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# THE BINNACLE

Summer 2019  
No. 27

*Ocean City's Home for History*

## Sacred Sundays in a Dry Town: OC's Blue Laws

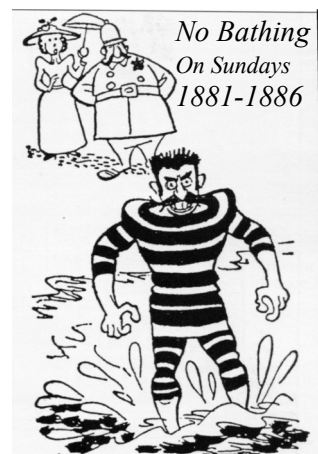
By William K. Pehlert, Jr.

When residents and visitors reminisce about their younger days in Ocean City, their memories often include some of the ways the blue laws of the time were enforced. They may remember fines being levied for such diverse infractions as selling a whole cantaloupe or doing minor house repairs on Sunday. The blue laws have a long and complicated history, having been retooled and pared down over the decades.

Ocean City was founded as a Christian resort in 1879 by four Methodist ministers who eventually acquired all the land on the island. As parcels were sold off, each deed included covenant restrictions designed to ensure Ocean City's Christian character. Two principal covenants were a rule against the sale or manufacture of alcoholic beverages and a prohibition against commercialism on the Sabbath. The covenants were rooted in Puritan morality laws of the 1600s called "blue laws" printed on blue paper and/or because "blue" connoted a rigid moral position. "Blue laws" or "Sunday-closing laws" prohibited specific activities on Sunday with exemptions for "works of necessity."

In 1881 the governing board of Ocean City established restrictions on bathing, horseback riding or opening businesses on Sundays. In 1884 the city was incorporated as a borough; the elected officials fine-tuned Ocean City's "necessity exceptions" under existing New Jersey law. New

Jersey's law provided for each municipality to determine "necessity exemptions" including prohibiting public entertainment, sports, amusements, and commerce. Arbitrary and absurd situations were the inevitable result. For example, the borough passed a law forbidding wearing bathing suits on streets on Sundays when the bathhouses were closed, presenting would-be bathers with an obvious problem. The problem was solved by permitting bathhouses to open if bathing suits were prepaid on Saturday. Although steamboat and trains could bring visitors to the



1906



1980 Sentinel-Ledger

(Continued pg. 4)

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello!

Hope you are enjoying your Summer! Our museum has been busy with the Summer Lecture Series that is held on Thursdays at 7 pm in the Chris Maloney Hall of the Library. I want to give a special thanks to Ken Cooper and Carol Dotts for organizing the program. Dick and Becky Stanislaw will be presenting the last program on September 12, "What We Were Singing in 1879." Hope to see you there. In August, we had our ever-popular History Camp led by Babs Stefano and Al Crescenzo. We had 10 campers who gave their presentations to their parents and families on August 16th . Great job by all!

Our Annual Luncheon will be held on September 18th at 11:30 featuring Bill Hughes as the key note speaker. The event will be held at the Greate Bay Country Club in Somers Point.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

Board President,  
S. John Loeper



Beach View, from Concert Hall, Ocean City, N. J.

# Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

A volunteer appreciation luncheon is planned for Wednesday, September 25th, 2019, at 11 am. After a busy summer season, there will be opportunities to "meet and greet" and renew friendships. Updates on changes in the museum will be discussed.

## Volunteers Wanted

The museum is always looking for individuals who love history, Ocean City, and people! There are positions available including the front desk, events, as well as specific volunteer assignments. Come join us! Call the museum at 609-399-1801 for more information and someone from the Board will contact you to discuss volunteer opportunities.

## New Museum Website Binnacle Available Online

In early July the museum went "live" with its new website, [ocnjmuseum.org](http://ocnjmuseum.org). The new site features information about our collections, museum news, and upcoming events. Keep an eye out for frequent updates of news and events.

PLUS – the Binnacle is now available online. You can view and/or download current and past issues of the Binnacle from the website.

Stay tuned for more features and functions on the website in the coming months.

## Upcoming Events at the Historical Museum



### September

- **Bubble Mania**  
Saturday  
September 14th at the Ocean City Airport.
- **Annual Luncheon**  
Wednesday  
September 18th at the Greate Bay Country Club.
- **Volunteer Appreciation**  
September 25. See article.

### October

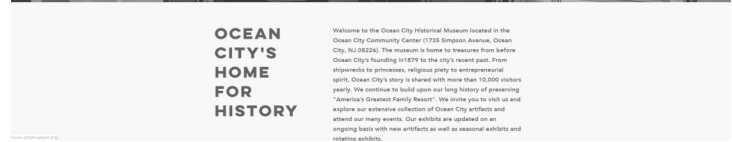
- **Brunch Buffet**  
Sunday October 20th at Clancy's By the Bay.

### November

- **Randazzo's Night**  
Date To Be Announced  
Proceeds from the night go to support the museum.
- **Mrs. Claus's Market Open House and Fair**  
Friday November 30th at the Community Center.

### December

- **Mrs. Claus's Market Continues through the month of December.**



#### From Hunting Ground to Modern Resort

The exhibits of the Museum trace the history of Ocean City from the Native Americans who hunted on its shores, through the founding of the city and its subsequent development, to the resort of today. The Museum is designed to appeal to both visitors and long-time residents. Its extensive archives are a popular resource, used by those researching the history of their families or properties. The volume of old photographs and files of families help to round out the vision of Ocean City, past and present.

#### Ocean City's Founders



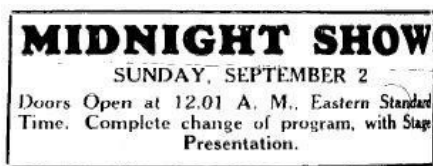
#### The Founders & The Early Years

In 1874 four Methodist ministers came to what is now called Ocean City to establish a resort town.

island on Sundays, the local trolleys could not run, making it difficult for excursionists to get to the beach.

Over the years, America's Greatest Family Resort tried to balance the conflicting demands of maintaining a code of morality with the demands of attracting tourism. A Christian Sabbath faction fought to keep at least a partly closed Sunday, while an open Sunday faction fought for no restrictions to spur rapid growth. Politically, it was hard to repeal Sunday-closing laws without risking Ocean City's status as a dry town. Allowing the Sunday sale of candy and tobacco was viewed as a wedge issue which would degrade the city's image to the low moral reputation of other shore resorts.

With an eye to serving tourists, some businesses found ways to circumvent the laws. The Moorlyn and Strand Theaters added Sunday midnight shows which began at 12:01 a.m. on Monday. Some merchants created "fake sandwiches" to evade the ban on the sale of ice cream and soda separately from full meals. Enforcement ebbed and flowed, but when violations became prevalent, the city cracked down by hiring outside undercover detectives. Ironically, violators pressed charges against the hired detectives for working on Sunday.

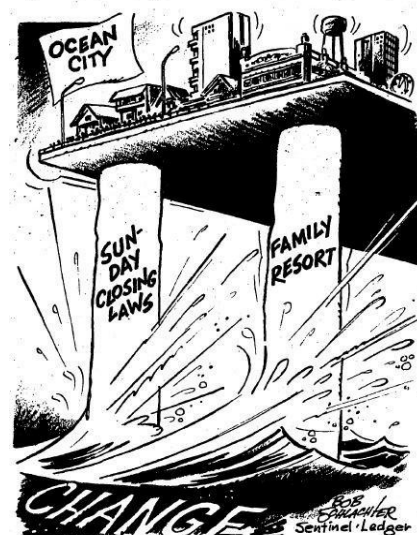


1928 Sentinel

In 1918 Ocean City's Ordinance 110 codified its own Blue Laws as they had evolved over four decades. In 1964 Ordinance 110 was replaced by Ordinance 947, which included Sunday bans on construction, but specifically permitted sales of prepared food, candy, tobacco, magazines, and health and hygienic items; rentals of beach, fishing, boating and transportation items; services of gas stations, real estate agents, physicians, lawyers, and undertakers; and operation of parking lots. Out-of-town media often chided Ocean City's blue laws by citing absurdities, such as the ban on the sale of hardcover books (e.g. the Bible), while permitting the sale of magazines (e.g. Playboy).

Sunday openings were finally permitted in 1986 after a referendum eliminated Ordinance 947, but people vividly remember the years when the blue laws were in effect. Stores would cover the shelves or darken the sections where banned goods were displayed. One visitor to the Museum recalled the manager of the store where she worked being fined for selling a whole cantaloupe, which would have to be prepared, rather than a sliced one, which was ready to eat. Tales are told of being allowed to buy a toothbrush, but not toothpaste, which would require squeezing. Lifelong resident Ken Cooper tells of being fined for replacing the screen in a door on a Sunday.

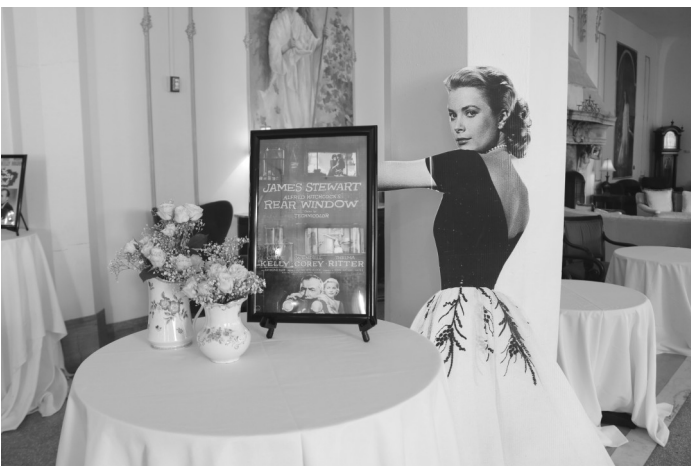
But not all memories of this time are negative. Longtime resident Babs Stefano remembers Sunday as a time for church services, as well as family walks and other activities. Loretta Harris, a fourth-generation Ocean City resident, says, "Blue Laws were in place throughout most of my life in Ocean City, so they were just an inconvenient fact of life. In the early years, Sunday was church day, all day, beginning with 10 a.m. Sunday school followed by morning service from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. If there was a dynamic preacher or good gospel choir visiting, we went back to church in the evening. Our Sabbath was structured just the way the founders would have wanted."



1977 Sentinel-Ledger

# Annual Grace Kelly Tea

Board Member Al Crescenzo spoke at the Flanders on Grace Kelly's movie career for our 5th Annual Grace Kelly Tea. The event was wonderful as always featuring lots of clips of Grace acting throughout her movie career.



# History Camp 2019

Get ready Hollywood! The next generation of future directors, producers, screen writers, and actors have just completed the 2019 History camp. This group of campers were charged with producing an infomercial, commercial or testimonial that highlighted a specific artifact found in one of our exhibits. They accomplished this task by creating and filming two to five minute videos in a time frame of three days. These videos were shown to an audience on the last day of the camp. They worked in teams of two campers who had equal responsibilities in completing the project. A question-and-answer session that followed the video showed how in depth they researched their artifacts. The FRIENDS and VOLUNTEERS of the OCEAN CITY FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY were a major sponsor of this camp experience providing the funds that made this camp possible. The culminating celebration included a pizza party and a visit from Mayor Gillian, who presented the campers with their CERTIFICATES of ACHIEVEMENT and VIP tickets to Wonderland.



# Lifeguards

By: Loretta Thom

Surf, sand, shells and sun. Summer or winter, a trip to the shore is made better by a few days at the visitors. For the safety of those visitors, the Ocean City Beach Patrol stations lifeguards at specified and lifesaving tests before being s

PHOTO I.D. PLEASE. Photographs with no names or dates are an eternal problem to fami  
info@ocnjm



Ca. late 1920s or 1930s. Alvin Thompson, far right, walking on boardwalk with three unidentified lifeguards.

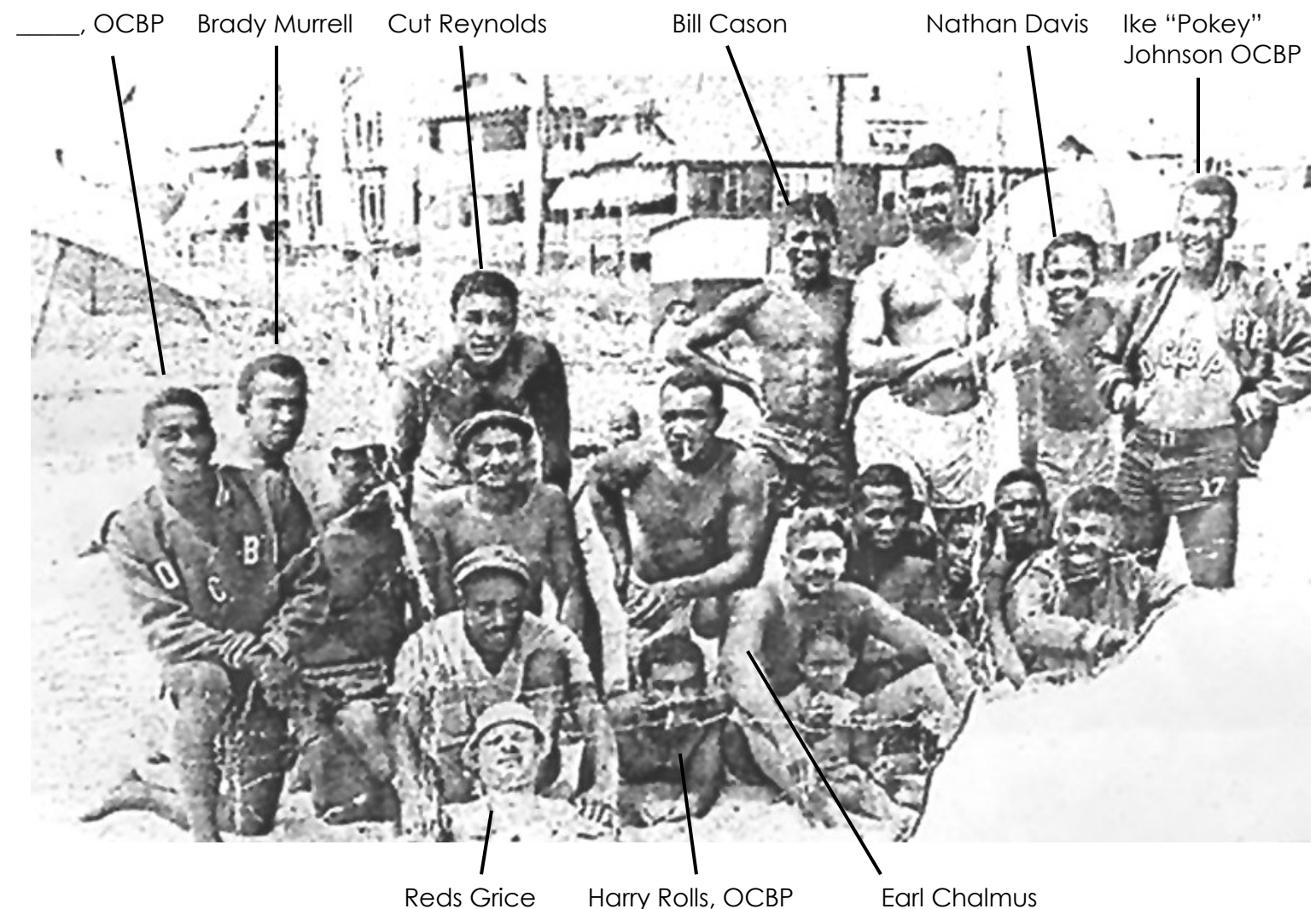


# on Duty

mpson Harris

e beach. Each year, Ocean City's miles of white sandy beaches are an attraction for thousand of beaches during the summer. These men, and now women, must pass rigorous swimming, rowing selected fro the coveted positions.

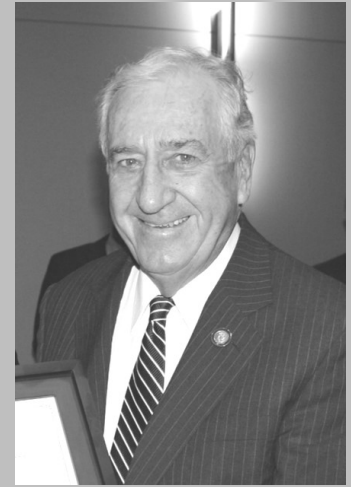
ly, friends and historians. Help us identify the people in the two photos below. Email us at museum.org



Ca. 1940s or 1950s. Lifeguards pose with group of bathers on 5th St. beach also known as 6th St. beach.

# Save the Date for the Annual Luncheon

This year's Annual Luncheon will be held Wednesday, September 18th at the Greate Bay Country Club in Somers Point, NJ. We are excited to announce our guest speaker this year will be former Congressman and Ambassador to Panama, Bill Hughes. As always there will be a lunch service, raffle prizes and a 50/50. Tickets are \$50 for the general public and \$45 for members. Stop by the museum or call 609-399-1801 to reserve your tickets!



## Lecture Series

**Thursdays @ 7pm**  
**FREE ADMISSION**

All lectures will be held in the OC Public Library's Lecture Hall at 1735 Simpson Avenue. An American Sign Language Interpreter will be signing the presentations.

### **Sept 5 *Picture Sharing***

Ken Cooper and John Loeper

### **Sept 12 *What We Were Singing in 1879***

Dick and Becky Stanislaw

Check back next summer for more interesting lectures!



## Antique and Collectibles Fair

Another successful Antique and Collectibles Fair was held on July 13th this year! Despite sharing the day with Night in Venice we had an excellent turn out both at the fair and in the museum. We would like to take this time to thank all the vendors and patrons who came out. We hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.





# Volunteer Spotlight

By Noel Wirth

*Volunteering at the Museum takes many different avenues: greeting visitors, becoming a docent and giving tours, making phone calls, performing computer activities, or becoming a researcher. Each issue of The Binnacle spotlights the "unsung heroes" who give their time and energy to the Museum.*

## Mary Jane Bullock



Mary Jane Bullock, a dedicated volunteer since 2012, has a long history in Ocean City. Her family moved to a home on 11th Street in 1944 from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Mary Jane attended all three schools in Ocean City and was a high school classmate of Marla Adams who was Miss Diamond Jubilee and has appeared in movies

and TV soap operas. Mary Jane worked at Hogates restaurant in the summer, and after graduating high school attended Godley Beacon Business College in Delaware. After working at Prudential Insurance in Somers Point, she became

a stay-at-home mom for 14 years, raising 3 children. When she returned to work she was employed at several local business offices.

Retirement eventually approached, and Mary Jane was looking for volunteer opportunities. She saw an ad seeking volunteers for our Museum, and, as a lover of history, knew it would be a good choice. She has been an active volunteer since 2012. You can see her Saturday afternoons, her favorite time to volunteer. She loves to greet and talk with visitors and answer any questions they might have. She is also a supporter and volunteer at many of the museum's special events. When she isn't volunteering, her favorite pastimes are reading, crossword puzzles, knitting and tai chi. Helping friends and our Museum—what a wonderful way to spend retirement. Thank you, Mary Jane!

## Jeanne Robinson

No stranger to Ocean City, Jeanne had been vacationing in Ocean City with her family since she was 5 years old! In the 1980-90's she rented an apartment on Haven Ave. for the month of July and commuted to Philadelphia while working at P.S.F.S. Jeanne had the opportunity to purchase her own home on Simpson Ave. 20 years ago, and the very next year she stopped in to visit our Museum and was hooked! She became a docent and volunteered for other activities two and three days a week.

In 2005 her volunteer activities at the Museum were somewhat curtailed when she became the owner of a small Bichon Frise, "Putter," her devoted companion. Jeanne is a golf aficionado and has played at the Ocean City Golf Course for 19 years and founded a golf league for women at the

Heritage Golf Club. Also a volunteer at Shore Memorial Hospital, Jeanne is a member of the Stainton Society. Jeanne is active at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and assists with their various fundraisers. Jeanne is a "Behind the Scenes" volunteer at our Museum with her valuable organizational skills. We are thankful for all she has done for us in the past and her continuing support. 19 years! Amazing!



## *2019 Support received from April through July*

### **New/Renewals of Individual & Family Memberships**

Bob and Beth Auwarter	Cecelia Galleli	Joan Kurtz	Angelo Psatis
Bobby Barr	Roland Gannon	Mary Kenny Lee	Karen Quintin
Lewis and Debbie Barrett	Michael/Carole Girone/Subotich	David and Bernice Losinno	Dorothy Ray
Richard Bernardini	Fred and Sue Glazier	Kay Lynn	Joseph and Cathy Reby
Gretchen and Ralph Bingham	Patricia Hand	Patricia Lynn	Carolyn Ruggiero
Dolores Bonewicz	William Harvey	Joseph and Cathy Mathiot	Dr. and Mrs. Carl Scheetz
Richard Booth	Carol Ann Heenan	Jane and Bill McCausland	Margaret Schock Rod and Betty Schumacher
Dale Braun	Betty Hellard	Nancy McNeil	Joan Selby
Mary Jane Bullock	Ronald Hepkin	Mary Michaels	Jeff and John Shirk
Joan Campagna	Vince and Ann Hink	Elaine Novello	Regina Simpkins
Joan Chapman	Michael Hoffman	Linda and Norbert Olsen	Martha Styer
Dominick Costanzo	Bill Hughes	William Parkhurst	Bill and Kay Sundermeier
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Joseph and Cathy Fertsch	Denise and Gary Jessel	Winnie Piriano	Michael and Judith Young
Sonia Forry	Robert Kradoska	Beth Poinsett	

### **New/Renewals of Benefactor Memberships**

Mr. and Mrs. John Brennan	Joel and Caroline McKeever	Avery Teitler
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Bernard Goodrich	Barbara Stefano	Noel Wirth
Keith Hartzell	Judy Stephenson	Donald Woolson

### **New/Renewal of Patron Memberships**

Doris Broadley	Crab Trap Ltd.	Dennis and Joan Myers
Harry F. Brooks	Joseph and Diane Heath	Kathy and Joe Palermo
Rhoda Brown	Johnson's Popcorn	
Beth and Jim Carl	Marie Knight	

### **Special Donations**

Colony Club	Joel and Caroline McKeever	Society of Mayflower Descendants
Ken Cooper	NJ Council of the Humanities and Arts	Sturdy Bank
Judge Bernice DeAngelis	Pitman School	
Mary Murphy Fleming	Randazzo's Pizzeria	

# Wanted

## Oral Histories - Longtime Ocean City Residents to Share Their Stories

In keeping with our goals of preserving Ocean City's history, we have revived our project to collect oral histories from longtime Ocean City residents. We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to meet our interviewers and share their stories. Interviews will be conducted at the Ocean City Free Public Library or any location convenient to the interviewee. Videos made from these interviews will be preserved in the museum and selectively made available to museum visitors and on the museum's web site.

If interested in scheduling an interview or simply learning more about this program, contact the museum at 609-399-1801 or [info@ocnjmuseum.org](mailto:info@ocnjmuseum.org).



Please consider donating to support The Ocean City Historical Museum this year with a donation to our annual fundraising campaign. Each year, our organization strives to inspire and educate our community and without donations from individuals like you, this would not be possible. The museum is a non-profit and runs solely on donations, and grants to benefit the community which we serve. We are counting on your support. Remember that your gift is tax deductible!

A donor envelope is included for your convenience. Your donation will be recognized in our program book throughout the year. Thank you in advance for your support!





PHOTO BY SENIOR STUDIO

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*The Mission of the  
Ocean City  
Historical Museum,  
Inc. is to delight,  
inspire and  
educate the public  
about the story of  
Ocean City, New  
Jersey.*



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Ocean City, NJ 08226

Or current resident

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