



# Sandy Shorts

The Cologne Schoolhouse on Cologne Ave.  
in the late 1800s

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## “The Most Metal Place in New Jersey”

By Bobby McGruther

I’ve had the privilege to do a bit of traveling in the last year. I took a break from school only to come back as a staff member and now as a student finishing up my degree. In my travels I’ve learned that some people have a very different view of New Jersey than you may think.

I’m in a band that tours sometimes. We took a break from touring to record an album, but when we were on the road I learned that I live in “the most metal place in Jersey.”

When I tell people I’m from New Jersey, most look at me funny. “Wow, I don’t picture a guy like you when I think of New Jersey.” They expect some guy with muscles, a fade, and shutter shades. They expect the MTV cliché. However, there is a group of people who react differently to my being from NJ.

Around July, I was at some rest stop, in some state, on my way to some venue to play some show. I was talking to the guitarist of a band from Virginia . . . or was it South Carolina . . . I don’t remember.

The point is he asked me what part of Jersey I was from and I said, “I’m from South Jersey. I live on the border of two small towns in the Pine Barrens,

Absecon and Leeds Point.” The normal reaction is “Oh, where is that near?” or something of the sort.

I’ll tell them it’s near Atlantic City and they’ll ask about casinos or whatever. That’s the usual. This guy’s reaction was different. He looked at me shocked. I thought maybe I had food in my beard or something, but then he said it: “You live in the most metal place in New Jersey! Like Jersey Devil bro!”

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This was followed by questions: Had I ever seen the Jersey Devil or had I heard weird noises at night? I do hear weird noises at night, but that's only because I grew up in a more populated area of the Pine Barrens, so the sounds of the woods are always new to me. I didn't expect the same reaction from anyone else on the tour. Some dudes are into folklore, most dudes aren't. However, the more people who discovered what part of New Jersey I was from, the more they became interested in hearing about where I lived and what it was like to live in "the most metal place in New Jersey." When they discovered I was a practicing Christian, it changed to "the most demonic place in New Jersey." Apparently demonic is still very metal.

### Keeping the Music Alive

By Lauren Bork

As I pulled into the back parking lot at my Alma Mater, Cumberland Regional High School, all of the years of concert choir and late night drama practice came rushing back. I walked up to the big glass doors of the Performing Arts Center, the PAC, and waited. The last time I was there was almost four years prior and much had changed. New benches stood outside and a bright new sign was hanging above the doors. Through the window I saw the lobby—it too had undergone a complete makeover. So many improvements had been made in only a few short years.

Betsy Harrison pushed the door open and gave me a hug. She is the head of the Music Department, the Choir Director, and the Director of the Spring Musical each year. She was my favorite teacher—I spent every moment I could in her classroom, the choir room.

Mrs. Harrison started working at Cumberland Regional in 1997. She was hired simply to teach singing and to direct the choir, but rather quickly she started picking up other responsibilities at the school. The following year, she took over the Drama Guild and has been the Director of the Spring Musical ever since.

She teaches several classes for the singers at the school. *Chorus I* and *Chorus II* are open to anyone who has a desire to sing and to learn how to read music. Each class is offered every other semester. *Concert Choir* is an audition only class for more advanced singers. It is offered one semester a year. Mrs. Harrison says, "I just like to dive into the music."

The concert choir performs at two concerts a year which are held in the PAC with free admission for the public. The choir sings a combination of popular music and classics—even some songs in foreign languages. She says, "We want to get everyone exposed to all different styles of music—not just what they see on *Youtube*." In addition, the choir typically travels several times in the spring and the fall to sing at locations such as the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City and the Cumberland Mall in Vineland. This year, the female singers travelled to Glassboro to participate in Rowan University's Young Women's Festival of Song. High school choirs came from around the state to practice and perform a selection of songs together.

Each year at Cumberland Regional, there are two drama productions performed in the PAC. In December is the Fall Play, which is now directed by Elisabeth Campbell and John Stephan, the Drama teachers at the school. Late March or early April brings the Spring Musical, which is directed by Mrs. Harrison. The musical is usually a huge hit and draws many people from the community. This year the musical was *Anything Goes* and was held March 27th, 28th, and 29th. Rehearsal has been underway since late January.

Two years ago, Mrs. Harrison started teaching *Piano* at the school. The administrators were not sure that the classes would be popular enough, but they decided to give it a chance. The program was so popular that this year Mrs. Harrison started teaching *Piano II*.

Each year, Mrs. Harrison also runs another event in the PAC that serves South Jersey residents. Every February, the Miss Cumberland County Pageant is held there. Winners of this pageant go on to represent the county in the Miss New Jersey Pageant and some former winners have even gone on to the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City. Since she took the event over in 2003 and moved it to Cumberland Regional it has only grown in popularity (the pageant itself has been held in Cumberland County since 1976). Typically, over 200 people come to watch each year. Mrs. Harrison herself competed in pageants like this one and even went on to compete at the Miss New Jersey Pageant.

Mrs. Harrison and people like her are keeping the arts alive in South Jersey. Through her various classes and programs at the school, she has enriched the lives

of many South Jersey residents. At a time when the arts are being eliminated from schools in the state, Betsy Harrison has not only maintained her program but enhanced it—adding new ways for students to get involved in music. *Interview conducted 2/26/14.*

### Ong's Hat

By Lauren Goodfellow

Ong's Hat, New Jersey is said to have received its name from the womanizing antics of one Jacob Ong. The story goes that Mr. Ong used to go into the Pine Barrens to dance and consort with the ladies, always dressed in his finery and adorned with a prized silk hat. One day a jilted lover of Ong's took his hat and in an act of bitterness tossed it into a tree, where it stayed for years and served as a landmark for the little town. No one can say for sure whether this is how Ong's Hat, New Jersey received its name but the story can be given credit for helping name *Ong's Hat*, the Southern New Jersey bluegrass band.

*Ong's Hat* was formed by four South Jersey gentlemen with a mutual love for music and an interest in the Piney culture unique to the Pine Barrens of New Jersey. The members of *Ong's Hat* use their versatile and impressive musical skills to perform acoustic music, new and old, and to write original songs about their New Jersey stomping grounds. These selections include songs such as "Bog Iron & Glass," about Batsto Village in Wharton State Forest, which once served as a large iron and glass works; and a song about Dr. James Still, who was said to have been one of the first African American doctors and resided in Washington Township, New Jersey.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Thomas Stackhouse, the mandolin player and vocalist of *Ong's Hat*. To speak with Dr. Stackhouse, a well-spoken hand surgeon, one would likely not guess that some of his true passions lie in the rustic pastimes of his New Jersey ancestors. Dr. Stackhouse informed me that the Stackhouses have lived in Southern New Jersey since the early 1600s, which probably explains why New Jersey culture is so ingrained in Stackhouse's lyrics.

While most residents of New Jersey are aware of the Pine Barrens, a distinct few are involved in the colorful Piney culture that has emerged from them. I asked Dr. Stackhouse what has inspired him to take an interest in the Piney culture of South Jersey

and he said that while researching what makes New Jersey's landscape so ecologically unique, he stumbled upon John McPhee's book *The Pine Barrens* in which he learned many things that piqued his interest about New Jersey's land and culture. When Stackhouse is not playing mandolin and guitar for *Ong's Hat* band, his hobbies include some very Piney entertainment such as fly fishing, beekeeping, farming and raising goats.

Those interested in hearing *Ong's Hat's* unique brand of South Jersey bluegrass and blues can find them playing at some of South Jersey's finest conventions such as *Lines on the Pines*, held during March in Hammonton, New Jersey, and the New Jersey Folk Festival.

### The Grasses of Paradise

By Andrea Manley

The bar area of *The Avenue* is filled to the brim every Thursday night and it's not just to fill up on local beers and weekly gossip. This Egg Harbor City restaurant and bar has the additional perk of live music and tonight's band had a unique sound that resonated through the cozy wood paneled room as well as the area's surrounding pines. *Jug Paradise* is a string band whose music draws heavily on the influences of bluegrass and Americana. I was introduced to the band's music as being distinctly moongrass. Initially the term "moongrass" was a gray area for me, but after talking with the band I couldn't imagine describing them any other way.

*Jug Paradise* consists of Ryan Young on the upright bass, Morgan O'Connell on the acoustic guitar, and George Blouin on the mandolin and jug. All of the men contribute to vocals. Later on in the night I asked the band how it all began. Though each two years apart, they all went to the same high school, and started the band two years ago. When they moved to South Jersey they found their groove on the full-time front. While *The Avenue* seems like a small venue, these men sure know how to get the whole room on the dance floor. The band is known for having folksy original lyrics and foot-tapping rhythm and I was far from disappointed when I had the pleasure of attending their Thursday gig. Their other South Jersey venues include regular appearances at *The Rail* in Richland, *Olligators* in Berlin and the Noyes Museum in Oceanville.

Their infectious tunes really ring true to the area's deep-seated history. South Jersey has always been a place of dance halls and bluegrass and *Jug Paradise* brings a familiar feel while adding their own spin to tradition. When I spoke with Ryan Young, the bassist, I asked him how they came to be known as a moongrass group. He described the discovery of the term through an identity crisis in classifying their unique sound. "We have always had a lot of influence from bluegrass but have never quite filled the role of a traditional bluegrass band," he said. "One day during a practice, the name moongrass came up and it just seemed to fit our style of exploration and creative expression through music." This laidback demeanor is just what makes the band so enjoyable to listen to. I can still hear the lyrics to one of my personal favorites, "The Light in Which Darkness Brings":

Developing the light in which darkness brings,  
 Supposing you have lost something  
 Instead you found what you gain.  
 The sun dances with the moon,  
 Round and around in a circle they go,  
 Round in a circle they go.

While there is a certain lulling factor to their music at times, it's stirring to see the musicians so moved and engaged in their music. *The Jug* also never fails to mix it up. The music may be contemplative, even demure for a moment, but then the band will switch to something that has the whole room up and dancing. They are very perceptive of the mood of the location and the energy of the crowd and know just how to work it.

I asked Young how South Jersey has influenced the band. He laughed at my question but was able to respond, "Egg Harbor City has a lot of character and there is a lot of room for growth."

My parting words with the bassist revealed his dedication to the band and really hit home. I asked him what music meant to him. "Music more than anything to me," he replied, "signifies an exploration of oneself through the creation of vibrations. One discovers who they are through the endless quest in trying to learn an art form." There is much to be said of the pursuit of art. Watching the band strum along it was easy to see how bonded they were with the moment and their music. I was glad to experience their performance and plan to attend many more to come.

## Painting South Jersey

By Lauren Bork

Driving down route 540, just before the four-way stop that marks the end of Salem County and the beginning of Cumberland, a huge purple barn sits far back off the road. If you were to drive down that long gravel lane, you would find a ten-acre farm with four horse pastures, an outdoor and indoor riding arena, a hay barn, and a beautiful main barn with stalls for fourteen horses. This used to be the home of Lone Wolf Ranch, the horse training operation run by Deb Powers.

Deb Powers is a highly successful trainer on the American Paint Horse circuit and, until recently, she ran her business out of South Jersey. Originally from Michigan, she has travelled around a lot and has moved her business with her. In 2002, she relocated to South Jersey near Egg Harbor. More recently, the business was located at a barn on the edge of Cumberland and Salem counties, near Alloway. Of all of the places that she has worked, she feels that South Jersey was one of the best locations. She said,

South Jersey really is a great location if you plan to show a paint horse. Our region, called Zone 7, stretches from Maine down to Virginia and as far west as West Virginia and Pennsylvania. From our barn in South Jersey, the furthest show in the Zone is only about five hours away. This area is unique in that way—everything is very close together.

Deb typically travels to almost all of the shows in the Zone each year, and she always attends the four shows a year that are held at the Dream Park, a state of the art equestrian facility in Gloucester County. Additionally, she takes her clients to shows open to any breed of horse, called open shows, around South Jersey. She said, "Our favorite open show circuit to attend was the New Jersey Horse Association. They usually have six shows a year and we tried to go to all of the ones that didn't conflict with our paint shows."

While Deb does specialize in the training of Paint and Quarter Horses (a breed similar to paint), she does train horses with other specialties: "There are a wide range of different breeds and disciplines in New Jersey—not just paint horses. I have trained all sorts of different types of horses including race horses, jumpers, and trail horses."

Just last fall, Deb relocated her business to Westminster, Maryland. She said, "It was the opportunity

of a lifetime.” She is now in the process of buying her own sixty-acre horse farm up near the Pennsylvania border. Though this is a little further away from the shows, she will still travel to all of the shows in the Zone: “The New Jersey shows are a must—they are typically the biggest shows in the Zone and the most competitive.” In 2013, Deb trained the number one Open, Amateur, and Youth horses in the Zone. Horses in her program won four World Champion Titles and one horse was number one in the nation for the Open division. She said, “I’m so proud of what we accomplished as a group last year. We can only hope that we can do it again!”

Deb ran a very successful business in South Jersey and represented the state all over the country. “Everyone was always shocked when they found out that we were from New Jersey. Everyone seems to think that it is one big suburb of New York and Philadelphia. I’d always say ‘No, we’re from the garden part of the garden state!’” Although she has since moved on, Deb looks back fondly at her years in South Jersey. Her years here helped her build her business—today it is booming: better than ever. In April, 2014 she will bring the horses and clients to compete at the first Garden State Paint Horse Club show of the year.

The big purple barn on route 540 has the perfect set up for a horse training business. Now there is another trainer in the barn helping to keep the equestrian business alive in South Jersey. *Interview conducted on March 24, 2014.*

## Cheers

By Kaitlin Montague

During my spring break, a brisk (snow filled) second week of March, 2014, my friends and I gathered at one of our favorite bars on the Jersey Shore, the *Watermark* in Asbury Park. The *Watermark* reigns over the Asbury Boardwalk on the second floor atop *Cubacan*, a Cuban restaurant, a surf shop, and an antique store. With its lovely location, the *Watermark* is a premier gathering spot. It is part sophisticated drinkery and tapas bar and part music lounge and social venue. Its environment is contemporary, yet comfortable, refined, yet relaxed—the perfect place to grab a drink in the summer, while overlooking the Atlantic in all of its glory and wonder.

We sat in the same place that we sit on every

adventure there, by the fireplace, unless, of course, it is summer when we lounge by the outdoor bar on the patio. I always promise myself I’ll order something new, but, no matter what, I always revert back to the Tea Cup, a personal favorite: fresh strawberries, fresh spearmint leaves, rum, lime, a hint of simple syrup, and my favorite ingredient, muddled cucumbers. The Tea Cup is a burst of flavor, a strawberry mojito with a twist—cucumbers.

This trip to the *Watermark* was different. A few weeks prior, Linda Stanton, founder and president of *Lines on the Pines*, made a visit to our senior seminar class to talk about South Jersey. During her presentation, she mentioned that the Mason jar was first made very close to Batsto Village. With this in mind, I mulled over my Tea Cup, served decoratively in a Mason jar, which helps to complete the calming aura it releases at first sight of the drink.

Rather than reminiscing with my friends, I spent my time at the *Watermark* pondering John Mason and his jars; when did he construct his preservation jar idea? How was it made? Clearly, it was a success, since Mason jars, whether its purpose be for drinks, candles, or preserves, is all the rage now, it seems, more than ever.

Upon arriving home, I spent the afternoon with my nose to my computer in search of the story behind the Mason jar. It is apparent that many fail to recognize that South Jersey has a significant place within the pantheon of prominent sites in preserved food technology. Seabrook Farms, located in Upper Deerfield Township, was a pioneer in freezing vegetables and later became America’s largest frozen food processor. Along with Seabrook, John Mason, a native to Vineland, was also interested in the longevity of preserved produce. In 1858, Mason, though he was already established in New York City, returned to South Jersey to convey his preservation idea from inkling to reality. It was practicality that brought Mason back to his native state: he was in search of a good, sturdy jar, and at that time, South Jersey’s glass industry was at its zenith, with several factories using the local sand of the Pine Barrens to produce a superior product.

Mason built upon the work of the Frenchman, Nicolas Appert, who fifty years prior had hypothesized that heating food would sterilize it to prevent spoilage. The tin can was introduced as an option for food

preservation just years after Appert's theory, but the technology proved impractical for those who wanted to preserve their own food. Also, the food inside the can would remain unseen, creating a need for labeling. Other canning methods that used cork and wax were problematic and were deemed unworkable.

In 1858, Mason would invent a porcelain-lined zinc lid that would form a protective seal while the food cooled in the glass container; however, this required a jar that could receive this lid in an effective manner. Mason, in conjunction with Samuel Crowley, a glass expert whose glassworks resided on the Mullica River in the Batsto area, worked together to design a jar with a threaded mouth that could accept a screw top lid. Soon after, Clayton Parker, master glassblower, fashioned a sample product, for which Mason would receive a patent—it was the jar that bears his name to this very day.

Today, the “Mason jar” is still used for canning, while others, such as the *Watermark* and many other institutions worldwide, use it as a beverage glass for its “country” or “Piney” feel. So, next time you come in contact with a Mason jar, take a moment to raise your drink—or maybe a jar of preserves—to the man, native to South Jersey, who made this universal product possible. Cheers to you, John Mason.

## **Back to the Barracks**

*by Toyka Henderson*

As a child I remember taking a class trip to a far away “big city”—Trenton, the state capital of New Jersey. We visited the State House, The State Museum of New Jersey, and finally the Old Barracks Museum. I distinctly remember visiting this site and being overwhelmed with excitement. I stepped off the big yellow school bus—referred to by my classmates and me as the “cheese bus”—and looked up at what seemed to be the biggest and most interesting building that I had ever seen in my eight years of living. As I walked through the brick entrance and entered the yard in front of the Barracks I was surrounded by other school students, tourists, and most interesting to me real live soldiers with muskets. My class got a tour of the barracks along with a historical introduction which, at the time, was the least of my worries. At the end of the tour we saw a reenactment where the soldiers shot their muskets and cannons in the air. My early memories

of the barracks are so vivid that I was ecstatic to see how they compared with a recent Saturday morning adventure back to the barracks.

The Old Barracks Museum is located in Trenton and describes the ways that New Jersey affected worldwide events. During the French and Indian War, Britain sent troops to the colonies to protect English citizens against the French and their newfound allies, the Indians. Initially, the soldiers had nowhere to sleep and were quartered in the homes of colonists. Finally, overwhelmed with the extra burden of housing the soldiers, colonists asked for legislation to build barracks. Five were built in New Jersey in the towns of Perth Amboy, Elizabeth, New Brunswick, Burlington and Trenton: the latter is the only barracks left standing today.

Upon entering the barracks, I was greeted by a woman dressed in clothes from the revolutionary era as well as a man dressed in a militia uniform. The woman kindly escorted me to the Officers' Quarters of the Barracks Museum where she gave a helpful rundown on the history of the museum and described what I would be seeing on the tour. The rooms in the museum are staged to mimic what a barrack would look like during the revolutionary period. The Officers' Quarters were large and had a formal eating area and bedrooms that slept two men per room. This was a significantly better fit than the quarters of the common soldiers who slept twelve in a similarly sized room. Three bunk beds were fit in one room with four men in each bunk. There was also a fireplace and picnic-style table in the cramped room.

The tour guide explained that the barracks' first use was to house soldiers in the winter months. Later it was used as a military hospital. The barracks were the site of the Battle of Trenton, an important turning point in the American Revolutionary War. The guide also described the significance of the hospital run by Dr. Bodo Otto of Germany. This hospital played a major role in developing modern medicine, and it was here that Otto made strides in eliminating the horrid disease of small pox through inoculation. Over time the Barracks had several other uses before it was converted into the museum that it serves as today.

I had high hopes, upon deciding to revisit the Barracks, that I would feel the same excitement I remembered as a child. I did not account for the fact

that I was no longer a child, and the things once described as awesome would no longer tickle my fancy in the same way. For one, that big city with all those big buildings in our nation's capital was not really that big anymore and was not that far away either. Instead of the excitement of forty students building during a loud, long, and bumpy ride, I was accompanied just by a friend who I forced to drive. The ride was silent except for her occasional complaining about how much I would owe her after dragging her on this boring school trip. There was no one in sight after pulling up to the old Barracks, no one pointing us in the right direction, no one else to enjoy this the tour with us, and none of the commotion I experienced some sixteen years prior, so we followed the signs pointing to the gift shop where the tour would begin. There was no reenactment and no shots or cannons to be heard in the yard—just the sound of my friend making deep sighs of boredom and sucking her teeth every time the tour guide moved on to the next subject. On my trip to the Barracks in February 2014, however, I took away something much greater than on my first visit. This time I came on my adventure with a purpose, open ears, and an open mind. I took away information that I value and will remember for long years. I learned more deeply about the history of the state where I was born and raised. I learned that this place, so close to home, has had a significant impact not only upon this country, but the world.

### **Batsto Mansion Nighttime Exploration**

*By Carmen Capoferri*

Batsto Village in Wharton State Forest was founded in 1766 and was used as a bog iron industrial center during its early existence, supplying iron products to the Continental Army during the American Revolution. As the years proceeded, Batsto passed through the hands of different owners, who, along the way, added different structures to the area that produced specialized iron and forestry-based products. In 1954, Batsto was purchased by the State of New Jersey and became part of the Pinelands National Reserve.

Though its grounds and structures have changed since it was founded back in the mid-eighteenth century, thanks to considerable preservation efforts by the state, Batsto feels as though it exists outside

of present times with a unique ambiance all its own. Because of this, the occasional trip to Batsto Village and its surrounding woodlands offers an opportunity to momentarily disconnect from present day concerns in order to appreciate how people lived in the past.

Among the gristmill, carriage house, barn, and numerous other structures on the property, the most prominent building is the mansion. From afar, the mansion towers above all other structures in Batsto, including the surrounding tree line. Apart from its size, the mansion also impresses because of its unique style, which, like the rest of Batsto, appears as though it has been frozen in time, serving as a visual artifact of a bygone era. On a guided tour of the property, the mansion stands out as the crown jewel of the entire showcase because of the attention given to furnishing its interior and exterior—attention that has preserved many of the fixtures that were present when Batsto was operated by its original owners.

While a guided tour of the mansion I attended a few years ago provided brief historical background of the mansion and a view of its most notable features, my most recent visit to the mansion, thanks to a very fortunate set of circumstances, allowed me to interact with the building in a very hands-on way that a guided tour cannot offer. This VIP experience was all thanks to my mom, who works as a State Park Police Officer and was granted permission to let myself and other family members roam the building with almost no restrictions. Granted we were especially careful when walking in parts of the mansion that are still in need of renovation. To top off the experience, we chose to visit the mansion at nighttime, which lent the experience an ominous backdrop.

Inside the mansion are many styles of furniture and fixtures that are rarely seen in modern households. These include magnificent stone fireplaces, stoves, and bathtubs, along with corresponding kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom appliances. Other rooms contain old books, china, dressers, and other accoutrements that complemented the rooms in which they are found. These items also aid the illusion that the mansion still exists in its past state. Since we were not restricted as part of a guided tour, we viewed all of these items up close, giving us an even greater appreciation for their appearance as well as the detail with which everything was preserved.

As our group made its way higher up the mansion's staircase, we came upon more and more rooms that did not have functioning lights. If not for the one flashlight amongst the five of us, we would have been entirely surrounded by darkness. At this point in our trip, slight rational, as well as irrational, fear began to set in. The rational fear involved the potential of getting hurt wandering around an old building that had unsafe areas in need of maintenance. The irrational fear had to do with seeing a ghost along the way. Of course, the possibility of getting hurt was far more likely than seeing some sort of spirit, but it was hard not to let our imaginations get the better of us, especially when areas like the attic, basement, and children's rooms looked especially chilling in the dim light.

Soldiering on, the final stop on our unguided tour happened to be the highest point in the mansion. It could only be accessed by walking up a rickety spiral staircase. Only two of us walked up the staircase at a time for fear of breaking through its creaking boards. At the top, we were greeted with a breathtaking view of the rest of Batsto and surrounding areas. In fact, the view stretched as far as the Atlantic City Casinos, and possibly even Philadelphia.

At the end of my exploration I realized that historically preserved sites such as Batsto Village offer a way to understand the past that is not offered in books. Books teach an understanding of the past that is based on factual understanding and memorization. Sites such as Batsto teach an understanding based both on factual understanding as well as direct experience. Until the advent of time machines, Batsto and similar sites are as close as people will get to experiencing the past.

## **A South-Jersey Home in US History**

*By Eddie Horan*

*Home* is a concept closely intertwined with that of *family*. People often think of home as where they are from, where they were raised, or where they've spent the most quality time with their families. Pam Cross of Linwood quips, "Home is where the dogs are." Although we all define home in a different way, it seems difficult to separate the concept from family.

There is an intriguing level to the concept of home, however, that people often don't think of: while we think of our homes as where our families are, we

often forget that, unless we live in new construction, numerous families have called our homes home long before we lived there—in some cases, they might have lived there before we even lived at all. Depending, then, on who has lived there before us, our homes can sometimes be part of not just our history but of the history of a much larger demographic.

On a hot day during the summer of 2013, while playing catch with her young son in the yard of her old house, Lauren Wilson of Pitman was reminded of this concept. After she had cheered for her son (he had caught the ball—an impressive feat, as she had thrown it harder than usual), she looked up and became distracted: her elderly neighbor from a few houses down was approaching. Normally, this would not have been an occasion for distraction, but this time her neighbor was approaching with a frame—perhaps it contained a photo or a painting—in hand. When he had come within earshot, Lauren greeted him, a slightly quizzical tone in her voice.

"This man died in your home," he announced, handing to Lauren the frame (it contained an old photograph of a man, she could tell now). "I have been wanting to give it to you."

This man—Charles Willoughby, his name was—was not the owner of this South-Jersey house, but he would become an interesting part of the history of the home, and his younger sister Frances would become a part of the history of not only the home but of the United States as well.

Charles and Frances, as well as their older brother Edwin, were raised in the house, and Frances lived there until she attended Dickinson College, entering in 1923, and graduating in 1927. By 1938, she would earn a medical degree from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine, and in 1944, during the rush of patriotism that swept the country in the face of World War II, she enlisted in the Navy as a psychiatrist. She would work in the Naval Reserve: as a woman, she was not permitted to serve the regular Navy. It wasn't until October 1948 that she was sworn in as the first female doctor of the Navy. For the next sixteen years, she would work at the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia, during which time she achieved the rank of commander—a first for a woman in the Navy (Dickinson College Archives).

Upon her retirement, according to Wilson's neighbor, Dr. Willoughby moved back to her family



home with her older brother Charles, who became friends with Lauren's neighbor. In the 1970s, when Charles fell ill, Frances took care of him, but eventually the best she could do for her brother was to keep him comfortable as he declined.

"They had his funeral in the house," Lauren recalled from her conversation with her neighbor. "The porch was draped in black sheets."

Later in the summer of 2013, Lauren spoke with her next-door neighbor, who had lived in the neighborhood for a number of years and who used to help Dr. Willoughby with home repairs. He noted that one of the families that had lived in the house between Dr. Willoughby and the Wilsons claimed to have experienced doors opening and closing in a particular room; strangely enough, it was a room in which Dr. Willoughby used to keep numerous old family photos. Could their home be notable not just for having held a funeral and for having housed the first female doctor of the Navy, but also for a haunting? The Wilsons don't think so.

"We've never felt any kind of weird vibes; we've never felt anything like that. Nothing strange has ever happened," she notes.

The Wilsons find their house's little piece of South-Jersey history—including both ownership by the first female doctor of the Navy and the funeral of her brother, as well as the spooky experiences of prior owners—interesting, as it adds another level to their understanding of their home. "We were looking for a home with character. [That's] one of the reasons we fell in love with it." They are proud to share their home (at least in some sense) with someone as notable as Frances Willoughby, and that, by an accident of fate, they and their home are a sort of reflection of the history not just of South Jersey but of the United States as well. They serve as an example of almost-forgotten stories in our historic region: South Jersey folks could be calling historically significant places home without even realizing just how significant they are.

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## A Bed and Breakfast in Mays Landing

By Ian Brown

Growing up around Main Street in Mays Landing, I always found myself wandering through town. Whether it was riding the bus to school, riding my bike around, skateboarding, or grabbing milk from the nearby Wawa for my mom, I continuously roamed Main Street. Throughout my triumphant childhood travels, there was always a house that stood out to me. In fact, it was more of a mansion. The mansion was blue with white shutters and sat just about fifteen yards off of the road. The mansion was large and very old looking; it had to have been haunted at some point. There was a large white sign outside of the mansion that read "The Abbott House Bed and Breakfast." It was peculiar that there was a bed and breakfast spot on Main Street in Mays Landing. Sure, Mays Landing has a river, a lake, some parks, but I could not wrap my mind around why this would be a good place for an overnight business. In fact, now, as a 22-year-old still-resident of Mays Landing, I investigated this mansion for the first time to see what this business was doing there.

I called the Abbott House several times, but to my dismay they did not answer. There's no way that could be good for business. Unsettled, I decided to take the couple mile drive over to the house to explore. Without thought, I went and knocked on the door with the large metal doorknocker. The door slowly opened and I was immediately suffocated by the not so popular smell of old cigarettes. I guess this place allowed their visitors to smoke inside.

I was baffled when the door fully opened and a woman in her pajamas stood in front of me with a very perplexed look on her face. Pajamas and cigarette smoke; that definitely is not good for business. I explained who I was and that I was doing a project on the history of South Jersey and was very interested in this beautiful old building. The woman, who had obviously been snoozing only moments before, grumped something and a short older woman came and asked what I wanted. She was wearing jeans, a sweatshirt, and had awake eyes, so I felt much more inclined to trust her. I once again explained that I was a student and would be very interested in touring and learning about this old bed and breakfast. She explained that they were doing renovations and that it would be better if I came back later in the week.

I left feeling excited; they were renovating the place and maybe I would get the chance to interview the first overnighters to stay post renovation.

When I arrived back in a few days, the older, more trustworthy lady answered the door. This time, the smell of cigarettes was gone. She introduced herself as Linda Maslanko, the owner of the house. According to Maslanko, the mansion was built in the 1860s and is a Victorian-style, second empire house, which is a rectangular tower with a steep roof. The mansion also has a “wedding cake” look to it, meaning that it is very decorative inside and out. There were big windows all throughout the downstairs area. The downstairs also had hardwood floors and different assortments of flowered wallpapers in different rooms. A large wooden door led into the living room. It was here that Maslanko informed me that this was no longer a bed and breakfast and was just a house that she and a few of her family members were living in, renovating, and preparing to sell. I wanted to tell her that they should take down their white sign that read “Abbott House Bed and Breakfast,” but I felt that would be rude.

Fortunately, Maslanko was in fact one of the owners while it ran as a bed and breakfast and knew a decent amount of history about the house. Unfortunately, she could only show me the downstairs portion because people were upstairs.

J. E. P. Abbott was the first owner of the Abbott House. He purchased the house in the 1860s. Abbott was the first solicitor in Atlantic City and purchased the house for his family. He owned the house until it eventually changed hands and was bought by a Russian family. Maslanko was unsure of the family name, but she did tell me there was a large Russian population in that part of Mays Landing. In fact, there is still a Russian church a few blocks from the Abbott House.

The Russian family eventually moved out and the house became abandoned. Maslanko stated that there was a lot of looting from the house, including the fence, which she jokingly said I could see alongside several people’s houses if I drove down the block. The house stayed abandoned, and was an eyesore for Main Street until the 1980s. The new owners, whom she did not name, bought the Abbott House and decided to turn it into a bed and breakfast. Mays Landing is only twenty five minutes from Atlantic

City, where the original Abbott had worked. Atlantic City is also one of, if not the top tourist spots in South Jersey. Business was good for a while and the owners had reasonable success.

In the 1990s, the Abbott House was once again put up for sale and bought by the Maslankos in 1999. Maslanko renovated the house, adding new floors, some landscaping, and a pool, among other things. Maslanko opened the Abbott House back for business in 2000. In addition to her renovations, the Abbott House still had the original icehouse and outhouse in the backyard to give it the old fashioned look that made this house so beautiful. Business was not great for Maslanko and with the failing economy she had to close the house for business in 2010. Since then, she has moved some of her family in and is planning to sell the house. She closed by telling me about a pipe that had burst, which is what she had been dealing with when I first showed up.

It was a shame that the Abbott House had to be shut down, but its biggest asset, Atlantic City, is not in the budget for many families anymore. Since it was a good distance away, Maslanko seemed unconfident that the house would ever open back up as a bed and breakfast. As far as ghost sightings in the house, she said that she does not believe that the house is haunted. She did, however, tell me that things disappear pretty frequently around the house.

## **Old and New Movie Houses of South Jersey**

*By Kristen Callaghan*

South Jersey is full of interesting pieces of history, most of which are overlooked by locals and tourists alike. Technically being a tourist, myself, I was under the impression that there was nothing particularly interesting about South Jersey, besides the beaches and boardwalks. However, while exploring Stockton’s library, I came across a book that explored an inter-esting aspect of South Jersey that I never before considered. That book, which was entitled *South Jersey Movie Houses*, explored the many different movie houses within the South Jersey area, both still in existence and long gone. Upon this discovery, I decided to take a peek inside the book.

As it turns out, I discovered a lot of information on the topic that I wouldn’t have found had I not picked up this book. For instance, I discovered that there was once a movie house in Paulsboro called

Hill Theater, which was built by a man named Alfred W. Hill in 1935. This particular movie house was one of the many movie houses that closed down. What makes it unique is that after its closing, it became the Hill Theater Studio, which, according to the book, is still in operation, today. A Google search confirms that Hill Theater Studio is still in operation; its website lists the different services and equipment that the studio provides.

That is, of course, not the only example of a theater with an interesting history. The Alan Theater that used to be in Atlantic City, for instance, was a place that mainly showed movies directed by black directors. That, and the Royal located in Philadelphia, were the only movie houses within the area that did this back when movie houses were prevalent. There were also a number of theaters built by Jacob B. Fox, a Russia immigrant who built movie houses in Burlington County. Now they are all long gone but had a lasting impact for the area. The last indoor theater built by Fox is noteworthy for being the first theater in South Jersey to use 70-millimeter projection.

Also, did you know that Atlantic City, which today only has one movie theater within its boundaries, used to be home to over 30 different movie houses? This included theaters that were considered major for their time, such as the Warner Theater and the Alan Theater. As a matter of fact, the exterior of the Warner Theater is part of Bally's Casino, now, and it is protected under the National Register of Historic Places. Ocean City was also home to several movie houses, but it, too has been narrowed down to only two theaters, and Wildwood once had a total of seven theaters, all run by William C. Hunt, but now there is only one.

After reading this book, I felt saddened. Being a person who loves old fashioned movie theaters, and coming from an area where such places are still in operation, it disappoints me that so many of those theaters were once thriving in South Jersey, but now there's not much left, and I wonder to myself what South Jersey might have been like when the movie houses were still thriving.

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## A Fire to an Eye Sore on Mill Street

By Ian Brown

Driving through Mays Landing presents many different views: the Hamilton Mall, Lake Lenape, Young's Skating Rink, The Great Egg Harbor River, and more—all within about a twenty mile radius. One sight that always caught my eye was a gigantic, blue building that took up an enormous section of land. There is even a walkway that crosses the street to an additional blue monstrosity. The building sits across the street from Victor's Liquor Store and about a half mile from an Atlantic County Camp Ground overlooking Lake Lenape. For as long as I can remember, the building has been there, but has also been closed. I was always curious about what that building was. My parents explained to me that it was an old glass factory, which at the time made no sense to me because the building was not made of glass. Eventually, my parents explained to me that it was not made of glass, but produced glass. The company was called Wheaton Industries.

Wheaton Industries was founded by Dr. Theodore Corson Wheaton in 1888 and was a great success. It was one of the largest and most renowned glass factories in America. Wheaton Industries was a family-owned business with 41 factories in the United States and 20 in other countries. The Mays Landing's site was purchased in 1950. The company originated, and still exists, in Millville, New Jersey. At one point, this building was probably beautiful. The blue building was probably radiant and seen as a landmark for a town on the rise. Unfortunately, during my time, it was nothing more than an old, fading, dangerous, eye sore.

I rode my bike and skateboarded past this building almost every day when it was not raining. I went with my friends to find places to skateboard while also avoiding the police. Times were much simpler in High School. When I was a sophomore, my friends and I decided that we needed to sneak inside of this building. We heard stories from other friends that had entered the building: it was haunted, there were homeless people living in there, the building was falling apart and could collapse at any moment. We had to enter by hopping a fence and crawling into a small opening in the side of the building. Today all of these things would be legitimate reasons not to enter, back then they were enticements for a sixteen-

year old to enter. We decided to enter the building the next weekend we were free, which, luckily, was every weekend since none of us had jobs.

We arrived at the building on a nice, sunny day. One story was true; we had to hop a fence and crawl through a hole in the side of this atrocious building while making sure that the police were not anywhere in sight. When we finally got inside, we were blinded by light reflecting off of the walls. Once we were able to get the stars out of our eyes, we were astounded to see that there was nothing inside of this gigantic, open first floor. Being the skateboarding innovators that we were, we took a few minutes to imagine building a ramp and getting video footage inside of this historic building. But we soon realized that there was too much broken glass and too many rocks on the ground to do so, and we were too lazy to clean it up. After spending about ten minutes on the first floor, someone suggested that we move on to the second. So far we had not seen a homeless person or ghost, but building collapse remained a possibility. So naturally, we went to the second floor. We walked up the surprisingly sturdy staircase and saw a giant machine, more broken glass, and more nothing. Although there was not much to see, we still returned to the building several times, mostly to have a story to tell to impress girls.

After becoming pretty familiar with this building, we decided that we should come back again, but this time at night. We even brought girls with us to show them how brave we really were. We approached the building in the same way, watching out for cops, hopping the fence, and crawling through the side of the building. This time, however, we had some added cargo in the form of flashlights. We entered the building and looked around the empty first floor with several flashlights shining. Still the same as it was in the light. We went upstairs, flashlights in hand, and explored the second floor. We decided that the only way we would get a thrill, and prove how tough we were to these girls, was to turn the flashlights off. Darkness soon hit and admittedly, it was scary. It was hard not to think of a ghost, or even worse, a living person standing behind us with who knows what. Like in every scary story, someone heard a noise and screamed. We quickly turned the flashlights back on and ran out of there. That was the last time we entered Wheaton's Glass Factory.

A few months later at the beginning of our Junior year in high school, I received a phone call from one of my friends.

"Wheaton's is on fire!" he screamed.

"Really? No way!" I answered.

"Let's ride our bikes there and check it out!" he excitedly told me.

"Alright, I'll be over in ten minutes." I said.

I saw the smoke from outside of my house as I grabbed my bike and headed over to meet up with my friend. We rode our bikes toward Wheaton's and saw a barrage of people and fire trucks. He was not exaggerating; the building was up in flames. We watched for a few minutes as a part of our childhood burned to the ground. To our surprise, the next day the building was still standing. A substantial part of it was missing, but the bulk of the factory still stood, now even more of an eye sore.



Still a Mays Landing resident, I drive by Wheaton's Glass Factory pretty frequently. About a year ago I noticed something puzzling; a large portion of the building was gone. I had no idea that they had begun demolishing the building. Wheaton's is still standing, but little by little the demolition is taking out the remains of this old factory. Today, you can see about half of what Wheaton's used to be, with most of the outside windows shattered, the smell of sulfur, and an even more hazardous eye sore.

## Basement Treasure: Atlantic County Historical Society

By *Kaleen Kern*

It is amazing what you can find once you really start looking. I say this because although I have lived in the town of Somers Point all my life, I had never once been to the Atlantic County Historical Society, located within the town. I was not aware that they had an incredible museum in their basement as well as a maritime exhibit on the third floor.

Upon my arrival at the Historical Society, I was warmly greeted by volunteers anxious to help. I wasn't quite sure what the building held, so I asked them to show me anything "interesting." The request sounded ridiculous, of course, because everything in the building was in fact, "interesting."

I was taken to the basement, and to my surprise, their collection of donated items was wonderful. The layout was of a Victorian home, with donations organized in sections set in the parlor, kitchen, closet, and bedroom. Of the many things that caught my eye, there were specifics that I was curious about; a distinctive mandolin piccolo, a lobster claw violin, and a gigantic clock. The lobster claw violin was documented as being previously owned by James Lafferty, the owner of Lucy the Elephant in Margate. But I chose to inquire about the clock simply because it was old.



Out of the dozens of clocks in the building, I was told that this one was special. Its cabinet was made of walnut and strangely the cabinetmaker is unknown. The clock itself is rare and fully function-

ing, an original Edward Duffield clock, built in 1765 in Philadelphia. After 230 years there have only been minor repairs to the cabinet. It is nicely polished outside and in. Edward Duffield was a very skilled clockmaker and close friends with Benjamin Franklin who is believed to have owned some of his clocks. An antique dealer dated the clock by using clues on the face such as its Roman numeral hours, five-minute markers, and its ability to tell the day of the month. The clock also included its original cabinet keys and is currently being wound to tell the present time and date, maintaining time for eight days with one winding. Interestingly enough, the museum inherited the clock through David Jones Somers, a relative of the founders of Somers Point in 1995 while he was staying at the Linwood Convalescent Center, but there is no history of who had owned the clock prior to this date. Unfortunately, there is no wall large enough to fit the stunning Duffield clock upstairs, so it must stay in the basement for the time being.

The Atlantic County Historical Society only functions through the good will of its volunteers who are always welcoming. You might consider volunteer-ing yourself.

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## Lucy in the Sky with Tourists

By *Kaylan Bini*

When I was a kid my parents used to take me and my siblings to Atlantic City practically every weekend in the summer. I sat in the backseat watching all kinds of people walking on the sidewalk with beach towels and chairs in hand. My mother would turn around to make sure I wasn't asleep because our destination was swiftly approaching. When she ushered me out of the car, I clearly remember big brown eyes staring down at me, and a huge mass of gray, a long trunk, and tusks that seemed to reach for the beach. Lucy stared down at me and coaxed me to draw closer. I couldn't break her stare; her presence was magnetic.

Lucy the elephant has been a figure in the lives of thousands since its erection in 1881, as told to me by

a very nice woman named Lee. When I revisited this attraction recently, after many years, it was like seeing a dear old friend. The line to get in was not long due to the cold, but everyone appeared to be excited. The ticket booth was tiny but the worker I encountered seemed quite chipper. It was a warm environment, you felt welcome the second you stepped over the threshold. I was eager to take my tour.

Lucy stood tall, seemingly just as tall as when I was a child. I couldn't help but smile when I walked up the steps in her leg and found myself in her belly. The pictures they had from Lucy's heyday reminded me of a photo album of someone's family. I then realized that I *was* looking at a family album. Lucy had become family to so many other children other than myself, children who spent summers running around her big legs, planted so firmly in the ground. She was certainly the tourist attraction that designer James V. Lafferty Jr. was expecting, and then some. Lucy has lived for years, standing proudly on a side street in Margate.

In the summer, people line up to visit Lucy and to eat at the Lucy shop near the beach. They have bands perform and people stop to watch and join the fun. The park also provides picnic tables for people to stop and enjoy a spot in Lucy's shade. Though the elephant has been remodeled a bit and repainted quite frequently, she still remains transcendent through the years. To get into Margate though, you must pay a toll coming and going; but Lucy is worth the cost. I haven't found any South Jersey native who doesn't know who Lucy the Elephant is, and when I mention her to people, they always want to know more about her.

### **The Mysterious Lives of a Debatable Dinosaur**

*By Andrea Manley*

While the presence of a large dinosaur off of Route 9 in Bayville is irrefutable, the background of the dinosaur raises the question of how it came to be the calling card of the area. I never pegged myself as a paleontologist, but I certainly had to go on a dig to find the story behind this large dinosaur statue. It clocks in at around twelve feet tall, twenty-five feet long and over eighty years old. This quirky dinosaur, with its murky past of associated tall tales and false truths, has come to define the Bayville area; though, in recent years it has become endangered.

The dinosaur made its first appearance in front of an ice cream shop, where it had spikes down its back and red glowing eyes. In the late 1930s it was moved to Bayville by taxidermist William Farrow. Many locals will claim that the dinosaur, which Farrow found for sale in a barn, was leftover from New York's World's Fair of 1939 but research shows this couldn't be the case due to the dinosaur's composition and appearance. The dinosaur was rumored to be one of the Sinclair Oil dinosaurs that graced gas stations, but that too proves to be a myth since the Bayville dinosaur doesn't fit the appearance or materials of the original Sinclair versions.

The dinosaur has had a few names over the years. When it first came to Bayville the dinosaur was called Dino. When the shop behind the dinosaur was a carpet shop the dinosaur was nicknamed Ruggles. This too faded, and it wasn't until 2007 that the Dinosaur was officially named Virginia for the property owner's mother. The type of dinosaur has also varied. It was debated in the '80s as to whether its identification as a Brontosaurus was correct and when it lost its head people even fought for its measurements to be adjusted to more accurately depict its species. In '98, however, Applegate, the artist who rebuilt its current head, stated that it was an Omnisaurus and designed the head to be smaller and less disproportionate.

This statue has had more than a few cases of poor luck over the years. It has been damaged about five times and has gone through three heads over its lifetime. The first accident occurred in 1980 when a truck knocked the head off. This happened again in '85. By 1996, the dinosaur was in rough shape because its head was too heavy and this was causing the neck to crack. The exterior of the dinosaur was also worse for wear. The owner of the dinosaur, Kim's Carpets, ended up hiring someone to restore the statue. It wasn't long after the restoration that the dinosaur met misfortune again in '98. Once again the dinosaur was decapitated but this time there was an additional problem. While awaiting repair the head of the dinosaur was actually stolen by someone and never found. This caused a makeover for the dinosaur and is the reason for its now compact, friendlier face. The dinosaur was hit two more times over the years but the repairs didn't lead to any other major alterations. It has been repainted several times though. The colors have ranged from white to purple, green to blue, and

it is now a pale blue with red and white handprints. It has been this color since the 2007 opening of House of Paints.

Currently, the dinosaur is in a sad state. The once playful design is chipped and faded. The neck is beginning to crack again from the weight of the head and its past patch-ups. While it is often visited by curious children and is currently being used as a geocache spot, it has woefully become worn down. The businesses behind Virginia are long gone and the land is up for sale. The owner often visits the dinosaur, but has stated that the dinosaur may need to find a new home. Despite the hard life this dinosaur has had, it is a staple of the local mystique of Bayville. When giving directions, it is rare that the dinosaur isn't used as a point of reference. The local charm of this dinosaur makes it hard to imagine a trip through Bayville without it. Hopefully, the dinosaur will be restored and will continue to watch over the town.

### **Community through Charity and Scholarship**

*By Kaitlin Montague*

Island Heights, New Jersey, is a small borough located in Ocean County consisting of just over 1,500 residents. The form and location of Island Heights was dictated by its original geography—an island which is situated by a steep bluff rising 60 feet above Toms River, the neighboring town.

In late August, when youngsters are preparing for school and summer is swiftly and dispiritingly coming to an end, all of the residents in the small borough have one last celebration to anticipate, a final lasting memory to aid the locals who treasure the summer months and hold them dear, one more warm memory to help endure the bitter, cold winter months—Sailfest.

Sailfest is an annual street fair and sailboat race sponsored and facilitated by the Rotary Club of Toms River. Food vendors, crafters, and artists carefully assemble their booths along the bay surrounded by amusement rides and live entertainment for all visitors and residents to enjoy. This single, most anticipated and prevalent event is the Rotary Club's largest fundraiser, benefiting multiple local charities and scholarships. Not only is Sailfest a fundraiser with a cause, it is a communal festival that celebrates the culmination of summer with friends and family.

Knowing little about the event, I attended the 20th annual festival in September 2011. One of my best friends, a lifelong resident of the small borough of Island Heights, invited me to experience one of her favorite festivals of the year. After riding our bikes up and down the meandering hills of Island Heights to the bay, only a mile away from my second home, I heard something in the distance. Before I could even see the bay, I heard the blissful tunes of a blues band; an overpowering rhythm guitarist playing a wonderful progression of chords that mirrored a call and response scheme, alongside a muffled voice singing to a bluesy beat, and accompanied by a harmonica, saxophone, and trombone. We peddled faster to reach the top of the last hill, coming to a halt when we reached the top. Looking down on Sailfest, as if observing from another world, the bay situated below and speckled with the hundreds of sailboats afloat in the water, was one of the most vivid sights I have ever seen. The magnificent view was worth every agonizing peddle of the exhausting ride to the top.

The ride down was nothing but a coast. Joining in the crowd of locals was like returning home after a long trip—all of the residents knew each other, and the new faces, like mine, were welcomed above all. Never have I ever felt so welcome in a public place. Everywhere I turned I saw a warm inviting smile.

As we made our way through the crowd, vendors sold crab cakes and fresh fish, crafters displayed their art, and sea-inspired jewelry sat on the edge of the boardwalk, just over the bay's still waters. The water began to sway as the waves rippled in a steady pace. Seconds later, sailboats of all sizes were gliding across the water, one after the other, forming a parade.

I gazed about the festival watching families eating hot dogs, funnel cake, and fish. A group of adults circled around the band, holding hands and singing along. I have never experienced anything quite like the communal atmosphere of Sailfest.

### **A Peaceful Day at Double Trouble**

*By Allison Shegda*

Over spring break, I went with my parents to Double Trouble State Park in Ocean County, NJ. I had never been there—or even heard of it—and neither had my parents. We drove there on Saturday afternoon, planning to walk around and enjoying the

mild weather, which followed weeks of bitter cold and snow. After parking, I headed over to the visitor's center, which, unfortunately, was closed. Instead, I took an informational pamphlet and looked it over, as I made my way toward a cluster of buildings amidst the cedar forest. Most of the pamphlet was dedicated to maps of the park and nature trails, with some information about the local trees and other plants. One page, however, caught my attention. It was a brief description of how Double Trouble got its name:

"There are conflicting stories about the naming of 'Double Trouble.' Most of the common legends center around an earthen dam at a mill pond on Cedar Creek. Sawmill operator Thomas Potter may have coined the words 'Double Trouble' in the 1770s after heavy rains twice damaged the dam, causing first trouble and then double trouble. A more colorful legend involves muskrats that persisted in gnawing at the dam, causing frequent leaks. Such leaks, when discovered, gave rise to the alarm 'Here's trouble,' upon which workmen would rush to repair the damage. One day two breaks were discovered and a workman overheard the owner shout 'Here's double trouble!'" ("Double Trouble Village" 7).

Upon reaching the buildings, a sign informed me that this was Double Trouble Village, a former company town which produced timber and cranberries. The exact date the village was initially constructed is unknown, but the buildings that can be seen today date back to the 1900s. There is a schoolhouse, a general store, bunk and shower houses for the workers, the Burke House, and a cranberry sorting and packing house. The school is the oldest remaining building in the village, built in 1893. From 1938 to 1957, the Burke House was the home of the Burke family, of which David Burke was the foreman of the cranberry processing. The cranberry packing house was built in 1909, with additions added as the demands of business increased; the engine house was built in 1919, and the two-story sorting room in 1921.

Further down the path was the old sawmill. In the 1850s, Double Trouble had two water-powered sawmills, which produced timber, mainly for

shipbuilding, from the white cedar trees in the surrounding area. In 1904, Edward Crabbe purchased the land and formed the Double Trouble Company. He purchased an additional 260 acres of land for cranberry bogs, most likely because in the 1860s and '70s, New Jersey was the number one producer of cranberries in the United States—the cranberry industry was booming. However, the cranberry boom also contributed to the demise of Double Trouble's sawmills: the cranberry bogs diverted the water from Cedar Creek, which powered the sawmills. Both could not be operated at the same time, so the mills closed down.

Once past the sawmill, I came upon the nature trails. I walked a path that took me along Cedar Creek and between two cranberry bogs. Seeing the cedar stumps protruding from the still-frozen water was beautiful, if slightly surreal. The cranberry bogs, although apparently still used, were obviously not in season, being overgrown with tall grasses and brambles. This particular trail seemed to be a popular dog-walking spot for the locals—though I did see some actual wildlife in the form of a few hawks and several smaller birds. I did not see any muskrats at all. Upon returning to the main area, I took one last look around the village before getting into the car and heading home.

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The Cologne Schoolhouse came crashing down on its own July 4, 2010. Photo by Lynn Wood.



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For more information about the Center, see [blogs.stockton.edu/sjchc/](http://blogs.stockton.edu/sjchc/) or contact the director, [Thomas.Kinsella@stockton.edu](mailto:Thomas.Kinsella@stockton.edu).