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Safety First! By Harold Lee

“In the infant days of the city, the volunteer fire companies not only provided protection for property but also the fire houses became neighborhood civic centers. Fire companies provided much of the town’s social activity at the turn of the century.

The first firemen were incorporated as Volunteer Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 at a meeting on March 19, 1890, in the school house on Central Avenue. George Adams was chosen temporary chairman, William Lake, secretary, and Simeon Miller, treasurer. It was almost four months before they had collected enough money to begin buying needed fire-fighting equipment. The men raised much of the funds themselves by benefit dinners and other events. It wasn’t until the fall of 1896 the company built its first fire house on the corner of 9th Street and Asbury Avenue, site of the present City Hall, and erected by the firemen themselves.



Reliance Fire Co #2 — 612 Asbury Ave

Reliance Fire Company No. 2 soon followed and was located on Asbury Avenue near 6th Street, while Liberty Company No. 3 came along a few years later at 12th Street on Asbury Avenue. In their heyday, the three companies had a combined membership of about 200 men. The early volunteers pulled their equipment to fires by manpower and pumped water by hand. After a few years, they switched to horses to draw the apparatus and finally began using motorized vehicles in 1913. One of their most unpleasant tasks in the old days was fighting a fire in a barn at 7th Street and West Avenue when a number of horses burned to death and the firemen worked in near-zero temperatures which froze the clothing on their bodies.



OC's first firehouse, located at 9th & Asbury

I Remember When with Dick Grimes

By Ann Richardson

Students got a history lesson from one of Ocean City's living legends. Mr. Grimes visited the Ocean City High School and rehearsed the impact which the Great Depression had locally. Welcomed by his grandmother, after the tragic deaths of his parents, he took up residence in Ocean City, and has remained a fixture, positive, in the life of the community. He was named 2007 Citizen of the Year.

His recall of the Depression is that "It was tough. There were bread lines; many people were out of work. The only thing which we had in our favor is that we were a resort town and things changed in the summer." Ward's Pastry was one of the businesses which helped out. "We would go in and clean up the kitchen and we would get paid in day-old bread and buns. We'd take them back to the neighborhood and distribute the baskets."

One owner who helped the poor was Chris Montagna. "He had the restaurant on the Bay and the fish market. The big attraction was the Flying Cloud. and people came from miles and miles around for a ride on that boat. A Jewish butcher shared meat trimmings w/ the youth. "That's how we survived on the goodness of others."

Segregation was a reality in those times, too. However, he was one of the first African-American mail carriers and went on to a career in the Post Office. His wife, Marizita, taught home economics at the high school. But, colored students were not allowed to use the pool at OCHS, except on Fridays...when it would be drained and refilled for the coming week.

In spite of all this, Mr. Grimes said "We survived. We survived because we are a wonderful community and because we helped each other. Times were tough, but so were we."

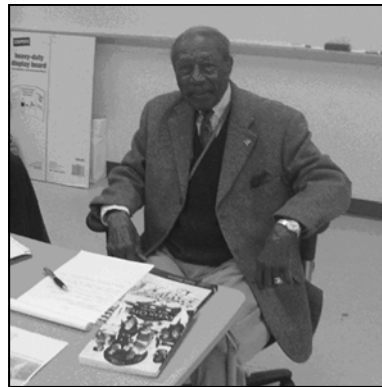
I Remember When:

This is a continuing feature of a series of articles designed to draw on YOUR memories of Ocean City. We welcome submissions for future newsletters to be mailed to the OCHM or e-mailed to Jean Bell jmb580@comcast.net

A Report from the Classroom

By Kelly Martin

On Thursday, December 3, the students of Miss Martin's English 9 class welcomed a very special guest. Mr. Richard Grimes, a 91 year old life-long old resident of Ocean City, shared with the children his experiences while growing up during the Great Depression. He described the 1930s as a community of togetherness, where everyone struggled with poverty. He told stories of sweeping bakeries, cleaning butcheries, collecting fish, and



gathering driftwood as a way of life. Mr. Grimes, a former student of Ocean City High School, connected with the students by telling football tales, discussing marble tournaments, baby

parades, and about the award winning lifeguard teams. Mrs. Rachel Dolhanczyk, the Curator of the Ocean City Historical Museum, accompanied the presentation by distributing original photographs, script that was used as money, OCHS yearbooks, and a telephone directory from this time period.

The freshmen English students experienced living history and were greatly intrigued by this fascinating man. The students are currently studying John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, a story about two men traveling together during the Great Depression. Many were shocked that Mr. Grimes shared some of the same experiences as the characters in the novel, like struggling for work, friendship during difficult times, and even segregation. The students certainly gained a greater appreciation of the novel, of the Great Depression, and of Ocean City. Many thanks go to Mr. Grimes, Mrs. Dolhanczyk, and the Ocean City Historical Museum for sharing this noteworthy presentation with the students.

Volunteer Spotlight

Featuring: Edwina Wagner



Edwina has been coming to Ocean City since attending the Drexel Institute of Technology (now Drexel University), where she majored in design. She hung out on the 14th Beach when Bob's Restaurant was a hot dog stand under the Boardwalk!

Always considering herself a Philadelphian, she admits to residence in New York where she pursued a career as an apparel designer. And, on retirement, began a life of volunteering. At first, a fascinating job as a tour guide of Long Island mansions during designer showcases, and then multiple jobs at Museum exhibits, plus lectures. Her work as a Eucharistic Minister for her Church led to an outreach program which involved finding jobs, housing, medical and legal assistance, and managing a food cupboard.

When husband, Roy, retired, they decided to move to Ocean City. (Why go on vacation when you can be on vacation, year round? And, it put them closer to children and grandchildren.) They immediately became active in their Church and Edwina found fun doing the Beachwalk, working at the Clothes Closet, and becoming involved in First Night.

The beautiful Historical Museum was a lure, too! There, she is a docent, taking people on tours and giving them the history and background of Ocean City. (She and Carolyn Tonti work together organizing the Museum's numerous pictures.) And, for a favorite contribution, Edwina dresses up in vintage costume for the Children's Tea, delighting all who see her.



Liberty Company No. 3—1200 block of Asbury Avenue

Although they (the volunteers) disbanded as an active fire fighting force in June, 1930, the first paid fireman was Harry Reinhart, who had the title of caretaker of the fire station. The paid forces increased slowly, and by 1907 there were only three paid members, one at each fire house. They were Samuel Carhart, Charles Watson, and Luther Wallace, Sr. From 1905 to 1927, the year of the big boardwalk fire, paid men gradually were added by the city until there were about 34. On July 1, 1930, by city ordinance, the departments were placed on a full-paid basis. A third station was opened about 25 years later at 29th Street and West Avenue."

Editor's Note:

Ocean City's firefighters are considered the finest; responding to emergencies at both ends of the island, well-trained and well-prepared for any concern that may ensue, both large or small. A well-deserved salute to them is included in the Museum's 2010 calendar. The calendar is available for sale in the Museum Gift Shop.

Excerpted from Harold Lee's book which was published by The Friends of the Ocean City Historical Museum in August, 1965; Fifth Printing, October, 1999, and reprinted as a tribute to Harold Lee for his efforts in preserving Ocean City history & "Ocean City Memories" was published in 1979 by the Centennial Commission of Ocean City, New Jersey.

Curator's Corner

By Rachel Rodgers Dolhanczyk

Winter Blues? No Way!

Both in the museum world and in the tourism industry, many people wonder what it is that “you do” during the winter months. Coupled with being closed to the public and people really start to wonder. In many regards, your part-time staff (Sandy and me) is busier during this time of year. Just like at home it is time to clean house and prepare for the future.

As we put 2009 to bed, file away financial and business records, write interim reports for grants and reflect; we prep for the not so distant and distant future. The future holds a special exhibit on sand pails from the collection of Robert (Need to check last name.) The images depicted on the pails tell a unique story about American history. Thursdays Nights at the Museum (lecture series) and Wednesdays for Kids are in the works, as well. This spring, two 10th grade classes will visit us from Ocean City High School. Their teacher, Barbara Daniel, is in the process of developing a new pilot program that will include three sessions both in the classroom and at the Museum. Our increasing relationship with the school has proven to be beneficial for all involved. I was fortunate to accompany Mr. Dick Grimes to Kelly Martin's 9th grade English class. The students recently read *Of Mice and Men* and Ms. Martin wanted her students to better relate to the 1930s. Mr. Grimes told of his experiences of the Depression in Ocean City and I selected items from the collection to accompany his recollections. (Please see Ms. Martin's article about the visit.)

Curator offices are always piled high with new acquisitions. The trick is to try and get ahead, but there is always someone new coming through the door who recently cleaned out their attic. In 2009, there were 52 new accessions. Some donations may be a simple photograph, while others may contain a box of treasures. All are processed in the same matter: donor thanked, deed of gift signed, cataloged, marked/tagged and housed. This is a good time of year to work on those collections and find homes. Of course, it is easy to take a step forward, but then wind up taking ten steps back. For example, it may be a simple notion to put a summer dress in storage until one opens a box containing both summer and winter dresses. Then a whole new project commences to consolidate and re-wrap items in

tissue paper, make new labels and note the change of location in the cataloging software. A five-minute project becomes a daylong activity! Don't take this observation as a complaint; it is one of my favorite aspects of the job and the best way to find long forgotten treasures.

Another example of a winter project involves the research library. The next time you use the Museum's research collection, you will find it easier to locate books. Sandy re-housed our book collection and created subject dividers. Any books not cataloged were done so by the Public Library. Others materials were shifted and re-housed to better aid researchers and volunteers. Sandy has also been developing the 2010 Tree of Honor, which, this year, will reflect the seasons. Thank you to all who so graciously support this program last year.

The construction and renovation pose interesting challenges that can greatly alter a workday. Recently, the removal of the concrete steps and platform to the Community Center caused such vibrations that the work had to be ceased so that items could be removed from the wall. Fortunately, three Trustees had stopped in and the extra hands were put to good use. In preparation of the “sail” removal from the roof, we have moved everything that would be in harms way of an accident were to occur. While the moving and taking down has proven to be tiring, there is a light at the end of the tunnel as mid-June approaches. The Museum will have a new, prominent entryway, a start-of-the-art fire suppression system, a new kitchenette, multi data/voice ports, WiFi and use of the lecture hall and meeting rooms, not to mention to coffee shop in the Atrium. Until then we will be patient and flexible and continue to work on projects such as the examples noted in this column. See you in a few months!

Wish List

Want to help the Museum? Consider purchasing an extra ream of paper or other supplies the next time you shop. Here are some of the supplies that we use daily:

- Copy paper
- Envelopes, self adhesive (business and letter)
- Manila envelopes
- Three-ring binders
- Pens (ones that write well)

President's Message by Steve Gring

Let me begin this message by introducing myself to our membership & readership. I am Steve Gring, a retired school administrator from Pennsylvania who has lived permanently in Ocean City since 2002. You could call me a "newbie" if you like. My wife Mary Ann & I were profiled in a past edition of the Binnacle.

I have been a volunteer at the Museum since 2002 & a Trustee since 2004. During that time, I have chaired the Curatorial Committee & co-chaired the Annual Fair Committee.

In my new role as Museum President, I look forward to meeting & interacting with our membership in the following months.

I want to devote the second portion of my message to commenting on the current construction issues that are impacting Museum life. As many of you know, the Museum is part of the much larger expansion & renovation project for the Community Center. In discussing this project, the phrase "temporary inconvenience, permanent improvement" comes to mind. The Museum will be faced with several extended closures during the next weeks & months, partially to accommodate the entire building project & partially to accommodate work within the Museum. A new entrance for the Museum is being created & will face an atrium entrance to the Community Center. This will necessitate our postponing the annual Children's Tea until later in the year. Please stay posted for details on rescheduling this popular event.

On the "permanent improvement side," I envision the Museum becoming an even more integral part of the Community Center. We will be accessing much needed computer networking that will be integrated into the entire Community Center. We will have the use of a renovated kitchenette & we will be able to regain some lost exhibit space in the area just outside our storage room. Many readers will recall that this space formerly housed our military display.

These are exciting times for our Museum. Our staff continues to be available during construction even though on many occasions, for safety reasons, the Museum itself must remain closed to the public. Please continue to contact us either by phone or e-mail.

We are all anticipating the "springtime" of our Museum!

Construction Photos



2010 Calendar of Events & Programs

For more information, please visit our website at www.ocnjmuseum.org, watch for email notifications , or call the Museum 609.399.1801.

- June 17th Sixty Summers in Ocean City with William H. Parkhurst
- June 19th OCHM Annual Fair
- June 24th Buckets of Fun: Sand Pails and Beach Toys with Robert Smith
- July 1st 5th Annual Sinda Miniature Golf Day at Playland's Seaport Village
Golf Between 9th and 10th streets on the Boardwalk 10:00am-4:00
pm. Free tickets must be picked up at the Museum
- July 1st 100 Years of Boy Scouts with Rocky Gannon
- July 8th 131 Years of Real Estate in Ocean City with Ken Cooper
- July 15th History of the Ocean City Fire Department
- July 22nd Secrets of the Vault: Museum Treasures
- July 29th Ocean City Beach patrol with Fred Miller
- August 5th “Who’s Where” in the local cemeteries with Jim Campbell
- August 12th TBA
- August 19th Researching your Home with County Clerk Rita Marie Fulginiti
- August 26th Then & Now, a Pictorial Essay of Ocean City with Michael McMahon
- Sept. 2nd The Roaring ‘20s: What We Were Singing with Drs. Richard &
Rebecca Stanislaw

Wednesday's with Kids will be back this summer! July 7th – August 25th

Special Summer Exhibit

Buckets of Fun: Sand Pails and Beach Toys
from the collection of Robert Smith of Shippensburg, PA
Over 200 sand pails, sand sifters, vintage sand shovels and sand molds
from the mid-1800's thru 1960s.
Exhibit opening and reception TBA

MANY THANKS TO OUR NEW MEMBERS & RENEWED MEMBERS

October 2009-January 2010

Jim Finnegan, Jr. Kay Lynn Susan Hafsrud Michael Girone & Carole Subotich Valerie Henszey Elizabeth Booth Ruth Stein Ruth Ann Bosworth Richard Keast William & Barbara Smeck Patricia Conway Lois & Tom Fagan William Gebhardt Janet Andrews Joan Chapman Irvin N. Tyson David & Leslie Hartzell Carol Sedergran Lynne Kranich Patricia N. Mallas Carol Milhiser Robert Mayers Jean Bell	Randolph & Tracy Lee William & Sandra McMahon Jay Gillian - Gillian's Wonderland Pier Alice & Ralph Moseley Wendy Harper Sylva & Marino Bertini Joanne Budnick Jane Rubino Harry Brooks John S. Gabel (Jack) Gene S Di Medio Willaim C. Kohler Louis & Nina Eni Thomas Ciaverelli Jacquelyn Maccarone Michael Foreman Carol Schoff Bill Hughes Alexandra Ford Dan & Wilma Murray Mack & Manco Inc. William Harvey	Mabel Hanscom Elizabeth G. Dewees Dick Grimes Lorraine Coholan George Tice W. Richard & Patricia Ann Gum Robert L. Bachich Sig & Doris Rutkowski Michael Hinchman Peg Heller Vince Kelley Marjorie A. Brooks George C. Koch F. Joseph Kiefner, Jr. Joan Campagna Austin & Linda Short Carla Heist Charles & Eileen Smith Mary Walsh Donna & Michael Bastianelli Dr. Ken Given Mr. & Mrs.	Carmen Conicelli Charles Dolaway Gerry McKenna Sal & Kitty Paone Dr. Karl Rugart Joan Kurtz Margaret Schock Beryl & Terry Webb Charlie & Betty Davis Mary Ann Struthers Edna Henry Lewis & Marie Mawson Connie Patten Francis Larkins Marie Manos Betty Ann Harp Dean R. & Loretta C. Shacklett
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Accessions

Since Sept.— Dec. 2009, the following have donated objects, photographs and/or documents to the Museum's collection:

Eleanor R. Speich
Tina Cornman Gibson
Ken Cooper
2nd Chance Thrift Store (Cornerstone
Community Church)
Craig & Lee Knox
Ocean City Tabernacle
Janet Andrews
Mildred Robbins
Joan Kurtz
Christine Detwiler
Arthur J. Cox
Julius A. Green
Ed Wisham
Doug Longenecker



Holiday Greeting Display 2009

Thank you to the following donors for the Holiday Greeting Display 2009, benefiting the Wednesday for Kids program 2010

Mary Dowlin Bernard Campbell Joanne Budnick Tyra Payant Jack & Joan Kurtz	Beatrice Sharp Betty Hellard Gillian Family Sandy & Rachel
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Grants & Donations

City of Ocean City
Gillian's Wonderland Pier
Mary Ann Gring
Patricia Mallas
Karen Riley
Denise McDugall
Ruth Ann Bosworth (Tree of Honor)
Jim & Linda Houck
William Kohler
Michael Foreman

***Stay in touch with OCHM
Sign up for email updates!***

Would you like to receive monthly updates from the Museum via email?

Would you like to be reminded of programs and events?

***If so, please submit your name and email address to
info@ocnjmuseum.org!***

In order to improve communications and save postage/printing costs, we will send e-blasts and e-news to you electronically throughout the year. Of course, we will still print and mail *The Binnacle* and you can always check out updated information on our website at www.ocnjmuseum.org

*Ocean City Historical Museum's
Mission Statement
The Mission of the Ocean City Historical
Museum, Inc. is to maintain and operate a quality
Historical Museum in Ocean City,
New Jersey with the cooperation and
assistance of the City of Ocean City.
The specific goals of the Ocean City Historical
Museum, Inc. are to collect, preserve and
display objects that are of historical worth and interest
to Ocean City and surrounding areas; and to provide
educational and cultural programs pertaining to Ocean
City, New Jersey and surrounding areas.*



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