



# THE BINNACLE

Winter 2019  
No. 25

Ocean City's Home for History

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## **The Flanders**

by Carol Dotts

In 1922, with the completion of the Delaware River Bridge (now known as the Benjamin Franklin Bridge) and to compete with the other resort towns, Ocean City saw a need for a full service resort hotel. The Chamber of Commerce appointed a group of Philadelphia and Ocean City businessmen to form the Ocean Front Hotel Corporation. The members were J. Howard Slocum (president), who also managed the Princeton Inn; William Massey, (treasurer); Howard Stainton, and Allen Corson. Vivian B. Smith, an OCHS graduate, was the architect; he also designed other OCNJ landmarks, such as the old high school, the Music Pier, and City Hall. David McClelland of Philadelphia was the contractor.

The Flanders was built in the Spanish Mission Revival style and was constructed using steel girders and concrete (billed as "fireproof"). Built at 11<sup>th</sup> Street and the Boardwalk, the hotel was named after the Battle of Flanders in Belgium, an acknowledgment of the sacrifices of the fallen Allied soldiers of World War I. Construction began on November 11, 1922. The Flanders was not completed when it opened on July 28, 1923, with a dinner party attended by dignitaries and prominent locals.



An early change for the Flanders was made after much of the boardwalk was destroyed in the 1927 fire. When the boardwalk was pushed east, the Flanders installed several additional pools, including a salt-water Olympic sized one and a diving one. For generations these pools were people's touchstones of the Flanders.

By 1932, Elwood F. Kirkman, a name long associated with the Hotel, acquired it. The new managers brought in many changes over their long tenure to keep pace with vacationers' expectations. For forty years, the Flanders enjoyed an unrivaled popularity and dominated the Ocean City skyline. Kirkman was owner of the Hotel until the time of his death in 1993.

In the post-World War II world, American vacationers sought things the Flanders could not provide, including private baths. Especially after the Port-o-Call opened in 1966, the Flanders fell on hard times.

(Continued pg. 4)

# NEW MUSEUM TRUSTEES

## Victor Daniel

Vic has been a year-round resident of Ocean City since he retired in 2016, after a long career managing information technology in manufacturing and distribution organizations. Originally from Virginia, he lived in the Philadelphia suburbs for more than 40 years. He vacationed in Ocean City since the late 70s and became a property owner here in 2007. He enjoys the small town feeling and family friendly atmosphere of OC.

Vic's lifelong interest in history led him to volunteer at the Museum, where he has participated in many activities, including history camp, block party, Bubblemania, front desk greeter, and tour guide. As a trustee, he plans to contribute by sharing his technology and accounting experience as he becomes further involved in Museum projects. He is looking forward to learning more about Ocean City history.

## Jodi L. King

Jodi grew up in Upper Township and graduated from Ocean City High School. She has been employed by Sturdy Savings Bank for 19 years and is currently the AVP/Branch Manager of both Ocean City locations. "Ocean city is such a fun place to live and work. I love the people, the craziness of the summer and especially the peaceful winters. This community organizes great events for all ages and the residents really care about the local businesses. Also my son loves the rides and waves so we go to the beach and boardwalk in the summer which are the best."

Jodi has always been interested in local history and wants to help preserve it for generations to come. She hopes to get involved in growing the visitation to the Museum and the donations needed to sustain it. She looks forward to being a member of the team and to contributing in any way she can to ensure the Museum's success.

## Winter in Ocean City 1911



## 2019 Black History Exhibit

“Country boy to world stage.” That’s the way Theodore Ford describes his journey from Ocean City boy off to join the Air Force to Secret Service Agent travelling the world with the U.S. Diplomatic Service. Theodore followed in the footsteps of his older brothers, Samuel Ellis Ford, Jr. and Norman Kenneth Ford. Samuel led the way by being part of the Air Force team that constructed Thule Air Force Base and radar site in arctic Greenland. Norman retired from the U.S. Army where he was a helicopter mechanic and flight engineer. He went to work for the Federal Aviation Administration where he rose to Police Major Station Commander at Dulles International/Washington National Airports in Washington, D.C. He was a first responder during the September 9, 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon.

Donald Ford Sr, a second generation Ford in the military, is known as the warrior in the family. He served as Flight Engineer aboard the Spectre AC-130 gunship, providing cover for troops in Thailand.

Every family has a story to tell. At the heart of Ocean City’s Ford family story is Ruby Wheatley Ford. In this exhibit, her offspring come together to share their stories as a tribute to her, the strong woman, loving and steadfast influence in their lives who paved the way for their success.

In a first ever showing, the Ocean City Historical Museum is honored to present the exhibit depicting highlights of the Ford family’s 100+ collective years of government service. Four generations of Fords contribute to more than a century of service. The exhibit will run from February 1 through February 28.

We are not makers of history, we are made by history.  
Martin Luther King, Jr

## Upcoming Events at the Historical Museum



### February

- **Black History Exhibit** “The Ford Family: Heroes and Sheores” exhibit will open on February 1, light refreshments will be served
- **Childrens Tea** The annual tea, which is open to boys and girls, will be held on February 9, at 11:45 AM to 2:00 PM. The theme is “Pirates and Scallywags”. The event will begin with a program in the Museum, followed by the high tea in the Senior Center. Cost for tickets is \$10 per person.

### April

- **Spring Brunch Buffet** will be held at Clancy’s by the Bay in Somers Point on Sunday April 28 from 12:30 to 2:30 PM . John Leoper will present a program entitled “Snow Ice and Sand.” Tickets are \$28 for members and \$32 for guests.

**Watch your email for upcoming events**



**Spectre AC-130 Gunship**

*(The Flanders continued from page 1)*

The pools that were such an important part of the experience closed permanently in 1978. The hotel officially closed in 1995, after selling off the sand lot that had housed those famous pools. (That sand lot would become Playland's Castaway Cove.)

While this was a dark time for the Flanders, a developer, James Dwyer saw a vision of the Flanders reborn and acquired the property. Over the subsequent years he spent more than \$12 million to convert the Flanders from a 220-room hotel into a 95-room condominium. Unfortunately, Dwyer and the Flanders became mired in numerous legal battles, leading to the removal of Dwyer and the closing of the Hotel yet again in 2002.

In 2003, new investors, Ocean City Partners, brought new direction to the Flanders Hotel. In 2005, the Flanders was converted into a Condominium Association. Despite financial struggles, the newly elected President Peter Voumouris completed upscale renovations to provide five elegant penthouses and set the Flanders on a new trajectory.

Even after 95 years, the Flanders still exudes the elegance of its storied history and rightfully holds the title of the "Jewel of the Southern Jersey Shore."

### *Flanders Dinner Party*

*July 28th, 1923*

*Consomme Yvette*

*Aiguillette of Striped Bass*

*Saddle of Spring Lamb*

*Potatoes Hollandaise*

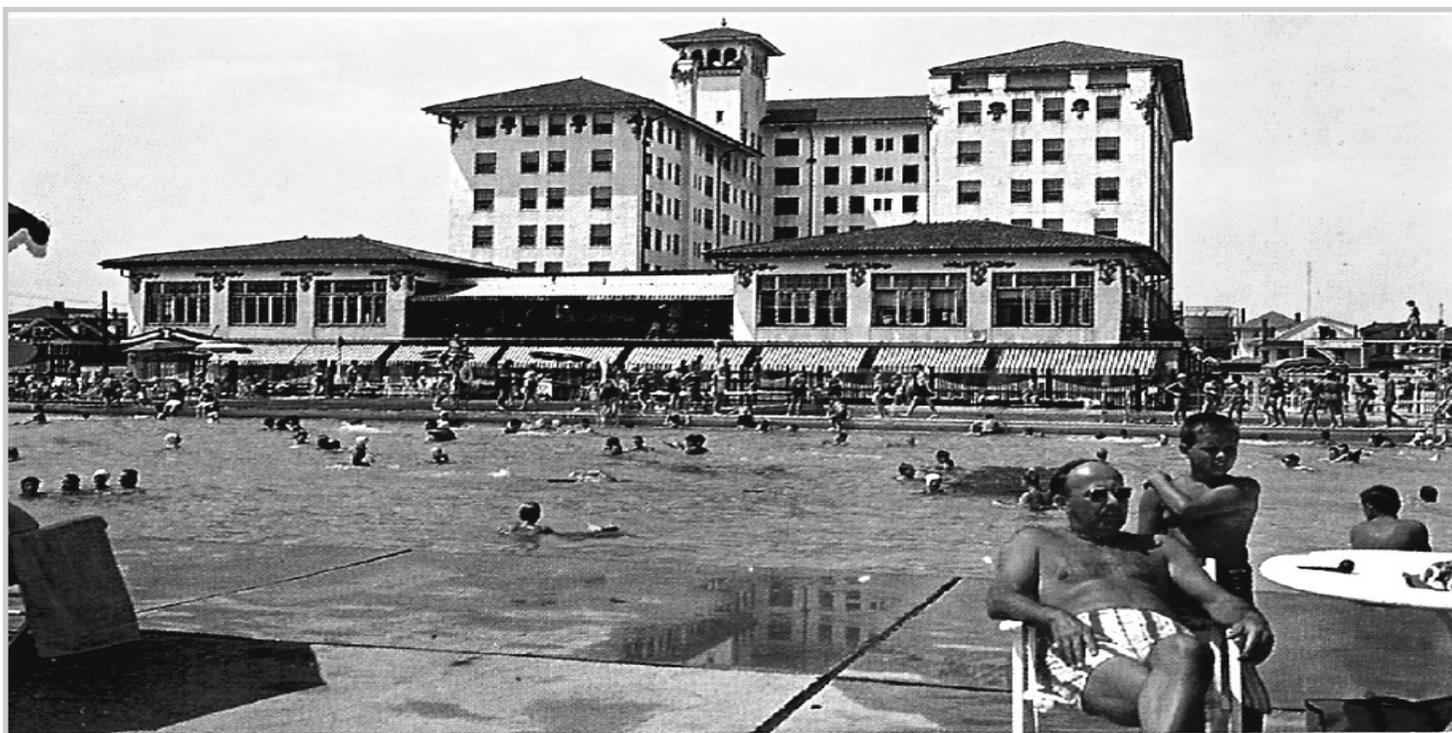
*Fresh Peas*

*Punch Parfait D'Amour*

*Supreme of Chicken Moussele*

*Mousse Glace Flanders*

*Assorted Cakes*



## Curatorial Committee

Recently, our former Executive Director, Jeff McGranahan took a trip down to Georgetown to acquire artifacts from Mr. William Cassidy, who summered in Ocean City from 1947 until 2013. He collected various items from the shore including a framed and lighted three-dimensional nautical chart of the waters around Ocean City. This is a 1950s era chart published by the United States Department of Commerce and can be found in the entrance of the Museum. The lighted, three-dimensional chart was made in 2016, by Bobby Nash of Latitude Kinsale in Kinsale, Cork, Ireland and is layered to show contours and depths of the waters.



**Nautical Chart of Ocean City, 1950  
United States Department of Commerce**

## THIS OLD HOUSE SERIES

### Lomax House

By Loretta Thompson Harris

This unassuming two-story duplex in a quiet neighborhood on Simpson Avenue in Olde City Ocean City has been there for more than a century. Entirely surrounded by new construction, a coat of contemporary colored paint helps it belie its true age and blend in with surrounding houses. On close inspection, you can still find traces of the hot pink paint favored by one former tenant. Its frame structure has stood the test of time, weathering the worst of floods and storms and providing shelter for the best and least of mankind. If walls could talk, these old walls would reveal details of some of Ocean City's interesting but all too often unrecorded history.

If walls could talk, these walls could share stories of trials and tribulations, tragedy and triumph as hotel chef Preston Lomax and brother-in-law Rev. Israel Grant Harris teamed to develop extensive plans for a neighborhood church and housing for summer workers. In 1912, Lomax purchased this Simpson Avenue property from City founder Rev. James Lake and took up residence. Rev. Harris pastored a church in Pleasantville while residing on West Avenue in Ocean City. Lomax, Rev. Harris and followers met regularly at the West Avenue home and began organizing Shiloh Baptist Church. In the interim, Harris converted and saved souls from his West Avenue residence. The establishment of this home based "church" was openly challenged as unnecessary by members of an existing neighborhood Baptist church given the limited population of potential church-goers

Shiloh's founders pressed on and purchased a lot on Simpson Avenue immediately north of Lomax's duplex. The cornerstone for a new church was laid in April 1913 and the new edifice dedicated in June. On September 30, 1913, the church was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin. The fire, swept by northerly winds, consumed the

church, gutted the north side of the duplex and damaged the south side. Undaunted, Harris and Lomax pursued their plans acquiring several additional plots in the neighborhood. Harris took up residence in one side of the duplex and held church services on the ground floor of Lomax's duplex until 1923 when the congregation acquired a church building and relocated it to 7<sup>th</sup> Street near Simpson, just a stone's throw away from the burned out church site.

The untimely death of Preston Lomax in 1926 spelled the end of development plans. Creditors eventually foreclosed on properties held by Lomax and Harris as individuals. Both families moved to California where Rev. Harris again pastored a church and Lomax's daughter, Gertrude, an Ocean City native, gained fame as an entertainment writer and nightclub owner who hobnobbed with comedians Bill Cosby and Richard Pryor and pop icon Michael Jackson. More than a century later, Shiloh Baptist Church, the little church that could, lives on today at its 7<sup>th</sup> Street location.

If walls could talk, certainly the walls of this house would tell us about pastoral foster care of orphans and blessed matrimonial ceremonies performed here by Rev. Harris. Every now and then, in a moment of reflection, an elderly person from the neighborhood still mentions having been married there.

If walls could talk, these walls would tell us whether old records incorrectly list Florida Jones as a resident in the home when her name was actually Blanche Perdita Jones formerly from Florida.



**The Lomax House**



**Civil War sword found under floorboards  
In the Lomax House**



**Gertrude  
Lomax with  
Michael  
Jackson**

## **The Year in Review—2018**

February's notable event was Teddy and the Bears, the Children's Tea sponsored by Gillian's Wonderland. The Museum marked Black History Month with a special exhibit, The Seasons of Life.

In April the Museum held a brunch at Clancy's by the Bay, where Ken Cooper presented a program on Historic Houses of Ocean City. The Museum also featured an exhibit of the historic Easter Parade, as well as a T-shirt contest that raised funds for the museum.

May events included a special exhibit on Ocean City's favorite daughter, Grace Kelly, presented by guest curator Anthony LoRusso, as well as a fundraiser held at Randazzo's.

June's highlight was the annual Grace Kelly High Tea, held at the Flanders Hotel. The speaker was H. Kristina Haugland, Associate Curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

July was a busy month, with the Antiques Fair, the first session of History Camp, and the beginning of the Lecture Series, which ran through September.

August events included the second session of History Camp and the continuation of the Lecture Series. In addition, a talk on Harvey Lake was presented during the Lake family reunion, where the Museum was given Harvey Lake's ring.

In September the Annual Luncheon, honoring Dr. Richard Stanislaw, trustee emeritus, took place at Greate Bay Country Club. The speaker was Aaron Bogushefsky, local artist and teacher. In addition, the Museum displayed an exhibit called "Path to the Crown," featuring former Miss Delaware Michelle Harris Anderson.

October's events included the Brunch Buffet at Clancy's by the Bay and a special program for Halloween, Dead Darlings and Cemetery Symbolism presented by the Museum Director. Museum volunteers manned a booth at the city-wide Block Party.

In November, the Museum kicked off the holiday season with a Christmas Open House, featuring a craft and antique fair and the opening of Mrs. Claus's Market. Another fund raiser was held at Randazzo's.

Finally, December brought the Community Winter Festival, where children could do crafts with Mrs. Claus. Mrs. Claus's Market rounding off the year.

# Volunteer Spotlight

By Noel Wirth and  
Loretta Harris

*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.*

## Margaret Schock



Friends and followers of our Museum have probably already met Margaret Schock, one of this quarter’s volunteers in the spotlight. Margaret moved to Ocean City from Philadelphia in 1991. She has been a museum volunteer since 1992 when she was recruited by friend and museum volunteer Dot Turner.

Margaret grew up in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia where children and pets ran free, where they roller skated and played games in the street.

She loved watching the trolley pass through on its way to Germantown. She also enjoyed watching the gas lamplighter come through carrying a ladder on his shoulder to light the gas lamps. She remembers eating ice shivers left behind by the ice man. While cramming for Spring exams, she listened to Richard Tucker singing *The Bluebird of Happiness*.

Margaret has fond memories of Ocean City too. Before moving here, her family vacationed in Ocean City every summer since her birth. She recalls horseback riding on the beach, roller skating and bowling on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and skating on the basketball court periodically flooded to make an ice rink. The boardwalk had fewer stores but lots of fun things for a young girl: the merry-go-round, houses of mirrors, the three little pigs game, and swim meets at the Flanders. Blame Margaret for the fence that was erected around the hotel after she and friends climbed to the top of the elevator shaft to view the city. She was always in the crowd that ran to the waterfront to see a daredevil

parachute down to the beach near the Sindia shipwreck, pass a hat among the crowd for donations and then be picked up and whisked away by a waiting plane.

Margaret loves history and has learned a lot by volunteering at the museum. “The museum has stored away many treasures and surprises just waiting to be exhibited for those who visit”, she says. Come re-live days of old and learn something new. Peruse decades of Ocean City history, perhaps reminiscent of your childhood.

**Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless**

## Edwina Wagner

When Edwina and Roy moved to Glencove, NY from Pennsylvania, Edwina knew she did not want just to sit at home – she wanted to do things, so Edwina began her volunteer life! While living in Glencove, Edwina began volunteering at the Port Washington Historical Society, as she has always loved history. When Edwina and Roy moved to Ocean City in the 1990's, she continued volunteering, stepping up her game! She volunteered at the Clothes Closet, became a Eucharistic minister at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, and became a Beach-Walker volunteer at the south end of Ocean City. Edwina and Roy, who was an Ocean City councilman for two terms, have been mainstays at First Night celebrations. They always dressed formally “because New Year’s Eve is a special occasion” according to Edwina. She and her husband greet guests at the Ocean City High School as they enter to see special musical numbers.

At our Museum, Edwina was a docent and kept her eyes open for new projects. She and a fellow volunteer, Carolyn Tonti, leafed through boxes of disorganized photographs and began categorizing them and putting them into blue topic boxes. Many visitors coming into our Museum looking for pictures of houses, stores, people, and events benefit from Edwina and Carolyn’s efforts. Edwina faithfully returns to the Museum every Friday morning to continue her efforts with photographs. We are thankful to have Edwina as a volunteer and greatly appreciate her many years of service.



**Edwina at work**

## ***2018 Support received from October through December***

Michelle Anderson  
Elizabeth Chandler  
Janet Cook  
Dawn Dolinsky  
Paula Engard  
Joan Ferko  
Evelyn Golley  
Susan Haines  
Carolyn Halbert

Lora Hamer  
Suzanne Hampton  
Angela Harris-Moore  
Ted Irrgard  
Dorothy Johnson  
Craig and Renate Johnston  
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Janet Liszka

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Pam and Ed Manning  
Marie Manos  
Susan Newkirk  
Connie Patten  
Preston Pittman  
Kathleen Schock  
Dr Kathleen Taylor  
George Tice

### **Patron Renewals**

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Margaret Fell

### **Benefactor Renewals**

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Carol Sedergran  
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Sandy Simpson  
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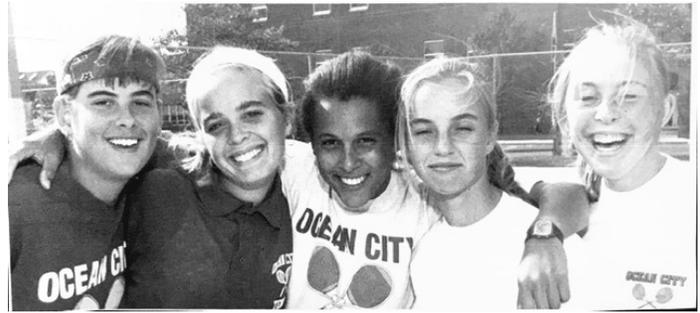
### **Special Donations**

Carol Dotts  
Loretta Harris  
Fred Miller  
David Mink  
Ocean City Board of Realtors  
Dr Albert Porreca  
Randazzo's Group Raise

Carol Sedergran  
Bob and Colleen Snodgrass  
Duane Sonneborn  
Barbara Stefano  
Sturdy Bank  
Dot Turner

If you believe something is listed in error, please contact the Museum at 609.399.1801.  
We will make corrections in the next issue. Thank you for your patience.

## Glimpses of the Past 1994



**Kathy Fanelli-Yates, Jill Mullen-Adamson (varsity captain), Nicole Bowman, Margaret Carey-Spaulling, Jen Rickards**



**Cape Atlantic Championship  
Tennis Team**

**Cape Atlantic Championship  
Soccer Team**



# LEGACY GIFTS



## Join The Parker and 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 to include the Museum in your Will

or Trust:

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

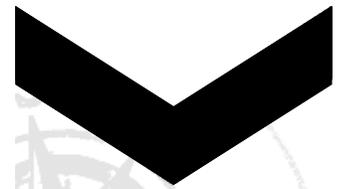
**“I give and bequeath to Ocean City Historical Museum, after all debts, expenses, and other legacies have been paid, all or \_\_\_% of the remainder of my estate.”**

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

Winter 1934



*All Ice  
Eight and Beach  
Ocean City N.J.*



*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.**  
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