

ATLANTIC HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Atlantic County Historical Society

FALL 2021

'TIS THE SEASON...

by Cindy Mason-Purdie

HURRICANES! The Hurricanes that arrive in a nice cocktail glass can be delightful and refreshing. Those that arrive in the sky with wind and rain...not so much. The official 2021 Atlantic hurricane season began on June 1. Mother Nature apparently no longer checks her calendar; this is the seventh consecutive year that she has whipped up a storm to form before the designated start. Forecasters are telling us to watch for above average activity this season. Speaking of above average activity, donations to the Society's collections continue at a steady pace and three recent accessions featured, you guessed it, hurricanes. Included in a large box of materials related to the Hurley-Jones Department Store, donated by Jeff MacNeill in memory of Robert Franks Jones, two photos depicted wreckage at Georgia Ave., Atlantic City from a storm that hit on Nov. 25 & 26, 1888. David Ludlum's New Jersey Weather Book notes that it was a strong late season hurricane passing well off shore but huge waves caused serious damage to shore structures and boardwalks, as well as beach erosion.



The Sept. 14, 1944 hurricane is fairly well represented in the Society's image collections, however, Lydia Bickel donated a unique photo album entitled "Daoud Brothers 1944." Numerous images illustrate extensive damage inside the art & antiques store (note the high water line) that operated at 1523 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, as well as scenes of destruction from around the city and its environs. As quoted in a 9/2/2019 *Atlantic City Press* article, Rutgers Professor Anthony Broccoli stated, *"The (storm) impact was heightened because storm surge in southern New Jersey occurred very close to high tide. Timing is everything. It produced some of the highest water levels ever recorded on the South Jersey coast. Water level at Atlantic City reached 8.84 feet above mean low water."* The United States was still in the midst of World War II. The storm wreaked havoc on military ships. Five were sunk including the Navy destroyer USS Warrington on September 13 when, as a Category 4 with sustained winds recorded at 145 mph, the storm produced 70 foot waves. More than 300 sailors were lost. While the storm caused catastrophic destruction on land, the number of deaths remained low, it is thought in part, because of the wartime civil defense warning systems in place and actively involved in warning and evacuating.



Lastly, our good friend Bob Warrington (unknown if he has a relationship to the USS Warrington) donated another photo image which happened to also be from the 1944 hurricane. It's an aerial view of damage to the Atlantic City Boardwalk at its northern end at Maine Avenue. Does anyone know if that tower, long gone now, was associated with the Coast Guard's wartime efforts?



Events and Happenings

Program Logistics

RISLEY HOMESTEAD

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



Program Description

Yard Sale

8:00am – 2:00 pm

Saturday, September 18th
(rain date, September 19th)

Many items for sale, including extra Library books. All proceeds benefit the ACHS.

THE 2021 ACHS ANNUAL LUNCHEON HAS BEEN CANCELLED...

BOSCOV'S DEPT. STORE

6725 Black Horse Pike
Egg Harbor Twp.

Wednesday, October 20th 8am -11pm

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 recipient of the purchase price of each ticket. (Contact ACHS for Tickets)



HOLIDAY SWEET SALE!

Monday, December 20th
3:00pm – 6:00pm

@ACHS
907 Shore Road
Somers Point
(Masks Required)



ANNUAL ELECTIONS

At the August Meeting of the Governing Board, the report of the Nominating Committee was presented and accepted. Members will vote for the nominees at the Annual Luncheon which will be held on Sunday, October 17, 2021 @1:00pm at the Crab Trap Restaurant in Somers Point. New Board Members will be installed at that time.

NOMINATIONS FOR OCTOBER 2021 to OCTOBER 2022

OFFICERS:

President: Sid Parker
Recording Secretary: Babs Perry Silva
Assistant Curator: Kevin Little
Librarian/Chaplain: Norman Goos
Assistant Treasurer: Pat Parker

TRUSTEES:

Michael Connor – Thomas Kinsella
James Mason IV – Heather Perez
Donald Perry – Dana Shupp
Michael O'Brien – Judith Schwartz

CANCELLED

Need to Contact Us?

Phone: (609) 927-5218 or

Email: ACHSinfo@comcast.net

Visit our Facebook page or website

www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org

Newsletter Editor, Layout & Graphics : Ellen Hyatt

Contributors to this Issue:

Sid & Pat Parker, Cindy Mason-Purdie,
Diane Miller, Brittani Mazzone & Charlene Canale

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



FRIEND \$1 - \$49

Joan Frankel, Ed & Barbara Kroger, Joyce Poley,
Sheryl Collins, Lee Ellenberg
Donald Shupp, *In Memory of:* Arlene Shupp
Bruce Guthrie,
In Memory of: Leslie A Conover Guthrie
Carla Welsh, *In Memory of:* Vernon Headley &
In Honor of: Ronald Charles Headley
Bruce & Barbara Aydelotte,
In Honor of: Edward Stephenson
Frances Brewin, *In Memory of:* Charles D. Brewin, Sr.

PATRON \$50 - \$249

Michael Connor, Bill Purdie and Cynthia Mason-
Purdie, Charles Birnstiel, Bob & Lynne Warner,
Robert Barnett, Walter & Lois Gregory,
Mary J Peterson, Anne-Marie Glenn,
Marilyn & Charles Gallagher, Wayne & Megan Ernst,
Diane Bassetti, Judith LaDrew Bayer, Paul Schopp,
Norman & Marilyn Goos, Diane Miller
Carol-Anne Heinisch, Edith Delcher,
Maria & Charles Dupras
Richard & Winnie Squires,
In Memory of: Joanne Stiefbold
Kathy & Bill Fritz, *In Memory of:* those who are gone
& *In Honor of:* those still to come
George & Carol Guiliano,
In Honor of: Sid & Pat Parker
Norma Higbee, *In Memory of:* Virginia Dehn
Charlene Canale *In Memory of:* Edward Canale
Elinor A Veit, *In Memory of:* Richard F Veit
Ben Brenner, *In Memory of:* Acilla Risley

Welcome

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

Robert Malagoli, *Margate, NJ*
Dawn Burke Sena, *Phila., PA*
Dr. Kathleen Pullan Watkins, *Phila., PA*
Kirk Mayer, *Beesley's Pt., NJ*

PATRON \$50 - \$249 (continued)

Lewis & Deborah Barrett III,
In Memory of: Lewis & Martha Barrett
Carol Zepfel, *In Memory of:* Chuck Zepfel
MarySue Lovett,
In Honor of: Volunteers Everywhere
Will Rozell, *In Memory of:* Ken Smith
Joan Berkey & Scott Smith,
In Memory of: Kay Whitty
Babs Perry-Silva, *In Memory of:* Carolyn Perry
Judy Schwartz, *In Memory of:* Al & Olga Amole

SPONSOR \$250 - \$1000

Michael O'Brien, Kathy Quinn
Sid & Pat Parker
In Honor of: George Guiliano and all veterans
Donald Perry *In Memory of:* Carolyn Perry
Dale Lonkart,
In Honor of: all our volunteers, past & present

COVID UPDATE... As a result of the increasing spread and severity of the Delta variant, the Governing Board at its August meeting unanimously decided to remain closed to the public until further notice. Researchers can still make appointments by email ONLY. Please check Facebook and/or our website for updates.

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
Assistant Librarian: Kathy Friitz
Curator: Joan Frankel
Asst. Curator: Kevin Little
Chaplain: Rev. Norman Goos

Trustees: Ben Brenner, Mike Connor,
Brendan J. Honick, Tom Kinsella,
James H. Mason, V, Heather Perez,
Donald Perry, Will Rozell, Dana Shupp,
Lynn Wood & Diane Bassetti, *Historian*

Looking Back through the Files.....

Transcribed by Diane J. Miller

Then and Now

By

Lewis Evans

President of the Second National Bank, Atlantic City, N.J.

1922

Editor's Note: This article was most likely an oral presentation given by Lewis Evans in 1922 before an unknown audience (possibly ACHS). In addition to being a bank president, Mr. Evans spoke of himself as a mail carrier, water and ice vendor, telegraph operator, and family man - all related with a touch of humor.

Its original, 6+ legal-size page length has been shortened, not only for space considerations, but also because some of its content might not be viewed as politically correct 99 years after it was written. The full article can be viewed at ACHS in Collection Box 20A, folder 14, Blake-Smick Collection.

Atlantic City was incorporated in 1854. Only 18 votes were cast. Counting five to a voter, would make the population ninety. Seven years later the population was 500. Now it is 50,000.

When I first came here to live there was one railroad (The Camden and Atlantic). It was a single track road, with gravel roadbed, making it very dusty. Wood was used for fuel for the engines, making it very smoky. Water was taken from tanks along the road. It took about two hours and a-half to make the run from Coopers Point, Camden. The fare was four dollars for the round trip, or two dollars one way. Cottagers were sold yearly tickets for fifty dollars. One train came down in the morning and one in the evening; and one left in the morning and one in the afternoon, except when storm tides came, which was pretty often, or a heavy snowstorm, which would be sure to block the road at Chamberlains Cut (just this side of Absecon). Then, trains came and left when they could; sometimes in a day, sometimes in a week. I have known it to be two weeks during such times. I carried the mail to and from Absecon by hand-car and on foot. The tracks were rarely washed away, but they would be covered with sea trash after every storm tide, which had to be removed with pitch forks.

Now, there are three double track railroads with all modern equipments and trains make the run in one hour. The tracks are all elevated above the meadows so that tides do not affect them.

There was no drive road. The only way to leave the island was to walk the railroad, take a boat, or by the cars. Now there are three nice wide boulevards. One to Pleasantville, which is covered with Warrenite; one to Somers Point; and one to Absecon, which are covered with gravel, but which will soon be covered with Warrenite, if the Board of Freeholders have their way – but not, if Mr. Samuel Leeds has his.

The railroad station was a long building extending from South Carolina to North Carolina Avenue, covering two tracks. It contained a small ticket and telegraph office and a very small waiting room for passengers, and a room for freight....Above these were rooms for living purposes and above these was a high tower which was a good lookout for trains delayed on the meadows and wrecks along the beach, as it afforded a clear view of the whole island, beach and meadows.

This depot remained until the Centennial 1876....It was then removed on rollers up Atlantic Avenue to Rhode Island Avenue, thence to New Hampshire and Arctic and used as a stable for mules, which were the motive power of the street cars from the Inlet to the Excursion House until the trolley cars were put in operation. The mule cars were not operated in the winter. The mules for many years were turned loose down in the sand hills where Margate is; and in the spring they would come up looking fine.....

One of the most popular hotels was Schauflers, situated near the depot. It was a great resort for beer lovers. Whenever a fresh keg was tapped, which was pretty often, a bell was rung, when cottagers and guests from other hotels would flock there to quench their thirst. On the porch of this hotel they used to sit for hours playing cards and other games. One of these games was with four people sitting at a table with a piece of cut sugar in front of each player. They would then keep perfectly quiet, and whichever piece of sugar a fly alighted on first the owner of the piece of sugar had to buy the beer for the four. They got their beer quite often, as flies were pretty thick there being no sewers then. The game I think much nicer than bridge, for you got a prize whether you won or lost, and no hard feelings.

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

The water for drinking, and all other purposes, was rain water caught from the roofs and was stored in cisterns and barrels. With no sewer and such water it is a wonder that it was not a death instead of a health resort. During very dry seasons the railroad would run a tank car here with water from near Egg Harbor City. I have sold many a gallon for them at one cent a gallon. Now the city has a plentiful supply of elegant, pure water from Absecon pond and artesian wells.....

Ice was brought here in schooners from way down east, and unloaded at the Inlet Wharf into small cars and hauled by mules to William Bartlett's Ice houses at Atlantic and North Carolina Avenues. This Ice Company continued in the ice business until June, 1922. Large quantities of ice were also cut on Doughty's Pond, Absecon and Mays Landing Pond, and shipped here by rail for George Myers, father of Daniel and Jacob Myers of the Hotel Chelsea. Now, all the ice that is used here is manufactured here.

The distance from Inlet Wharf to Brigantine was so short that by calling across they would come over in boats for passengers and messages. Brigantine was a great place to go for gulls' eggs, and all the meadows adjacent to Atlantic City abounded with mud hens, wild ducks and other birds. Fishing was fine in any of the waters surrounding the city.....

There were no banks except sand banks. Now, there are six banks and seven trust companies, but no sand banks except a few down in Margate.....

There were no secret societies; now there are lodges of every known kind in the world, not excepting the Historical Society of Atlantic County.....

I was the only telegraph operator. Now, I suppose there are three hundred.....

There was a jail located somewhere near Atlantic and Rhode Island Avenues, built of logs. I never knew of its being occupied; but the city did use what was known as Ryan Adam's house, at Arctic and Maryland Avenues, as a jail.....

Joseph Piersol, City Treasurer, of Philadelphia, a cottager down town, was the cause of sparrows being here. He brought a cage full of them from Philadelphia and liberated them in front of Schaufler's Hotel. He thought they would kill the caterpillars that infested the willow trees (and in those days all the trees were willows for it was thought no other kind would live here), but a sparrow is more afraid of a caterpillar than a woman is.....

The first signal service man here was William F. Slater. He is now living in Washington. He was not a telegraph operator, his duties required him to send weather observations to Washington at 8 A.M., 12 noon, 8 P.M. and 12 P.M. and then wait until he received the probabilities from Washington. He would bring from his office at the lighthouse his observations at 8 A.M., 12 noon, and 8 P.M. to the depot. The 12, midnight, he would bring to my house on Connecticut Avenue, call me from a nice warm bed, and wait until we got Washington probabilities.....

There were very few houses below Michigan Avenue. At Cedar Grove (now Margate) Capt. John Bryant, grandfather of our esteemed citizen, Lewis Bryant, lived. There was a hotel there called the Cedar Grove Hotel, kept at one time by Simon Hanthorn, grandfather of our Judge Robert H. Ingersoll, now Vice Chancellor. Patty Irelands was about half way down the beach.

During the winter months, the Merritt Wrecking Company of New York kept a wrecking schooner at the Inlet, fully equipped with all material for boarding a wreck, and on the first sign of a boat in distress or on receipt of a telegram announcing a vessel ashore along the coast, they and the crews of the life saving station, would go at once to the wreck. Capt. Japhet Townsend of Linwood, Capt. Edward Wilson and Capt. Amasa Bowen of Atlantic City were generally in charge of the boats and, from my intimate acquaintance with them, I do not think they knew what fear was, and as for ability if a vessel could be boarded or saved they knew how to do it.....

Some day, some one in lower Ventnor will be digging a basement and will find human bones and will wonder where they came from. Well, they are the bones of a colored sailor which washed ashore on the beach. It was in such condition that it was taken into the sand hills and buried at the foot of a small pine tree. I could locate the tree for several years.....

Continued on page 6

Looking Back through the Files.....continued

There was no hospital. I have seen Dr. Tom Reed amputate a man's leg on a table in the kitchen of the young man's home. The man can be seen on the streets every day. There is now a good public hospital accommodating sixty patients and several private ones.....

The Atlantic City National Bank, on their yearly election day would give all of their patrons a big dinner, when champagne would flow like water. Oh, my! Those were the good old days. Now all the banks and trust companys give their patrons a lead pencil or some other little jimcrack on Christmas. I grant you that there are more sober people after election now than then.....

Of course, there were no telephones. Now, nearly every house and business place is connected with one. They are very handy to have when you want the doctor, but a great deal of time is wasted by idle gossip and lies that would never be told if you were face to face with the parties.

Quite a number of cows were kept on the island. They were turned loose on the salt meadows during the day, and between the greenheads and mosquitoes they had a sorry time of it. Of course, we have no mosquitoes now, for we have a State Commission to prevent their hatching. We have very few greenheads, only when you are out fishing, then you get more bites from them than fish bites.....

The island, where it was not improved, was covered with stunted cedar trees and baberry bushes. Wild rabbits were quite plentiful down the beach. They were the only wild animals until some years later, in 1882, when the elephant appeared on the beach at South Atlantic (now Margate). It was in [the] charge of Jas. Lafferty, and Atlantic City people flocked there by the hundreds when he announced its being on exhibition. This was another occasion on which champagne flowed like water.

The Baltic Avenue Casino was erected on wooden piling at Baltic and Maine Avenues. It was a great place for concerts and dancing, but never paid. One evening the piling gave way while Jenning's famous band was playing and several of its members were seriously injured. It was torn down and in its place was erected some kind of a patent windmill. This was never a success, and it, too, was torn down within the last year.....

The old Camden and Atlantic Railroad is entitled to a large share of credit for the establishment of Atlantic City's popularity, as every doctor all over the United States, and every politician in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and all newspaper men, were well supplied with passes and were entertained at hotels free, and of course they recommended their patients to come here.

You ask why with all the changes and chances to make money I did not get rich – why bless you, I am rich! I have a good wife, one son and three daughters, all married and living nicely; two granddaughters, a house and lot, twenty-five hens, enough to eat and wear and pretty good health for a boy. What more could I wish?



Left: Atlantic City, looking through the woods to beach, 1866, ACHS Glass Plate Negative 239, Silas Morse Collection.
Right: Atlantic City, cattle running at large, 1870, ACHS Glass Plate Negative 278, Silas Morse Collection

PANDEMIC POETRY...



I'M MY OWN GRANDPA by Sid Parker

Before I hit my teens in the early '50's, I only listened to records (breakable 78's) on my parents' Victrola. This was a weird favorite, perhaps explaining a later interest in genealogy. You can find the original 1947 version on YouTube, or later versions by Willie Nelson and others but, without peeking, try to diagram the family tree.

*Many, many years ago when I was twenty-three
I was married to a widow who was pretty as could be.
This widow had a grown-up daughter who had hair of red.
My father fell in love with her and soon they, too, were wed.*

CHORUS: *I'm my own grandpa
It sounds silly, I know,
But it really is so, oh
I'm my own grandpa.*

*This made my dad my son-in-law and changed my very life
For my daughter was my mother, 'cause she was my father's wife.
To complicate the matter, even though it brought me joy
I soon became the father of a bouncing baby boy.*

CHORUS

*My little baby then became a brother-in-law to dad
And so became my uncle, though it made me very sad
For if he was my uncle, then that also made him brother
To the widow's grown-up daughter, who, of course, was my step-
mother.*

CHORUS

*My father's wife then had a son who kept them on the run
And he became my grand-child, 'cause he was my daughter's son.
My wife is now my mother's mother, and it makes me blue
Because, although she is my wife, she's my grandmother too.*

CHORUS

*If my wife is my grandmother, then I am her grandchild
And every time I think of it, it nearly drives me wild
For now I have become the strangest case you ever saw
(This has got to be the strangest thing I ever saw)
As husband of my grandmother, I am my own grandpaw.*



Spotlight on the Shelves

a treasure hiding in plain sight...

All Aboard!

Discover the extensive history of railroads in New Jersey, particularly the New Jersey Southern Railroad. Published by the West Jersey Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, in collaboration with local historian, Paul W. Schopp, *The Trail of the Blue Comet* (B-1456), is informative when it comes to the true and intriguing inner workings of New Jersey's railroad development.

Originally, our South Jersey railway system consisted of mostly high-speed, straight routes from Philadelphia to the beaches or perhaps reaching farmland (Baer 5). Uniquely, this was the only railroad established for a north-south trajectory. Orchestrated by stockholders in New York, the railroad project was designed to bypass Philadelphia and stretch its reach from the city streets through the Pine Barrens. Barraged with the forces that were the monopolies, there were many financial, logistical and ownership changes which impacted major railroad tracts such as the Raritan-Delaware Bay, Camden-Amboy, and Camden-Atlantic. Expansion efforts were ultimately successful, leading to the debut of The Blue Comet luxury train in 1929, as well as many freight routes and passenger services (i.e. NJ Transit) that we have today.

This meticulously researched book gives us the opportunity to understand the struggles, efforts and innovations which influenced the growth of railroads in New Jersey.

By *Brittani Mazzone*

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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.