



November, 2020

Dear Friends,

The Avalon Historical Society was created to ensure that the Avalon of yesteryear was not lost or forgotten. Over the years we have seen many changes to our community. Although change can be a positive thing, preservation of the past is still important. We invite you to join us in these efforts by becoming a supporting contributor of the Avalon Historical Society.

In the recent past, the Society has been responsible for the restoration of the antique lifeguard boat, as well as the restoration of an 1889 painting of early Avalon and the restoration of the antique gas lamp that sits in front of the Avalon History Center. We continue to support the efforts of the Avalon History Center by providing items needed to preserve the collection and enhance the exhibits. In cooperation with others, we have been involved with the Hometown Heroes Veterans banners and the historic plaques that can be seen on homes throughout Avalon.

Currently we are in the process of documenting some of the oldest homes in Avalon through architectural plans and digital photos as well as location filming through the use of drones. We also continue our efforts to gather artifacts and memorabilia that are relevant to Avalon's past.

Unfortunately, due to the current situation, we were unable to hold the annual Olde House Tour, the Clam Shell Pitch and the Mini Golf Tournament. In addition, we are unable to have our annual Holiday Open House, where we thank our supporters.

We invite you to join us in our mission to keep alive the memory of the past, as we enjoy our seaside resort of today. You may do so by making a contribution to the Avalon Historical Society, 215 39th Street, Avalon, New Jersey, 08202.

The members of the Avalon Historical Society would like to wish you and your families a happy and safe holiday season. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Happy Holidays!

The Avalon Historical Society

Robert Penrose, President

Rosemarie Chew, Secretary

Susan McLaughlin, Trustee

David Coskey, Vice President

James Deeever, Trustee

Joseph Reese, Trustee

Michael Quinn, Treasurer

Carol Hart MacFeat, Trustee

Barbara Wilson, Trustee

AVALON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

215 39th Street • Avalon, NJ 08202 • Phone: (609) 967-0090



AVALON
HISTORY CENTER

Tidings



Official Newsletter of the Avalon History Center and Avalon Historical Society

Winter 2020 Issue

 facebook.com/AvalonHistoryCenter

WHILE WE WAIT

...In anticipation for the improved causeway bridge to bring us in and out of town, might we suggest recalling the ways past generations traveled into Avalon. Whether it was to vacation, relocate, or start businesses, once you start reminiscing, the five-minute wait will fly by!

The early 1900s saw Ford's Model T, together with other makes and models of automobiles arriving in Avalon by ferry or the railway. As early as 1905 the "Avalon Club" automobile association held regular car races on the beach. While pressure for a causeway to and from the mainland had been felt from the early 1890s, it wasn't until 1909 that Avalon Borough Council urged the Avalon Development Company to take on the project. In no time at all, entrepreneurs and speculators began buying up the meadowlands west of 7 Mile Beach and selling them to the Development Co.

The original plan used 20th Street and was drafted by R. Fendall Smith. However, 21st Street was ultimately deemed the logical route between Princeton and Pennsylvania Harbors and Sutton and Corson won the contract for \$15,150. Construction began in 1912. The 4½ mile boulevard over Graven's and Ingram's thoroughfares was dedicated (along with the new boardwalk) on



Ray Ellis print "Avalon Swing Bridge" 1964

July 13, 1913. Connecting Avalon's 21st Street with the mainland's Shore Boulevard, the new thoroughfare featured a hand-operated swing drawbridge. At the dedication, Mayor Gilbert S. Smith cut a golden cord across the new road before driving a golden spike into the new boardwalk, supported by regiments of the United Boys Brigade as he made his way across town. But by 1956, traffic in and out of Avalon via 21st Street had become intolerable, with daily backups during the summer months.

A new high fixed-span bridge was planned as part of a new roadway and bridge complex to connect Middle Township to Avalon. The location was set for 30th Street, which had meadows on either side and would not be hampered by existing structures, as was the case with 21st Street. The road complex includes 4 bridges, a causeway stretch named after Mayor Edgar V.H. Bell, measures 2.2 miles and cost \$4.2 million to build. The project began in November 1966 and opened for traffic in October 1968 after a dedication ceremony that included Avalon Mayor Edgar V.H. Bell and Middle Township Mayor Leroy H. May, Jr. As of 2020 the causeway counts over 50 years of travel, and following the current improvements, hopefully many more years to come.

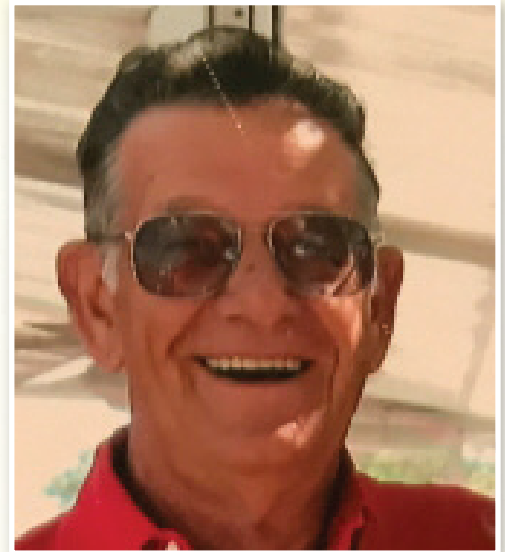


30th St. causeway over Ingram's Thorofare.
Avalon & Stone Harbor Herald. April 1968

This September our town lost a true Avalonian with the passing of Jack Richardson. Jack moved to Avalon as a young boy and graduated from Avalon Elementary School in 1948. After serving in the Korean War, Jack became an officer with the Avalon Police Department and spent his life serving Avalon in numerous ways, including as a member of the Avalon Fire Department, Scoutmaster for Avalon's Boy Scout Troop 270, and Coach of the Avalon and Stone Harbor Fire-Lions football team.

Jack's wife of 61 years Wilda was instrumental in bringing the Avalon Historical Society and Museum into reality, while Jack's business Richardson's Screen Repair on 39th street continues as an integral part of Avalon's long-running local business community.

We thank the Richardson family - Wilda, his sons John and Don, his daughter Elizabeth, and his grandchildren Johnny and Lauren for sharing their husband, father, grandfather with Avalon - we will all miss him.



RECENT ACQUISITION

Of all the memories shared with Avalon History Center staff, the Avalon Pier and Movie Theater are often the subject of questions and fond remembrances. So you can imagine our response when John Treese contacted the History Center asking if there would be any interest in a number of items chronicling operations at the Avalon, Stone Harbor, and Pleasantville movie theatres in the 1950s. These items had been found and

rescued from the Victoria Theater in Shamokin, PA, prior to its demolition. When the boxes arrived in December of 2019 and April of 2020, we were thrilled to find countless records of an era previously lost to us. The boxes contained box office receipts, movie rental details, staff rotations, candy sales, detailed handwritten diary records, playbills, flyers, and more.

While that would have been quite the find on its own, the surprises

didn't stop there. In late summer 2020 Mayor Pagliughi, via Sue Keen, found and donated among other items, a series of black and white photos from the day in 1979 when the Avalon Pier was demolished. Thanks to these photos and Mr. Treese's recent gift, an exhibit remembering these Avalon landmarks is planned for summer 2021. We hope you'll join us to relive the grand old days of Hollywood on the Avalon Pier.



As part of our ongoing mission to make the Avalon History Center and its collection more accessible, we are excited to partner with Google this year by joining their Arts & Culture initiative, which works with cultural institutions around the world to preserve their collections and make them available online. By participating in this program, we can share high-resolution images, oral histories, and other artifacts from Avalon's past in a new, easy-to-use interface. This program also allows patrons to tour specially-created online exhibits from the comfort of their own home! You can now visit these exhibits and our online collection here: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-avalon-history-center>



Thank-You To Those Who Donated Collection Items/Artifacts So Far This Year

Avalon Police Dept.
Lydia Borek
Colleen Cameron
John & Madeline Carr
Rose Marie Chew
Mary Fitzpatrick
Richard Grubb & Associates
Al Haring

Suzanne Keen
Mark Konnick
William J. Leahy
Carol MacFeat
Carol McElroy
Susan McLaughlin
Mayor M. Pagliughi

Michelle Petrucci
David & Susan Ross
Betty Shoemaker
John Treese
Christopher "Kit" Vernon
Marvin Wells, Jr
Martha Wright

HISTORY CENTER VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

History Center Virtual Programs Continue Throughout the Winter and Spring on the First Saturday of Each Month

Registration is required prior to the event. Register by visiting the event description in the Library/History Center's web calendar. All presentations will be via Zoom until further notice.

New to Zoom? Check out the Library's YouTube Zoom video tutorial under the website's help menu.



- December 5, 2020 at 1pm** Christmas Traditions by Kevin Woyce
- December 10, 2020 at 6pm** Upper Township 10 Towns Part Two by Bob Holden
- January 9, 2021 at 1pm** Nicholas and Alexandra Romanov by Jerry McNeff
- February 6, 2021 at 1pm** Avalon's High & Highfield families by Bruce Tell
- February 13, 2021 at 1pm** Valentine's Day Traditions by Kevin Woyce
- April 3, 2021 at 1pm** History of the Wedding Dress by Pary Tell

*The ATPC History Center and
Historical Society Wish All a
Happy and Safe Holiday Season!*

Our good friend Al Haring is making sure the History Center is full of Christmas cheer for all to enjoy, while maintaining social distancing. Please stop by to enjoy the festive décor and our new exhibits.

While you're here, pick up the 2020 Holiday Ornament! Available for purchase at the History Center for \$15 (check only).

We are open year-round.
Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm
Saturday 10am to 1pm
Closed Sundays



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