



# THE BINNACLE

Summer 2018  
No. 22

Ocean City's Home for History

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## Doctors, Lawyers, and Indian Chiefs

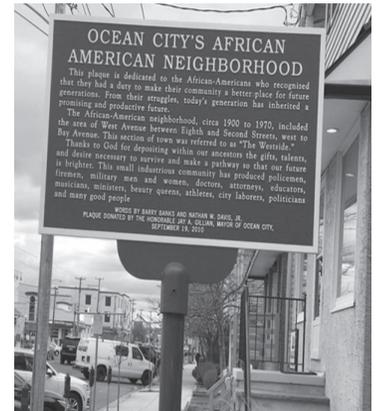
By Loretta Thompson Harris

"Where would you find doctors, lawyers, and Indian chiefs in Ocean City?" you ask. The answer can be found in the history of Ocean City's Westside community. The term Westside is a label sometimes used to define the City's African American neighborhood, loosely bounded by 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on the North, 10<sup>th</sup> Street on the South, Asbury Avenue on the East, and Bay Avenue on the West. Occasionally, people of color did live outside this defined area. In time, the easterly boundary pulled back to West Avenue. This small community actually sits in the center of the City within the area appropriately designated Olde City on local zoning maps, just blocks from the place where the Lake brothers put down stakes in 1879 when they founded the City.

With railroads and trolleys crisscrossing the neighborhood, the area soon became the nexus for housing, commerce, and industry, as well as

the melting pot for pioneering spirited African Americans, Italian Americans, and Native Americans. Some of the oldest housing stock on the island today is on the Westside. Single-family homes, small bungalows, boarding houses, and multi-unit housing, i.e. Oxford Court, Rose Court, Widows' Row, Cranmer's Row, and Mercer Place provided housing for these working class people.

The story of the African American community is memorialized on a plaque which stands near the southwest corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and West Avenue, now the site of Heist Insurance Agency. In 2010 descendants of the City's early African American families convened to dedicate the plaque to the men and women whose struggles made Ocean City a place where later generations could grow and prosper.



Westside Plaque at 7th and West

It is not by happenstance that the plaque should stand at this location. For decades, this was the site of Turner's Mobil Station, a gas station and candy store owned and operated by brothers Edward and David Turner. In earlier days, Turner cleaned the car windows while he filled your gas tank and your children bought penny candy from his store. The station was a place where men gathered around a free-standing stove in a room heavy with cigar smoke to exchange stories and solve community problems. Next door was John Motley,

*(Continued on page 4)*

# FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Hello, Fans of History!

We are rapidly approaching the Summer! We have set an ambitious schedule of events coming in the next couple of months. Check out in these pages all that we have to look forward to.

Especially exciting is the fact we will have two summer exhibits. The first one opens on June 8, in conjunction with our upstairs neighbors, the Ocean City Arts Center, entitled, "I Remember Grace." The Arts Center has invited artists to depict Grace and we will be showing new and rarely exhibited items from the Museum's collection to celebrate our City's Princess, including pieces from Anthony LaRusso's private collection. The love affair that our community has with Grace Kelly continually amazes me and I am so glad to be apart of it. Our exhibit will run into July.

The second will highlight Ocean City's businesses that have served Ocean City for more than 50 years. The landmark businesses that we all know and love will be featured, including Shriver's, Wallace's Hardware and Wonderland to name a few. That exhibit will run from July and into September.

I am extremely pleased with all the effort that is presented here in this issue. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Susan Hohman, our editor, for herding this issue into production.

All the Best,

~Jeff

Jeffrey R. McGranahan, *Executive Director*

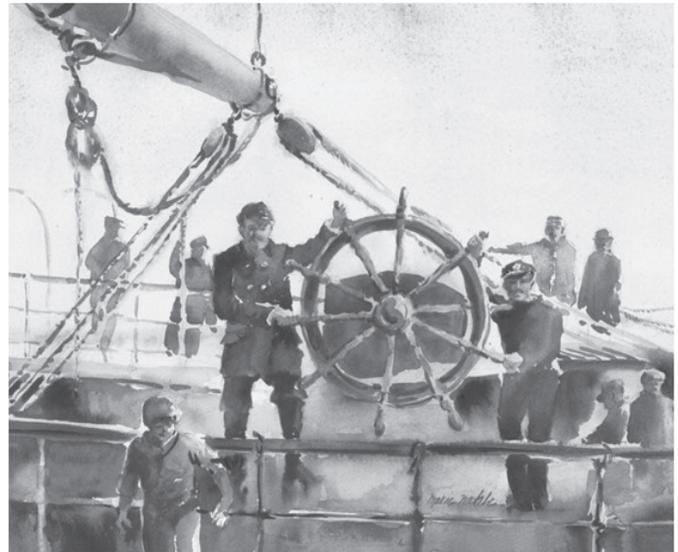
## 2018 BENEFACTOR'S GIFT

With the help of Marie Natale, Ocean City's best known watercolorist, the Museum has produced a giclee\* of a watercolor entitled, "The Crew of the Sindia." The watercolor brings to life the Sindia and her crew in a new way.

Each member renewing as a Benefactor (\$125) will receive a signed and numbered limited edition print of the watercolor. There were only 100 produced and we feel they will be handsome additions to our Benefactors' homes or offices. Those who have already renewed as Benefactors in 2018 will be presented a print at a special Benefactors' reception at the Museum on July 7 to kick off our summer activities.

If you have already renewed at a membership level other than Benefactor, you can credit that amount towards your upgraded membership.

\* giclee— a technology for fine art or photograph reproduction using a high-quality inkjet printer to make individual copies.



# Curatorial Committee News

Why donate? The Museum is always looking for artifacts that help tell our story. Recently, we received two acquisitions that are souvenirs from visits to Ocean City. One was a ruby flash cup, dated 1908, given by Carol L. Warrington. Her grandmother had visited Ocean City, where she purchased the cup and had it etched with her name (Sara Cassel). The other was a fob with the name Mattie A. Boyle engraved on it. The donor, Elizabeth Daley, found it by metal detecting. It seems that we all save something that will remind us of the past.



On Friday, June 8, we will be opening the “I Remember Grace” exhibit featuring our guest curator, Anthony LoRusso. This exhibit will run concurrently with the Ocean City Arts Center. The event is the first for both organizations!

Currently, the Museum is gearing up for the summer exhibit, which will open on July 6 and run through September. It will feature Ocean City businesses that have been operating more than fifty years. We are looking for donations to support this exhibit, including photographs of the people working at the businesses, memorabilia used to advertise, or other items that tell their history.

The curatorial committee meets monthly to review donations received during the month, while the exhibit team is busy planning our exhibits.



## Upcoming Events @ The Historical Museum

### JUNE

- Our fourth annual **Grace Kelly Tea**, “I Remember Grace,” will be held at the Flanders Hotel on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, at 2:00 P.M. Kristina Haugland, the Le Vine Associate Curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, will be our speaker this year. Miss Ocean City, Madison Leigh Kennelly, will be attending. Tickets are \$35.00 for Museum members and \$38.00 for the general public. Tickets must be purchased by June 1.

### JULY

- **The Summer Lecture Series** will kick off on July 5. Fred Miller and Stef Godfrey will discuss Ocean City Magazine's 50th issue and how history is a part of each magazine. For the complete schedule, see page 8.
- The fourth annual **Antique Fair** will be held on Saturday, July 14, 2018, from 9:00 AM—3:00 PM. in the Senior Center and Atrium area at the Ocean City Community Center. This event is free. Donations are welcome. Special Event: Meet the Curator for the Grace Kelly Exhibit.

- **History Camp** will be held at the Museum the second and third weeks in July. It is open to children ages 8-15. See page 7 for complete details.

### AUGUST

- Session 3 of **History Camp** will be held at the Museum from August 6th through the 10th.
- **The Summer Lecture Series** continues in the Chris Maloney Hall in the library. See complete schedule on page 8.

### SEPTEMBER

- **The Annual Luncheon** will be held at the Great Bay Country Club in Somers Point on Wednesday, September 19, 2018. Details will appear in the September issue. Cost: Members \$45, Guests \$50
- **The Summer Lecture Series** wraps up on September 13. See schedule on page 8.

(Continued from page 1)  
 the ice man. And across the street was Lottie Singletary's beauty shop, while Sylvester Thompson's construction company was just around the corner. A few steps away, Sample's Tea Room offered fare for the hungry. Or perhaps you preferred food from Mrs. Well's dining room, Mom Pat's kitchen, Dick Warren's restaurant, or the Green Pea Café. Archie and Rachel Alston, husband and wife, were but two of numerous barbers on the Westside. The neighborhood also boasted its own express men and taxi owners, tailors, a shoe shop, wallpaper hanger, employment services, Brown's Hauling, and Mrs. Carter, a chemist who bottled her own bleach.

Bolden's Rooming House, the Brydson's Washington Hotel (also known as the Pink Hotel), and Hotel Comfort were popular accommodations. Rev. Comfort's hotel was strategically located on Bay Avenue near the end of the West Jersey & Seashore Railroad opposite Steamboat



Al Carpenter and Limo

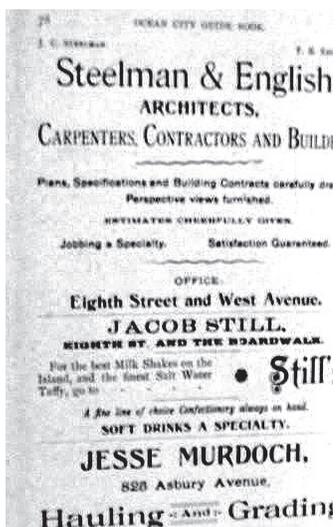


Al-May Inn

Landing. Here the Right Rev. Comfort hosted parties for visitors and local elite who dined on “oysters, clams, ice cream, confectioneries” and homemade ginger beer (*Clarence Motley, Afro Banner; Drena Money Garret 2017*). Alvin's Gardening and Florist Shop operated from Hotel Comfort. The Al-May Inn and Limousine Service, owned and operated by Al and May Carpenter, included a fleet of Cadillacs used to taxi patrons to and from the inn. The Carpenters are buried at Gouldtown Memorial Park in Cumberland County, suggesting Native American ancestry.

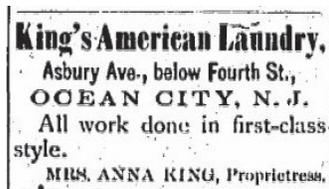
The Moneys, Morgans and Bryants all owned variety stores on the Westside. Owners of the Silver Slipper dance hall and various billiard halls provided social outlets, while civic and fraternal clubs and organizations lent support and cultural enrichment (*William Griffin 2013*). These are but a few of the ancestors commemorated by the plaque. With so much generated from within, the neighborhood was largely self-sufficient.

The earliest known African Americans to settle here began arriving in the 1880s. They were entrepreneurs, skilled craftsmen, and laborers seeking to get a foothold on the ground floor. Jacob, Mary, and Lewis Still are recorded residents of the City



in the 1885 State census when the town was considered just a summer resort. Year-round inhabitants included 230 White males, 223 White females, 2 Black males, 1 Black female, 4 Foreigners. Jacob Still was the nephew of abolitionist, Underground Railroad conductor, and author Dr. James Harrison Still. Jacob and his wife, Mary, a Salem County native, came to Ocean City from Burlington County where Jacob

had been a broom manufacturer between 1876 and 1881. After relocating to Ocean City, he opened Still's store at 8<sup>th</sup> Street and the



Boardwalk where he advertised the best milk shakes on the island and finest salt water taffy. Jacob, a Civil War veteran, is buried in an unmarked grave at the Baptist Church Cemetery in Upper Township (now surrounded by and maintained by Seaside Cemetery).

By 1892, Mary Jackson, Mrs. Willets, and the King family had joined the Stills. All lived on Asbury Avenue or West Avenue between 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Loretta Harris will be participating in this year's lecture series and will present on August 16, 2018 at 7 PM. She will be speaking about one of OC's forgotten Black entrepreneurs.**

and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets. Anna King owned King's American Laundry (*Polk's 1892 Directory*). The African American population numbered only eleven that year but more than doubled to twenty-three by the 1895 census. Long-time resident John (Pop) Stewart, once thought to be the first African American in the City, arrived that year and lived in the home of Charles Myers. He later married, settled into his home on West Avenue with the huge willow tree, and raised a family. He has descendants who still reside in Ocean City.

The Lake brothers' vision of a religious resort was quickly taking hold. The City caught the attention of John Sheppard Trower, a wealthy and religious African American caterer and financier from the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Trower purchased his first property in Ocean City in 1897 when he bought the Palace Restaurant next to the First National Bank at 8<sup>th</sup> Street and Asbury Avenue. Between 1897 and 1907, he purchased fourteen properties across the

island and held mortgages for Mayor Joseph Champion and Ira Champion.

Between 1897 and 1911, four African American missions/churches opened within the few blocks comprising the Westside: Macedonia Methodist Episcopal Church, led by pastors mostly from Maryland's eastern shore; Union Tabernacle Baptist Church, whose founders were Trower's Germantown contingency; St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, with founding members primarily from Salem County, New Jersey; and Shiloh Baptist Church, the little church that could, whose mother church was in Pleasantville, New Jersey. Shiloh's Rev. I. Grant Harris saved souls from his West Avenue home before his church was built and dedicated with great fanfare. These churches still stand today. Two of the Westside's earliest families who still reside in Ocean City are the Thompsons and Henrys. The two families came from Salem County in 1901 and 1909, respectively,

*(Continued on page 6)*

(Continued from page 5)

and affiliated with St. James A.M.E. Both families have deep roots in New Jersey, with branches documented back to the mid-1700s. Hopewell Baptist Church and First Spiritualist Church have come and gone. Few people remember Rev. Archie Harris of Hopewell Baptist, whose wife sat in a chair and used scissors to clip the church lawn (*Irene Rolls Henry, 2018*).

Westside residents with Native American ancestry include members of the Harmon, Drain, Clark, and Morgan families, all of whom have familial ties and roots in Kent County and Sussex County, Delaware (*Ancestry.com., Mitsawokett.com*). Harmons have lived in and around Ocean City since the early 1900s. Willard Drain, a widower and barber from Indian River, Sussex County, Delaware, lived in Philadelphia before relocating to Ocean City around 1900. His first employment here was replacing John Stewart as a valet for capitalist Sara Myers. He worked as a butler and cook before marrying Cumberland County native Florence Pierce and opening a barber shop in his rooming house on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and West Avenue opposite Turner's Mobil. Drain served on the Board of Trustees of Tabernacle Baptist with John Trower. Nanticoke Indian Chief Charles Cullen "Chief Little Owl" Clark and his father, William Russell "Chief Wyniaco" Clark, lived in Ocean City in the 1920s. Late into the 1950s, Native Americans regularly celebrated their ancestry in tribal dances in front of Riess' Lumber at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Haven Avenue (*Kenneth Thompson, 2014*).

The Westside did grow and prosper as hoped by the early settlers. This small community produced more than its share of teachers and preachers, civil servants, musicians, and beauty queens. It can lay claim to Olympic level athletes, a Hall of Fame golfer, and Secret Service agent for Prince Charles and Princess Diana! And what about the doctors, lawyers and Indian chiefs? Chiropractor Jerry Thompson, Sr., attorney Nathan Davis, Jr. and Chiefs Little Owl and Wyniaco Clark all have ties to Ocean City. Jerry Thompson and Nate Davis are Ocean City Westside natives, while both chiefs are Delaware natives who lived on the Westside.....our doctors, lawyers, and Indian chiefs who helped make Ocean City "America's Greatest Family Resort."

## OCEAN CITY'S RELIGIOUS FOUNDATIONS

A Exhibit in the Museum looking at the establishing of all the churches of Ocean City.



# Pictures from the Spring Brunch at Clancy's by the Bay April 15, 2018



## History Camp



### Calling all children: Adventure Awaits!

Come join us and learn the story of the **Sindia**, Ocean City's favorite ship, as well as many other interesting stories from our rich history. Do you know how the boardwalk got its name, or just why Ezra Lake is someone you should know about? The Museum is pleased to announce that we are expanding our popular History Camp for the summer of 2018. Once again, the Friends and Volunteers of the Ocean city Free Public Library are sponsoring the camps. Their generosity is providing the Museum with funds for books and other supplies to enhance the camp experience.

We are holding the Museum Studies Camp for beginners on July 9-15 and July 16-20. Each session will run from 9 am to 11 am daily. These sessions will highlight areas of the museum chosen by the camp staff. The campers will learn about these areas and then serve as tour guides on the last day of their camp. The Making History camp for older or returning campers will be held August 6-10 from 9-11 each morning. In this session the campers will select which exhibit to research, prepare a power point presentation, and present their findings in Chris Maloney Hall on the last day of camp. Games, activities, and snack will be provided each day. A pizza party for campers, as well as their families and guests, will be the finale of each session.

The cost of the camp is \$25. A limited number of campers can enroll each session. Contact the Museum at 609-399-1801 for more information or to register.

# Grace Kelly Tea

June 6, 2018  
Flanders Hotel  
2pm



Special Appearance by  
Miss Ocean City 2018:  
Madison Leigh Kennelly



Guest Speaker:  
**Kristina Haugland**  
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Member Tickets:  
\$35  
General Admission:  
\$38  
Ticket Deadline:  
June 1, 2018

Tickets online through a link on our website:  
[www.ocnjmuseum.org](http://www.ocnjmuseum.org)

## Summer Lectures

**Thursdays @ 7:00 PM**

All lectures will be held in the OC Public Library's Lecture Hall at the 1735 Simpson Avenue.

*American Sign Language Interpreters will be signing the presentations. Lectures for September will be announced later.*

### FREE ADMISSION

- July 5** *The OC Magazine & Sharing History*  
Fred Miller & Stef Godfrey
- July 12** *Boardwalk Merchants & Shriver's*  
Hank Glazer
- July 19** *Sun Rose Words & Music*  
Roz Lifshin
- July 26** *The Flanders Hotel*  
Ken Cooper
- Aug 2** *Hogate's Restaurant*  
Peter Harp
- Aug 9** *Boyar's Market*  
Robert Blutingen
- Aug 16** *John Trower: A Black OC Entrepreneur*  
Loretta Harris
- Aug 23** *Business in OC in the 1890s*  
Deb Worchel
- Aug 30** *Ward's Bakery*  
Walt Hohman

# 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 will spotlight the "unsung heroes" who give their time and energy to the Museum.*

## Carol Dotts



Carol has always been a Jersey girl, born and raised in Point Pleasant. A graduate of Montclair State College, she moved to Somers Point in 1987, where she married her late husband, Bill Dotts. After she retired as an Administrative Analyst I, functioning as Director of Fiscal Operations for the State of New Jersey, she volunteered at the Atlantic County Historical Society. She also joined the Mainland Choral Society, Garden Club, Questers, and Antique Collec-

tors Club. Carol's interest in history and antiques was sparked by her grandparents, who had a house filled with antiques. Carol now collects German pink pigs from 1859-1917. Carol joined the Museum at the suggestion of her friend Steve Gring, currently Board Secretary. Now she sits on the Board and is very active in supporting our organization. Multi-talented and hardworking, Carol can often be found volunteering behind the scenes at the Museum.

## Barbara Stefano

Barbara, affectionately known to all as Babs, and her husband Joe bought a house and moved permanently to Ocean City in 2002. They had spent many happy summers here and knew they wanted to relocate after retiring as elementary teachers in Pennsylvania. When she saw an article in the Gazette inviting people to become volunteers in our Museum, her love for history and Ocean City prompted her to become involved—a perfect outlet for her talents and energy. Babs is now vice-president of the board and serves on several committees: Special Events, Binnacle, Volunteers, and Membership (chair). With the goal of getting children more involved in Ocean City's history, Babs helped develop History Camp, her favorite Museum activity. Now in its third year, the popular camp is

growing. Babs also volunteers with the Friends and Volunteers of the Library and the Food Cupboard. She assists her husband, who is Quartermaster of VFW Post 6650. In addition, she teaches English one night a week at St. Francis Cabrini Church. With all these activities, Babs still finds time to dote on her six precious grandchildren, her number one priority.



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## 2018 Membership January-April

Jill K. Adamson	Peg Heller	Martin Mozzo & Family
Dorothy Aitkin	Barbara Henderson	Dan and Wilma Murray
Frank Allen	Mary Lois Hughes	James E. Oryniak
Robert Bieler	F. Joseph Kiefner Jr	Kathy and Joe Palermo
Ed Bonek	Marie Knight	John and Eleanor Parker
Dolores Bonewicz	Karen LaRatta	Connie Patten
Richard Booth	Francis Larkins	Melodie Perri
Joanne Budnick	Babette Lavner	Dr. Albert Porreca Jr.
Carol Calsin	Judith Levy	Ken and Suzie Post (new)
Virginia Coco	Edith Little	Karen Quintin
David Crowley	David and Bernice Little	Lois and Tom Rahme
Dawn Dolinsky	Kay Lynn	Joseph and Cathy Rebl (new)
Meredith Donaldson	Jacqueline Maccarone	Carolyn Ruggiero
Lois and Tom Fagan	Steven Marcus	Judith Sanitanni
Patti Farrell (new)	Joyce McNeely	Kathy Sauble (new)
Margaret Feil	Mary Lois Michaels	Jean Simpkins
Carol Frank (new)	Daniel L. Money	Marian Talese (new)
Patricia Hand	Dot and Len Mongo	Edwina and Roy Wagner
Ron and Virginia Gifford	Phyllis Moony	James Woodside and Ellen McCrane
Carol A. Heenan (new)		

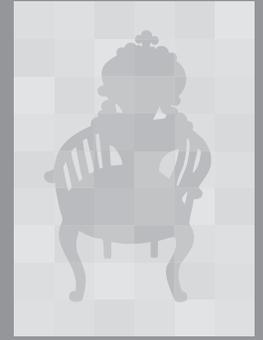
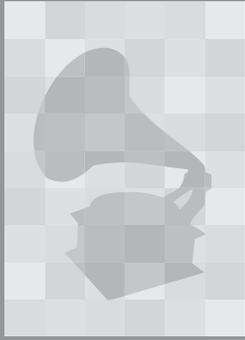
## 2018 Benefactors January-April

Ken Cooper	Richard and Rebecca Stanislaw
Carol Dotts	Ocean City fire fighters Foundation
Louis and Nina Eni	Anne Oves
Jay Gillian	Jeffrey Stefano (new)
Steven and MaryAnn Gring	Judith Stevenson
George and Nancy Hassel (new)	VFW Post 6650
Joel and Caroline McKeever (new)	

## 2018 Special Donations January-April

Colony Club of Ocean City	Kay Lynn
Carol Dotts	Fred Miller
Friends and Volunteers—Ocean City Free Public Library	Joseph and Cathy Rebl
Gillian's Wonderland (GILAMCO)	Judith Santianni
Steve and MaryAnn Gring	Barbara Stefano
Jeffries Family Foundation	Bobbi Taylor
	Dorothy Turner
	Noel Wirth

**The Ocean City Historical Museum is supported in part by a grant administered by the Cape May County Culture & Heritage Commission, from funds granted by the New Jersey Historical Commission.**



# Antiques & Collectibles Fair

**Saturday,**

**July 14, 2018**

**9am to 3pm**

Stainton Senior Center  
Ocean City Community Center  
1735 Simpson Avenue  
Ocean City, NJ 08226

FREE ADMISSION

Shop amongst some of the best known antique and collectible dealers in the region. China, glass, furniture, vintage collectibles, postcards, jewelry, textiles, and more.

For more information: 609-399-1801

## LEGACY GIFTS

### JOIN THE PARKER & LOUISA MILLER SOCIETY

An easy and lasting way to help Ocean City Historical Museum continue its work of preserving local history is to direct a gift through your estate plans.

The following is language you may wish to use when including the Museum in your Will or Trust:

**“I give (the sum of \$\_\_\_\_) or ( \_\_\_\_% ) of my estate to The Ocean City Historical Museum.”**

**“I give and bequeath to Ocean City Historical Museum, after all debts, expenses, and other legacies have been paid, all or \_\_\_\_% of the remainder of my estate.”**

Please remember that these are topics that should be discussed with legal and/or tax professionals and are only presented as suggestions.

# VIEWS FROM THE PAST!

Gillian's Fun Deck (Plymouth Place and the Boardwalk)

Below: The Fun Deck, c. 1930s

Right: The Fun Deck, c. 1970s



# OCEAN CITY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

*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.*



Ocean City Historical Museum, Inc.  
1735 Simpson Avenue  
Ocean City, NJ 08226

Or current resident

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