

Tidings

Official Newsletter of the Avalon History Center and Avalon Historical Society

Summer 2019 Issue

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THOSE NORTH END STREETS 1-5

"I heard that the city planners started numbering the streets from the middle of town and ran out of land."

"I heard that the streets blew away in a hurricane."

"I heard that the 1962 storm washed them away completely."

Like most great stories, these hold a grain of truth, but none capture the full picture. As time goes on it is more and more difficult to prove exactly what did happen to streets 1 through 5 but, using maps, records and early photographs, we can make an educated guess towards solving one of Avalon's greatest mysteries.

Before the street layout as we know it today was developed, and when Avalon was still covered with dunes and forest, a creek meandered from the inlet, twisting and turning in a roughly southwest



Houses on what would have been 2nd Street, had it ever been graded or paved.
1904 photo donated by Rose Wells.



trajectory all the way to what is now 19th Street. This was Beach Creek, and it was connected to a large tidal pond. While mapping out the area and shape of Seven Mile Island, early surveyor Ephraim Hildreth's 1825 survey failed to take into account the marshy nature of the land north of the mouth of Beach Creek and the tidal pond. However, his survey was relied upon for development and continued to be used for nearly 100 years. In 1887 the Seven Mile Beach Co. (SMBCO) referred to it when laying out their street plan right up to the water's edge, right up to and including their planned 1st St. either side of Beach Creek.

By mid-1892, Beach Creek and the tidal pond had been filled in, stopping any countercurrent against that of Townsend's Inlet. So the tremendous rush of water through the Inlet began to redistribute the sands from the north end southwards to the ocean end in what became known as the "Beach Creek effect". Nevertheless, SMBCO carried on with street plans, and this street map was submitted to and recorded by the County Clerk's office in July of 1892.

Improbably, a tiny community called the Hamlet of Leaming developed on that unstable land north of what was once Beach Creek. The late 1880's saw two lots being sold and probably built on the area of 3rd and 4th Streets, while the

(continued on next page)

1890's saw five lots being purchased and homes being constructed and lived in on what would have been 2nd Street, plus George Rummel built the Hotel Leaming between 1st and 2nd Streets. Rummel also persuaded the West Jersey Railway to provide a 'flag stop' for passengers to get on and off of trains, and in-and-out of his hotel. What he could not persuade the Borough of Avalon to do however, was to grade, pave and name the streets leading to and within the Hamlet of Leaming.

The future of the tiny Hamlet was bleak from early on, made even worse when around 1910, the West Jersey Railroad dumped masses of solid refuse into the channel under the trestle at the Sea Isle end, in an attempt to halt erosion. Around the same time, those properties in immediate danger from disappearing under water were abandoned, sold or even moved. In 1912, the Railroad took over the Hotel Leaming, re-built and renamed Leaming House twelve years earlier, but closed it down immediately.

By the 1920's, the north end Hamlet and its potential 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and possibly 5th Streets had slipped quietly into the Inlet waters. While we can argue that the



1905 postcard showing the Hotel Leaming. Donated by Joe Douglass.

southernmost end of 5th Street does still exist – under the name of Inlet Drive – 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Streets never officially existed, no postal address was ever issued, no road signs were put up, no road was ever paved. For a few years, pilings from two of the eight Hamlet structures could be seen at low tide, but today – nothing. As we continue now in the perpetual cycle of erosion and beach replenishment, may we recall with wonder the tiny Hamlet of Leaming, now Avalon's Atlantis.

NEW EXHIBIT "EARLY AVALON" OPENING SUMMER 2019!

A full display room at the History Center will be transformed to feature artifacts, photographs and information about Avalon's earliest years! The new exhibit will open on June 15, 2019 at 1pm, and will coincide with the Avalon Historical Society's 15th Annual Olde House Tour.

The exhibit will feature Avalon's earliest homes, from grand Victorian and Queen Anne style "Cottages" to cookie-cutter "Model Homes". Where possible we will show then-and-now images of the remaining original houses. The display also will explain the benefits of Avalon's Historic Register program, displaying the official plaque and featuring images and stories of those homes already taking part.

Also see timelines, photographs and artifacts from Avalon's original best known and beloved hotels, including the Avalon, the Puritan and Peermont Hotels, as well as the Sealark B&B, and Golden Inn. Some artifacts to be included are - original wooden Avalon Hotel sign, handwritten letters from the 1890's on Hotel Avalon notepaper, Princeton flatware, room rates and advertisements.

Using photographs and artifacts, a timeline of Avalon's railway experience will demonstrate how the railroad age together with the hotels and early homes, all contributed to make Avalon the seaside resort its early founders had hoped for & which we enjoy today.



Looking for even more "Early Avalon" information?
Plan to join in a walking tour of the North End –
see info on facing page!



at the AVALON HISTORY CENTER

215 39th Street, Avalon, NJ 08202

HISTORY CENTER YEAR-ROUND HOURS

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Monday-Friday 10am to 4pm. Saturday 11am-4pm.
Closed Sundays.

(609) 967-0090 | avalonhistorycenter.org

SUMMER 2019 EVENTS & PROGRAMS!

Summer History Lectures!

Shipwrecks of the Jersey Shore

Tuesday, July 16 at 6pm

Please join us for an informative program on the shipwreck that was unearthed at Stone Harbor point back in December of 2018. The presentation will be given by Steven Nagiewicz, a Marine Archaeologist, who teaches underwater science and exploration at Stockton University. Mr. Nagiewicz will also discuss the interesting Mullica River Revolutionary War wrecks.

Women's Suffrage in New Jersey

Tuesday, August 13 at 6pm

In 1776, New Jersey adopted its first Constitution which gave women who owned property the right to vote. In 1807, the legislative enactment revoked this right. For the next one hundred and thirteen years, the women of New Jersey would fight to regain their voting rights. From Antoinette Blackwell to Alice Paul, learn about the women who led the fight.

"Early Avalon" Walking Tours of Avalon's North End

Two dates: Tuesday, July 2 and Tuesday, July 30 at 6pm

Take a trip to the past while strolling the blocks of Avalon's North End. Enjoy viewing Victorian architecture and learning the history of landmark early buildings such as the 1892 Wells Memorial Presbyterian Church (still standing!) and the Avalon Hotel. Call the History Center for meeting spot and in case of inclement weather. Guided by Bruce Tell.



Teatime the third Thursday of every month at 11am! Join us to share memories of old Avalon and make new ones.

Plus, lots of other great events and programs!

Avalon Historical Society Olde House Tour – June 15 at 1pm. Enjoy tours of several of Avalon's old homes. This is a ticketed event beginning at the History Center.

5th Annual Paper Peddler Trivia Night! – Wednesday, June 19 at 6pm. Bring a team of friends and demonstrate your knowledge of Avalon's history and culture in a Quizzo-inspired trivia game! Enjoy old photos and memorabilia. Prizes will be awarded to the winning teams. Call ahead to reserve a table for your team of up to four people.

Miniature Golf Fun Thursday, July 11, 6pm to 9pm at Go Fish Mini Golf. Enjoy a round of golf with friends or family, while benefiting the Historical Society.

MONDAY FUNDAYS at Avalon History Center: Behind the Scenes at the Museum! 10am
A program for children. Look, touch, learn and explore with hands-on activities. All ages welcome, best for 10+. No registration required.

July 15: Animals in Avalon **July 29:** Transportation **August 12:** Then & Now

Avalon Historical Society Annual Clam Shell Pitch Competition, 30th St. Beach

July 20 at 8:30am. Try your hand at this fun, horseshoes-like sport, historically played on Avalon's beaches! No experience necessary. Tournaments for singles and doubles. Register and practice beginning at 8:30am at 30th St beach. Tournament starts at 9am.

New Avalon Assembly Chautauqua at the Jersey Shore – 7pm at the First United

Methodist Church of Avalon. Chautauqua assemblies provided education and enrichment for adults in communities across the United States beginning in the late 19th century. Join in a revival of this tradition by attending a variety of lectures on cultural and historical topics. Held at the First United Methodist Church of Avalon.



Do you own a historic house?

The Avalon History Center has a program to recognize houses that are 50+ years old and meet certain other criteria. Ask for details!

June 25: Mayor Martin Pagliughi on Emergency Management

July 9: The Kyle Sheppard Ensemble; organ, piano & strings

July 23: Dulcet et Duo; classical guitar concert

August 20: TBD, check back for details



The Historical Society's membership calendar runs from June 1 – May 31 each year. We hope you received a letter last month about renewing your membership. Thanks to those who have already done so! If you haven't yet, visit avalonhistoricalsociety.org, call (609) 967-0090, or visit the History Center for more information. As a special incentive this year, those who renew at the Contributor level (\$100) or higher are entitled to a complimentary print of the Avalon Pier!



Save the Date for June Events!

June 15, 1-4pm

Avalon Historical Society Olde House Tour
Plus grand opening of new Early Avalon Exhibits.

June 19, 6pm

5th Annual Paper Peddler Trivia Night
Call to register your team of up to 4 people.

Look inside for the full summer calendar of events!



**215 39th Street
Avalon, NJ 08202**