

# The Binnacle

### OCEAN CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Founded 1964 Ocean City's Home for History

Issue 28

# OCEAN CITY'S COMPANY G, NATIONAL GUARD OF NEW JERSEY IN WWI

### By William K. Pehlert, Jr.

An intriguing aspect of Ocean City's history is the role of its National Guard Company G in WWI. Soon after the Civil War, the New Jersey military units became the "New Jersey National Guard". Dedicated armories supplanted ad hoc armories. Many, in the style of a medieval castle, had thick walls, battlements, buttresses and narrow windows. The Efficiency in Militia Act of 1903 and the National Defense Act of 1916 created the modern National Guard system to standardize state National Guards, to set the rules for federalization and deployment, to closely integrate the Guard with the active-duty component, and to provide federal funding.



Ocean City, NJ National Guard Armory

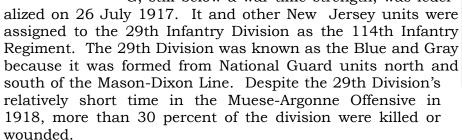
On 13 Mar 1914, Company G, 3rd Infantry Regiment, NJ National Guard was organized by Ocean City area men and began weekly drills in the Hippodrome. In 1915, Otis Townsend built its armory on the south side of 9th St. just west of Haven Ave. A Military Club, formed of Company G men, funded the armory costing \$10,000 with personal notes. The Club received annual appropriations totaling \$800 from the

state, county and city. The rental of the armory for basketball games, dances, and events helped pay expenses. At its 3rd annual *Ocean City, NJ National Guard Armory* muster in January 1917, Company G had 54 men and 3 officers: Capt. Vance L. Ealy, 1st Lt. Alfred R. Smith, and 1st Lt. Theodore V. Townsend. Capt. Hodge, the inspecting officer, called the armory one of the best in New Jersey. Lt. Smith had been head of Ocean City's Beach Patrol for years.



29th Division Insignia

In April 1917, Congress authorized entry into WWI (as the American Expeditionary Force), encouraged military enlistments, and established a military draft. The expiration of the 3-year enlistments of 22 men in Company G was offset by new enlistments at an April rally and some reenlistments. Company G, still below a war-time strength, was feder-





Fall 2019

114th Regiment

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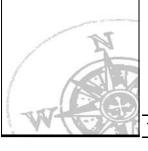
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Continued Pa. 3

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings from the President!

Now that the summer is behind us, we are looking forward to Fall and the holiday season. Mrs. Claus's Market will officially open on Saturday, December 7th with our 2nd annual



Collectible and Arts and Craft Fair! The event will be held from 9 am to 3 pm in the atrium area outside of the museum. We will be selling some of the "Treasures from the Vault" throughout the month. Other planned events will include Sindia Day. Read below for all of our upcoming events.

We have been busy revamping our museum exhibits. If you have not visited recently, you will want to stop in and see the new display wall that echoes the architecture of the Community Center. The Binnacle, our quarterly newsletter, has taken on a new look too. It is styled to evoke the feeling of an old newspaper and contains more historical information.

Our many volunteers and small staff continue working to make the Ocean City Historical Museum Ocean City's Home for History".

Looking forward to seeing you soon. Stop in and see THE WALL.

S. John Loeper

# **MUSEUM EVENTS**

### OCTOBER 2019

**Brunch Buffet.** Held Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. Topic: The Domestic Life of the Jersey Devil presented by Ken Sooy. Clancy's By The Bay, Somers Point

### NOVEMBER

**Randazzo's Night.** Held Randazzo's Pizzeria & Family Restaurant, 34th St. & Asbury Avenue, Wednesday, November 13th. Portions of the proceeds supported the museum

**General Membership Meeting.** Was held Thursday, November 21st. 7:00 pm. Ocean City Historical Museum

### DECEMBER

**Mrs. Claus's Market Open House and Fair.** Saturday, Dec. 7th thru Tuesday, Dec. 31st. Ocean City Community Center and Historical Museum

**Sindia Weekend.** Saturday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> at the Historical Museum and Sunday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> at the Life Saving Station

First Night. Tuesday, Dec. 31st. Ocean City Historical Museum. 4:00-9:00 p.m.

Museum Exhibit. Christmas 1939

Visit ocnjmuseum.org in December for 2020 events!

Upon federalization, Company G mobilized at Fort Edge, Sea Girt, NJ. Recruitments and draftees filled the ranks before leaving Sea Girt. Prior to departing for Sea Girt, 2nd Lt. John E. Trout replaced the retiring 1st Lt. Townsend. Seven firemen in 114th Regiment Company G were given night readable wristwatches by the Liberty Fire Company at a luncheon. Following a dinner at the Yacht Club hosted by businessmen, Company G was wished Godspeed by a crowd of several thousand at the Music Pavilion. Each man received a "comfort bag" from the Woman's Service Committee. On departure, a crowd saw them off at the PRR station. These events had many patriotic speeches by civil leaders and clergy and had appearances by local Civil War veterans.

In July 1917, the first draft in Cape May county numbered only 19 men because the county quota of 193 men was offset by the 174 men in its just federalized National Guard units. Early letters home selfishly asked men to enlist in Company G to keep it staffed with "friends" rather than to await almost certain draft into a unit of strangers. The loss of government appropriations at federalization led to an unsuccessful attempt to sell the armory to the War Department to relieve financial



6 Sep 1917 Sentinel Ad

pressure on the Military Club. A movie on the life of Company G at Sea Girt was shown at the Hippodrome. Having completed marksmanship training, medical shots, and physical conditioning at Fort Edge, the 114th Regiment left for Fort McCellan, Anniston, AL in early October. One of Company G's reports to the Sentinel bragged that, at government expense, they had a summer vacation at Sea Girt, wintered in the South, and soon will tour Europe. In June 1918, the 114th transferred to Newport News, VA prior to embarking for France. Most of the men of Company G remained in the 114th and arrived in France in July. Letters flowed to and from home with delays of about a month. Home-bound letters were often published in the Sentinel. A Red Cross process allowed each soldier to receive just one small Christmas package from home.



Capt. Alfred R. Smith

In October after Officer's Candidate School, Lt. Smith "made Captain". He commanded Company H of the 114th. Company H had about 190 men — most of the old Company G men but also many others. In the Muese-Argonne Offensive (Sep 26 to Nov 11) the 113th and 114th Regiments, both of the 29th Division, had a combined strength of 12 officers and over 700 men when they made a major assault on October 12th. Capt. Smith reported that only 2 officers and less than 300 men returned about 9 days later. Company H's losses were 41 in the hospital, about the same number missing, and several killed. Sergeant Morey wrote "It was Hell on Earth", that "they just slaughtered us", and that the "114th lost half or more". Capt. Smith wrote to Mayor Champion, "We have been in the heart of the fighting and lost a number of the boys" and "we had some men gassed pretty badly". Few men of old Company G were lost but he did not know

the fate of those who had transferred out.

From historynet.com on the Muese-Argonne Offensive we quote: "On October 8, Pershing...ordered the 29th Division to attack....On October 12, New Jersey National Guardsmen of the 29th's 113th and 114th Regiments took the Bois d'Ormont, at a cost of 118 killed and 812 wounded. Over the next 34 hours, the Germans bombarded Bois d'Ormont with high-explosive and mustard gas shells. Wisely, the 113th withdrew while the 114th held its ground—which only resulted in 706 more gas casualties.....two units found their right flank exposed (due to the breakdown of the 113th and 114th's assault).....On October 16, the 79th Division arrived to relieve the 29th, and five days later the last of the 'Blue and Grays' were pulled out of the line after having suffered 5,552 casualties in three weeks."

The 29th Division received a citation for its action in the offensive which was the largest and deadliest in American military history at that time. The offensive's "Lost Battalion" and heroic Sgt. Alvin York became legends. Word of the WWI-Armistice signing on November 11, 1918 was received by the Bell Telephone operators in Ocean City, was forwarded to City officials, and led to the ringing of the City's church bells and celebrations in the streets. On March 13, 1919, the Young Men's Progressive League honored those men who had returned to date. It was noted that about 135 had answered the call and four (Elmer E. Ranck, L. Russell Henry, Nichola Imaglizzo, Wesley R. Cordery) had made the ultimate sacrifice albeit through disease.



May 1919: 113th's Return to Jersey City

On May 6, 1919, Capt. Smith and Company H returned to Newport News, VA for mustering out at Camp Dix, NJ later in May. Many dinners and welcome-home events were held in honor of the returning veterans. Smith soon reopened his wall papering business. Ocean City Board of Trade planned to pay off the debts of

the armory which was in need of major repairs. However, the Military Club was "not now interested in warlike practice" wanted to free itself of the armory which it considered to be a "millstone". It was decided that a new community building would



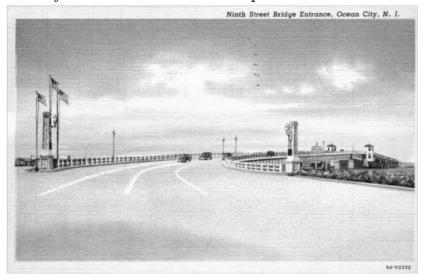
be a better memorial for old Company G. Subsequently the armory 1918: Troops Mustering Out at Camp Dix was used by the American Legion as a social hall and then by the city as a warehouse and garage. In Spring 1937, the armory was condemned and demolished.

Morgan-Ranck Post No. 137, American Legion was formed in the fall of 1919 with Alfred R. Smith as Commander. A memorial tablet listing local WWI veterans was placed in front of City Hall, dedicated on July 5, 1920 and later was moved to Memorial Park. In 1933, the American Legion handled arrangements for the dedication of the four war memorial bridges on the causeway between 9th St. in Ocean City and a new traffic circle in

> Somers Point. Alfred R. Smith led the dedication parade. The WWI memorial monuments at both ends of the 1933 causeway were preserved when the replacement causeway was constructed and completed in 2012.



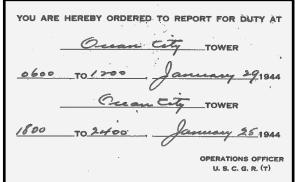
WWI Memorial Tablet



1933: 9th St. Bridge flanked by WWI memorials

# OCEAN CITY DURING WORLD WAR II (PART ONE)

By Mary Jane Bullock and Bobbi Taylor



After the attack at Pearl Harbor, everything about life in the United States changed. Of course, this included daily life in Ocean City. Roused by shock and anger following the sneak attack, all Americans dedicated themselves to the war.

There was a very real threat of aircraft attacks over the city, so volunteers were needed to serve as air raid spotters. During the course of the war, there were over five hundred volunteers that manned the towers, which operated 24 hours a day. These spotters kept constant

vigil for over 22 months. The Chief Observer in Ocean City was Philip Shafto. The main tower was built over the Ocean City Music Pier. In addition to the spotters, regular air raid tests were conducted, both day and night.

Marla Adams, Jeanne Lord, and Mary Jane Bullock, all members of the OCHS Class of 1956, recall the blackouts where windows were covered at night so that no light could escape to present targets to German bombers. Heavy black blinds were rolled down. Marla remembers her home on Plaza Place having eight windows on the sun porch which were covered by heavy wooden blinds. She also remembers her father waking her from sleep one evening and taking her to the Music Pier. There they climbed up onto the tower and she looked out over the ocean. Fortunately, no planes were sighted that night. All storefronts on the boardwalk were blackened out and the doors shut.



Blanche Livingston Preston, OCHS Class of 1954, married a career military man and now lives in Alaska. She remembers the war years in Ocean City. At that time, she lived with Mr. and Mrs. Homer Jones on Fourth Street. Homer was an air raid warden, and when the siren sounded, he donned a white hat and went on patrol in the neighborhood making sure no lights were showing from residents' windows. Homer stayed out until the all clear signal sounded.

Before television, images of the war came from the news reels shown at the movies. They caused some anxiety, even though what was shown was occurring overseas. German U-boats were off of our coast and that knowledge caused Mary Jane Bullock to have nightmares about soldiers landing and running through the halls of the Central Avenue School.

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The Pearl Harbor attack brought quick reaction to local Japanese merchants in Ocean City who had stores on the boardwalk. The December 11, 1941 Daily Ocean City Sentinel Ledger reported Japanese businessmen were locked out of their businesses and interrogated by authorities and agents as part of the government's move to freeze Japanese assets of all kinds.

Throughout the war, American citizens were asked to sacrifice their luxuries for the war effort. Families kept coupon books for rationing food, while tire, paper, and tin drives collected materials for the military.

The three members of the OCHS Class of 1956 remember going to the grocery store with their mothers, who had to present coupons to obtain food. Rationing was in effect. What could be bought and the quantity of it was determined by the number of people in a family and their ages. Jeanne Lord still has some of those coupons.

Another shared memory of Mary Jane and Jeanne was of the white blocks of oleo, which were a substitute for butter during the war. Mothers kneaded a packet of yellow food coloring into the oleo to make it more palatable, but it wasn't a satisfactory substitute for the real thing. Marla's aunt was the head dietician for the Philadelphia School Districts and was able to bring real butter with her when she visited Ocean City.



Blanche Livingston Preston recalls a time she was sent to the A&P on Eighth Street with ration coupons to buy meat for the family. She lost the coupons and was afraid of being scolded; however, there was no punishment. Sugar was in short supply and therefore used sparingly. She remembers not putting it on their breakfast cereal. To this day, Blanche does not sweeten cereal.

Ocean City had a five-man tire rationing board that had to approve tire purchases. Meat markets were almost bare in the city with only pork the usually available meat. Potatoes, however, were plentiful. During the war, Ocean City became more than a summer resort. Manufacturing companies with government contracts settled in town and industry grew. Chic's, a local tent making establishment run by Charles Milligan, became an army tent factory. Holtz Shipbuilding constructed barges for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It was the largest craft ever constructed in the city. The Moyer Shipbuilding Plant built tow boats in the Riviera section of the city as well as air rescue boats, "tool chests", and ammunition boxes.

In September of 1944, the Ocean City Daily Sentinel Ledger reported that Ocean City was hit with a very bad storm with 72-mph winds. It caused the most destruction of any storm to

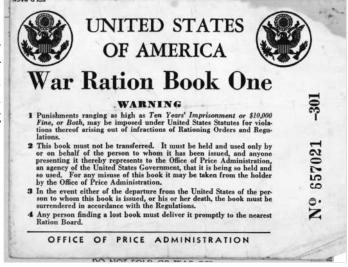
hit the city at the time. Cleanup was a monstrous task to undertake. More than 50% of all male residents were at war. Commissioner Bowker was overwhelmed with completing the task with such limited manpower on the island. To help clean up the wreckage, Commissioner Bowker made application with the Army for the services of prisoners of war (POWs) to assist in the cleanup. The city assumed the responsibility of feeding and housing them, as well as paying their

wages on a per diem basis, as required by

international law.

POWs earned 80 cents daily for their labor. They assisted in the removal of driftwood and other debris from the Recreation Center and the ocean end of 6th Street. Jeanne Lord remembers being on the boardwalk and seeing German POWs cleaning up the beach. When all work was completed, the POWs were allowed to watch the high school football games taking place at the far end of the field.

Next Issue: Part II, Heroines of the Homefront



# LOCAL CIVIL WAR VETERANS

### By Loretta Thompson Harris

Every November, red, white and blue flags dot the grounds of America's cemeteries. They wave proudly in honor of deceased military veterans who served in times of war and peace. Though Ocean City's founding in 1879 came years after the Civil War (1861-1865), a number of Civil War veterans made their way to our shores and spent their final days here. In that there are no burials on island, nearby communities on the mainland in Upper Township, Cape May County, NJ became the final resting place for many of our veterans. The only known burial at Seaside Cemetery is Dr. J. S. Waggoner, a Civil War surgeon who later became an Asbury Avenue merchant druggist and doctor. Boardwalk merchant Jacob Still is buried in the Second Cape May Baptist Church cemetery in Palermo. Samuel Schurch died in Ocean City and is buried in the Wesley Methodist Churchyard cemetery in Petersburg. Some lie at rest in unmarked graves in unidentified plots in the now defunct Second Cape May Baptist cemetery, which is now surrounded by Seaside Cemetery. Known Civil War veterans who lived in Ocean City are as follows:

John W. Brown	1834-1905	U.S. Colored Troops B,127	
Joseph Brown		Gunboat Union, Purser's Steward	
James L. Linn		Pennsylvania Calvary	
Lt. Charles Myers	????-1898	Pennsylvania B,8	
Henry Reimbach		New Jersey E,9 and A,4	
Samuel Schurch	1845-1911	Pennsylvania D & F,40. Drummer	
Jacob Still	1833-1901	U.S. Colored Troops B,51	
Dr. J. S. Waggoner	1837-1910	Pennsylvania 5th Cav & 84th Infantry. Wounded in action.	
David Wells	1837-1910	U.S. Colored Troops D,41 Infantry	
John B		Pennsylvania F,72	~Ancestry.com

~Ancestry.com ~1890 Veterans Schedule ~Find-A-Grave.com ~"Freedom To All", Joseph G. Bixby, 2011 ~Seaside Cemetery Burial Records ~Sentinel Ledger 5 Aug 1927

# Community Support



The Ocean City Board of Realtors presents check to the museum for volunteer support during the Ocean City Air Show's Bubblemania.

The Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders supports
the arts, history, and culture in Cape May County.
Pictured right with Freeholder E. Marie Hayes (far right) are
John Loeper, Betsy King, Vic Daniel, Loretta Harris, Jodi King,
Carol Dotts, and Al Crescenzo from the Ocean City Historical
Museum, Inc. and U.S. Life Saving Station 30



# **Curatorial Highlights**

The curatorial committee has been reviewing some of our "Treasures from the Vault" and deaccessing artifacts that are duplicates or do not relate to telling Ocean City's history. These items will be on sale during the opening day of Mrs. Claus's Market, Saturday, December 7th between 9 am and 3 pm.

Shortly, our Sindia exhibit will feature the hull of our famous four-mast ship. This will help further explain the Sindia wreck.

With the new entrance into the museum, the Grace Kelly exhibit will be moved to the front of the Museum to allow for a better view of the replica of her wedding gown.



# **Oral Interview**

Our museum is dedicated to preserving Ocean City's history in all its many forms. A written transcript of Rocky's unedited interview can be accessed at the museum.

# Roland "Rocky" Gannon

March 8th, 1925, a Sunday, and I was about to be born in Palermo, NJ. We had no electricity, no telephones in the house in 1925. So Dad had one of the neighbors call Ocean City and Dr. John Hogate Whittaker, who later owned Hogate's Restaurant in Washington DC, drove over to our house and delivered me on the kitchen table next to the only stove we had in the house. After the delivery, I was told later by my mother, that Dr. Whittaker said, "Loretta, get Harry, (my father) to buy one of these new horseless carriages. He could have brought you to Ocean City and I would have delivered this baby for 50 cents. But since I had to drive four miles on a Sunday afternoon to deliver this baby, I am going to have to charge you a dollar!"

{The Gannon family lost their Palermo home in 1932 during the Great Depression. The family relocated to Ocean City where the father might find work.}



Gannon: Heroic war pilot

We ended up on the train on Christmas Eve of 1932. It was snowy, and we rode the train into Ocean City's 9th Street station. My dad wasn't there; I don't know why, but my mother had the four children...My mother went inside the train station to talk with Scotty Barber who was the station chief on that night. He was sitting there with a green visor on and his hand on the Morse code key sending the message that we had arrived...We left the train station and we were going to some-place where we would hopefully spend Christmas...We had two cardboard suitcases. We walked down to 12th and Asbury and there was Gustafson's, a house with a big stairway coming up the front...but they said they couldn't take us in..." So, they recommended that Mother go find a place owned by a Mr. Fox who could take renters in Christmas Eve. He took us in and gave us a big room with beds and blankets. But there was no heat and no electricity. So, this is how I spent our first night in Ocean City in 1932.

Interviewed by Lora Hamer, Oct. 19, 2019

# 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 spotlights the "unsung heroes" who give their time and energy to the Museum.

## **Don Woolson**



Don Woolson has a history long Ocean City. His family started coming to our city in 1942. In 1945 the Woolson family purchased a home in the Gardens, and Don attended St. Augustine (when it was a fourroom schoolhouse at 1st St. and Atlantic Ave., and then attended Holy Spirit

High School in Atlantic City. After graduating from Pennsylvania Military College, Don was commissioned as an Army officer and retired as a colonel after 33 years of service. During that time, Don still

Bobbi was a Philly girl whose family always vacationed in Atlantic City. When her mother, who lived in Atlantic City, began to suffer from Parkinson's disease, Bobbi wanted to be close to her mother to help out. She was hired as an entertainment coordinator at Trump Castle in Atlantic City, a job she loved and worked at for 13 years. Unable to find suitable housing in Atlantic City, Bobbi moved to Ocean City at a friend's recommendation and found an apartment next to Knight's Pharmacy. She eventually moved to 16th Street and was there for 18 years until Sandy took a toll on her property, necessitating a move to Somers Point. Ocean City's residents, churches, and organizations showered her with kindness in the Sandy aftermath. She came back to Ocean City five years ago and wanted to repay their kindness, so she became a volunteer for Friends and Volunteers of the Ocean City Library. Her friend, Mary Bullock, (also a museum volunteer) suggested she might like helpcame to Ocean City when on leave. In 2001, Don and his family became full-time summer residents and in 2017 they retired here permanently.

Don read an article in a local paper that stated the Ocean City Historical Museum was seeking volunteers. As a lover of history and Ocean City, Don knew this would be the perfect volunteer job for him! Don loves to greet people from all over the country, and world, and likes to give them tours, telling them all about Ocean City's history. "Ocean City is the greatest place for families and retired people—so much to do!" says Don.

Thanks for all your help, Don, and continue bringing up ideas and suggestions for our museum.

# **Bobbi Taylor**

ing out at our museum, and Bobbi quickly came onboard. A volunteer for four years, Bobbi enjoys greeting and talking to visitors, and now is doing research for our Binnacle publication.

Bobbi's degrees in secondary education from Temple University and a master's degree in



hospitality management from Farleigh Dickinson University enabled her to become an adjunct professor at Farleigh Dickinson, Stockton University and Atlantic Community College. She also teaches a popular culture class at the Margate Library. Bobbi is a little dynamo, and we appreciate the time and support she gives our museum.

### **Museum Volunteers**

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Rhoda Brown
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Chris Constable
Sandy Crescenzo
Gerri Cusato
Marilyn Evans
Sue Fasy

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Jacquelyn Maccarone
Joyce McNeely
Terry Mendenhall
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Elaine Novello
William Pehlert
Alice Rinkavage
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Carol Sedergran
Martha Styer
Bobbi Taylor
Alva Thompson
Dorothy "Dot" Turner
Bob Williams
Karl Wirth
Noel C. Wirth
Don Woolson

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# **Special Donations**

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# **News Flash**

From the desk of Mrs. S. Claus...

Are you looking for the perfect gift for that someone who has everything? Santa has the answer for you! A membership to the Ocean City Historical Museum. Give the gift that celebrates Ocean City's Home for History. Memberships are available in different levels as follows:



Individual \$25.00 Family \$50.00 Patron \$75.00 Benefactor \$125.00





Each level comes with additional perks. Benefactors receive a print of the Fun Deck painted exclusively for the museum by Marie Shafron. You may purchase these gifts in person at the museum or call 609-399-1801.

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### EDITORIAL Our Incipience

Like Ocean City, which was founded 67 years ago on a dream and the for sightedness of the Lake Brothers, the Ocean City Weekly Guide makes its debut to acquaint he visitors with the many attractions and forms of entertainment Ocean City has to offer. It is the object of the publishers to make this periodical a comprehensive bureau of information for the stranger within our gates, so that he might get the best out of his stoy in our city.

All this information is oathered to-

All this information is gathered together in an attractive eye appealing, pocket-sized form, which the visitors will want to save from week to week and mail to friends back home.

to friends back home.

We wish to remind the thousands of visitors, who will use this comprehensive directory of information, that the continued publication of the "Guide" is made possible only by the cooperation of its' advertisers. Patronize them. Consult the pages of your "Guide" each week when shopping or seeking relaxation.

shapping or seeking relaxation.

We are still experimenting, of course.

We shall make mistakes and we hope to
make many changes. You, our readers,
who are our inspiration and you, our advertisers, who are our life blood can help
us with your criticisms and suggestions,
(which we will gratefully appreciate) as
much as you have helped us with your
support and approval.

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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 museums 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!

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The Mission of the Ocean City Historical Museum is to delight, inspire and educate the public about the story of Ocean City, story of Ocean City,



