of Valor.

Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

President: Sid Parker
Vice-President: Cindy Mason-Purdie
Recording Secy: Barbara Perry-Silva
Treasurer: Charlene Canale
Asst. Treasurer: Pat Parker
Financial Secretary: Ellen Hyatt

Librarian: Rev. Norman Goos
Asst. Librarian: Kathleen Fritz
Curator: Joan Frankel
Asst. Curator: Kevin Little
Historian: Diane Bassetti
Chaplain: Rev. Norman Goos

Trustees:
Ben Brenner, Mike Connor, Brendan J. Honick, Tom Kinsella, James Mason, V, Heather Perez, Donald Perry, Will Rozell, Dana Shupp, Ruth Taylor & Lynn Wood.



AS ALWAYS, THANK YOU!

FRIENDS \$1 - \$49

Sally Pietrofitta, Walter & Lois Gregory,
Charles Birnstiel, Charlene Canale, Frances Brewin,
Wayne & Megan Ernst, Elinor Veit, Donald Shupp,
Bob & Lynne Warner, James Foreman, Kathy Fritz,
William & MaryLou Crimbring, Bob & Gail Viden,
Fred & Marjorie Garwood, Dr & Mrs Stephen Gring,
Anthony Marino & Rosalie Valenti,
Carol Anne Heinisch, Anthony & Nanette Musarra,
Steve & Gail Cooper, Joan Berkey & Scott Smith
Suzanne Smith, *In Memory Of:* Lorraine Somers

PATRONS \$50 - \$249

Lewis & Deborah Barrett III, Howard W. Gant,
Longport Historical Society,
Barbara Hart, Jim & Lu Leeds, Carolyn Patterson,
Edward Stephenson
Charles & Marilyn Gallagher,
In Memory Of: Lee Sheridan,
Kathy Biggs & Family,
In Memory Of: Rev. James Biggs
Barbara Dix Aydelotte & Eileen Dix Gosweiler,
In Honor Of: Edward Stephenson's 90th Birthday

BENEFACTORS - \$1000

Robert & Joanne Stiefbold

CONGRATULATIONS!

Norman Goos has been appointed by County Executive, Dennis Levinson, to another two-year term as Local Historian for Atlantic County. Levinson expressed his appreciation for Norm's "dedication and commitment". Way to go!!



Judge Michael Connor swears in the Officers & Trustees of the ACHS Governing Board. More pictures from the luncheon are on page 4.

Welcome

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

Sally Pietrofitta, *Linwood, NJ*
David Joslin, *Newfield, NJ*
Gary Sigmund, *Pitman, NJ*
Brendan Honick, *Linwood, NJ*
Jeffrey Amundsen, *Hamilton, MI*
Sally Reiser Simon, *Fleischmann, NY*
Carol Zepfel, *Ventnor, NJ*
Barbara Aydelotte, *Egg Harbor Township, NJ*
Rick McKelvey, *Atlantic City, NJ*
Nancy Thinschmidt, *Northfield, NJ*
Nicholas Signorello, *Mays Landing, NJ*

New Life Members

Alice G. Sheppard, *Presque Isle, ME*
Thomas Kinsella, *Absecon, NJ*

ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Members of the Governing Board were sworn in by Judge Michael Connor at the Annual Luncheon on Saturday, October 12th at the Crab Trap Restaurant in Somers Point. Officers and Trustees sworn in were: Sid Parker, President, Pat Parker, Assistant Treasurer, Babs Perry-Silva, Recording Secretary, Norman Goos, Librarian/Chaplain, Kevin Little, Assistant Curator, James Mason V, Dr. Don Perry, Heather Perez, Dana Shupp, Michael Connor and Brendan Honick

The Bringing History to Life Award was presented to ACHS Assistant Curator, Kevin Little.

Attendees were also treated to a talk on the two famous murders that happened in our local area in the '60s by William E. Kelly, author of *300 Years At The Point*. His fascinating presentation whet the whistles of all who attended as Kelly announced he would soon be writing an updated version of his book with new information on these sensational murders.

MishMash

a little bit of this
a little bit of that



Left: ACHS President Sid Parker presents Asst. Curator Kevin Little with the *Bringing History to Life Award*.
Right: *300 Years at the Point* author William E. Kelly makes a fascinating presentation to those gathered at the Annual Luncheon.



ACHS Trustee & Volunteer, Ben Brenner participated in the Wm Davies MS Veterans Military Career Day talking with 8th grade students about his 30 years of service in the U.S. Navy and Reserves.

Thanks to all who supported our recent fundraiser at The Bonefish Grill! We received a check for \$202.01!



Our building sporting newly painted trim and new vinyl balcony railing.



The Star Spangled Singers, under the direction of Joanne Gabriel entertain at the VHP Annual Meet & Greet.



Ben Brenner & Sid spent a couple of days cleaning & vacuuming out the shed at the Risley Homestead. 780 pounds of junk went to ACUA in Sid's truck. They put in two shelf units and will add two more to hold yard sale items. Despite Ben's claim, Sid actually helped in this project!

One Man's Junk...??? *The Yard Sale!*



Top Left: Sid Parker & Ben Brenner doing what they do best... goofing off.

Top Right: Sheryl Collins doing what she does best - directing Joan Frankel, Mike O'Brien & Babs Perry-Silva!

Bottom Left: Volunteer Brittani Mazzone trying to steal Ben Brenner's new man purse.

Bottom Right: Babs & Ben assisting a customer.



SON OF SS CAROLINA SURVIVOR VISITS ACHS

Federal Judge Joseph Rodriguez of Camden County recently visited ACHS to ask if he could “touch” the lifeboat oars used to row survivors of the SS Carolina to Atlantic City’s shore on June 4, 1918. He is the 88-year-old son of Mario Rodriguez, one of the survivors in Lifeboat #5 which was guided safely ashore by the lights atop the Traymore Hotel. These oars are on exhibit in our 2nd floor auditorium/museum.

This wasn’t Judge Rodriguez’s first interaction with ACHS. On Nov. 3, 2001, he was one of the honored guests and speakers at the society’s annual luncheon where a program was presented about the last voyage of the SS Carolina, a passenger steamship sunk by a German submarine in 1918. The information which follows was taken from this program.

The SS Carolina had departed San Juan on May 29, 1918 with 218 passengers and 117 crew members onboard. On June 2, a German submarine stopped the steamer and its captain was instructed to have all passengers and crew immediately transferred to the lifeboats. When the lifeboats were rowed a safe distance from the vessel, the U-boat opened fire and sank the steamer.

The ship’s 10 lifeboats were rowed in a westerly direction, but during a storm that night, two of the lifeboats (#1 and #5) became separated from the others.

The 29 survivors in Lifeboat #5 succeeded in arriving at the foot of South Carolina Avenue [a coincidence of names?] and the beach in Atlantic City on the afternoon of June 4. Crowds on the boardwalk and beach saw the lifeboat approaching and tried to help in every possible way. The survivors were given fresh clothing, meals and a place to stay until they were permitted to continue to New York, their original destination.

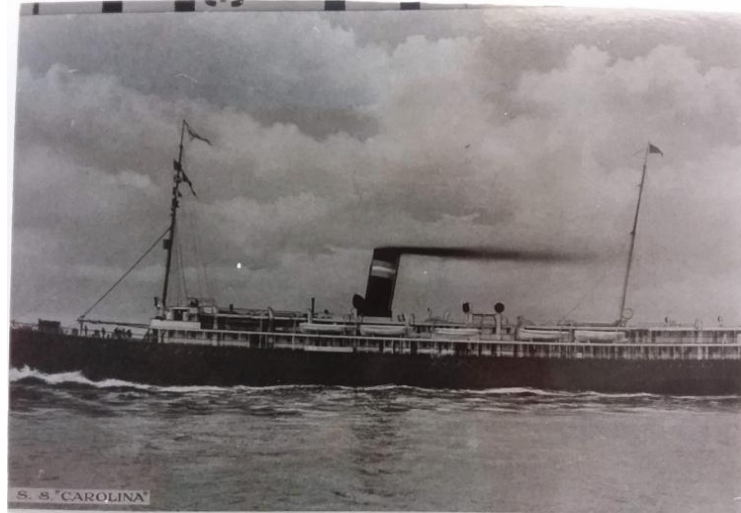
Lifeboat #5 was given to ACHS and used to raise funds for the American Red Cross and other war relief agencies.



Above: Judge Rodriguez “touching” the oar which rowed his father to safety.

Top Right: Survivors of SS Carolina on the Atlantic City beach. ACHS collection, pt. #2026

Bottom Right: SS Carolina. ACHS collection, pt. #2358



Looking Back through the Files

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

Editor's Note: Up to now, all the articles that we have transcribed for this column have been pulled from our paper files. However, as our knowledge of technology grows and our storage space shrinks, many of our newer acquisitions are being saved as digital files. This article is one such example and can be found on the Z drive of the ACHS computer in the Kemp History Collection. It's two main characters are a Revolutionary War Naval hero and a 20th century Atlantic City resident.

ELWOOD'S ROSE

A small pink tea rose with an unusual story is now on display at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis. It was the gift of a New Jersey resident who preserved the rose for over forty years. Now displayed with the John Paul Jones' memorabilia, its story began in France in 1905 when Jones' remains were brought to the United States.

Following General Horace Porter's discovery of John Paul Jones' body in Paris in April 1905 it was decided to return the body to the United States for re-interment at the United States Naval Academy. As the train carrying Jones' body passed through France on its way to the sea, the French people heaped flowers upon the coffin, one of which was a small pink tea rose approximately one inch in length and a half inch in diameter.

After arriving at the seaport the French government transported the remains to the USS Brooklyn for the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. In the days that followed, a young seaman aboard the Brooklyn named Elwood S. Horan removed two of the roses that had been placed there by the French people and placed them in individual match boxes. By the time the warship reached America the remaining flowers had wilted and were discarded. Not so for the little tea roses that Elwood had safely stored in his locker.

Following his discharge from the Navy, Horan returned to the Atlantic City area and for many years he worked as a barber in Colonel Sam Job's barber shop in the Morris Guard's Armory on New York Avenue in Atlantic City. The two little matchboxes with their still preserved contents were placed in his mother's trunk and in time forgotten about. When Elwood's mother died he rediscovered the matchboxes and on opening the first he found that the tea rose had disintegrated and all that was contained in the box was fine dust. Upon opening the other matchbox he found to his amazement that the tea rose that he had placed therein had remained in excellent condition. A second time he stored the little matchbox and forgot about it.

Years later, while visiting the John Paul Jones' crypt beneath the chapel at Annapolis, Horan casually remarked to the Marine sentry on duty there that he had saved a flower that had been placed atop Jones' coffin by the French people in 1905. Shortly thereafter he was confronted by an officer of the watch who invited him to tell his story to a higher officer. After being whisked from one office to another Horan eventually found himself in the superintendent's office. He was given a friendly greeting from the superintendent of the academy and asked to tell the story of the tea rose. Afterwards he was asked whether he would care to donate the little flower to the academy for display with the other Jones' memorabilia. Horan agreed and the flower was sent to the Naval Academy in 1948.

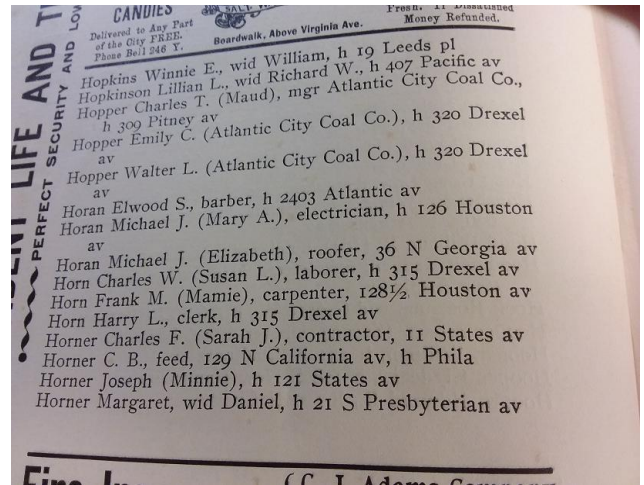
That was not the end of the story, however, because unknown to Horan his story and the flower itself were undergoing extensive investigations. By chance one day he happened to meet his old friend Captain of Detectives James Farley. Big Jim asked Elwood what he had been up to since the Atlantic City Police Department had received requests for information about him. Never associating this with the rose, Horan and Farley parted and the matter was forgotten.

Returning to the Naval Academy some time later Elwood was informed about the investigation that had been made. His service record had been gone over with extreme care and experts had confirmed the age of the tea rose, when it had last bloomed and the fact that it was native to the part of France through which John Paul Jones' remains had passed. The little tea rose was then treated in some way to preserve its color and form. Elwood received a letter dated March 5, 1951 from the Academy officials expressing regrets that his little gift had not been [previously] acknowledged in writing. Horan died about 1957 and to the day he died he liked to

Looking Back through the Files, *continued*

tell about the little tea rose that he had removed from the coffin of our greatest Revolutionary War naval commander when his remains were returning to America in 1905. John Paul Jones' remains were reinterred at the Naval Academy on January 26, 1913 and the little tea rose that had honored his memory arrived there thirty-five years later.

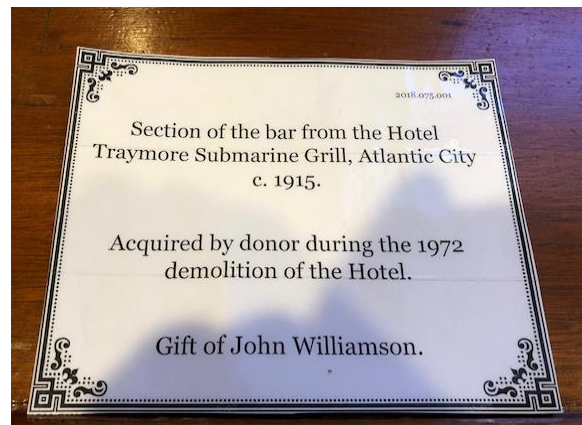
¹ Our Revolutionary War hero died July 18, 1792 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery of Paris by Pierre-Francois Simoneau, commissaur of the Paris section in which he died. Simoneau had the corpse placed in alcohol in a sealed lead coffin, hoping to preserve it till the day when America would wish to transport the remains of the great captain to her shores. General Porter, the Ambassador to France, began his search in 1899 and on April 7, 1905 a coffin was located containing an exceptionally well preserved corpse bearing a likeness to the captain. Within a few hours the body which appeared as though just buried was examined at the Paris École de Medicine by two eminent anthropologists. So well preserved was the body that physicians were able to hold an autopsy.



An image of page 256 of the 1906 Atlantic City Directory. The significant line reads: "Horan Elwood S, barber, h [home] 2403 Atlantic av".



Chuck McIlvaine, museum volunteer, with the display of daguerreotypes which he has cleaned and prepared.



The bar itself displays hotel and local restaurant items in our 2nd Floor Auditorium.

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Contributors to this Issue:

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 Lynn Wood, Norman Goos, Dale Lonkart & Diane Miller

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**ATLANTIC COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



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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.