

MAY 2023



# SCUTTLEBUTT

OCEAN CITY LIFE  
SAVING STATION  
MUSEUM



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## President's Message :

I trust this note finds everyone healthy and ready for the summer activities to begin. Let me start by announcing that the Museum starting May 1st, will be open seven days a week from 10:00 AM to 5: 00 PM... with the annual summer programs and activities beginning July 3rd.

Renovations, both exterior and interior, for the Bank of Ocean City Building located downtown will begin November 2023. In a perfect world, the exterior and some interior upgrades will be completed by the end of May 2024, as for the extensive work on the Museum's elevator to be completed within the next three years. Fingers crossed!

A shout out to Bunk Mann, whose book: "O. C. Chronicles" will be released sometime in the middle of May. This text captures the essence of those voices and events that shaped Ocean City. This quintessential book complements his two other publications, which neatly forms a trilogy of exciting people, places, and events. His book also features Paul McGee's classic artwork.

Meanwhile, Gordon Katz and I are currently thumbing through notes gleaned from membership and board meetings taken from the Bank of Ocean City's illustrious history.

Thanks to Assistant Curator Cara Downey for assuming all responsibilities of running the Museum while Curator Christine Okerblom cared for her newborn.

Many thanks to all those who assisted in running the Museum.

Newt Weaver, President.

## GUESS THAT ARTIFACT!

Can you guess what this museum artifact is?

To submit your guess, visit  
[www.ocmuseum.org/guess-that-artifact](http://www.ocmuseum.org/guess-that-artifact)




# WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Michael Maykrantz is the CEO of the Seaside Resort Group and a local real estate Broker, starting in business in 1997. He also served for 30 years with the Ocean City Fire Department, retiring as Firefighter/Paramedic in 2018, and is a Life Member of the OC Volunteer Fire Co. Michael believes in the importance of supporting the community having served in many leadership roles for various organizations, and is committed to providing outstanding service in his business. He is passionate and

forever dedicated to the preservation, education, and research of the history of the Town of Ocean City and Worcester County.

A photograph of a sign for the Beach Plaza Hotel. The sign is mounted on a brick wall and features the text "Beach plaza" in a large, stylized font, with "HOTEL by Phillips" in a smaller font below it. The sign is tilted slightly to the right. In the background, a large, multi-story building is visible, and a beach with people is in the foreground.

This past October, Michael Maykrantz and Stephanie Shockley spearheaded a fundraising effort that brought in over 17,000 dollars for the Ocean City Museum Society. As the Beach Plaza Hotel announced demolition, Michael sought the opportunity to preserve history and raise funds. Michael organized an auction that was comprised of furnishings from the Beach Plaza Hotel. Furnishings that would have been lost in demolition were saved and rehomed.



Ocean City Volunteer Fire Department, c. 1940

## ONLINE COLLECTION

Did you know that much of our collection is online for you to view? Dive into the past as you look at historic postcards, photos, and objects on our website at [www.ocmuseum.org/onlinecollection](http://www.ocmuseum.org/onlinecollection)

# THIS PAST FALL...

October was brimming with programs and events as we celebrated Worcester County History Month!



1. Elementary students enjoying our fall photo display.
2. Allan Beres, dressed as a "Keeper" at Harbor Days on the Docks.
3. Golden retriever, Malibu, enjoying our fall photo display.
4. Candle-Making Workshop with Honey Water Candles.
5. Ocean Pines Players actor dresses as Laffing Sal for our History Comes to Life program.
6. Watercolor workshop with Artist Joanna Guilfoil.

CNVFILLM FF1



23

CANVA STORIES

7. Storm Warriors 5K Walk/Run Awards.

8. Students from Berlin Intermediate School participating in our Annual 5K.

9. Bunk Mann presenting the 2022 Spirit Award to Joanne Guilfoil.

10. Al "Hondo" Handy and Mayor Rick Meehan with Hondo's new book "Defying Expectations: Family, Sports, & Recreation."



23

CANVA STORIES

CANVA STORIES



23

CANVA STORIES

9



23

CANVA STORIES

10

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Our free summer programs have been a long-standing tradition for over two decades.

Enjoy these educational, interactive programs designed to engage every member of your family.

Programs run from **July 3rd to August 25th.**

## HISTORY OF OUR SURFMEN, MONDAY 10:00 AM



Learn about the United States Life-Saving Service and the heroic men who rescued ships in distress off the coast of Ocean City, Maryland.

## BEACH SAFETY, TUESDAY 10:00 AM



Learn how to be safe in the surf and spell your name using semaphore. The famous Ocean City Beach Patrol is on hand with every thing you need to know!

## KNOT TYING, WEDNESDAY 10:00 AM



Become an expert at nautical knots with help from the U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary.



## ALL ABOUT SHARKS, THURSDAY 10:00 AM



Discover what types of sharks are found off the coast of Ocean City.

## LAND, SKY & SEA, FRIDAY 10:00 AM



Learn how the island was formed, what birds fly overhead and what creatures live in our ocean and coastal bays.



## AQUARIUM FEEDING, SATURDAY 10:00 AM

Discover the wildlife that inhabits our ocean and coastal bays as you watch our aquarium animals eat their morning meal.

PHOTO CONTEST



The Louis Parsons III Memorial Photo Contest is from April 1 - October 1, 2023. It features three categories:

- Ocean City Beach - \$250 award
- Ocean City Boardwalk - \$250 award
- Ocean City/Assateague Bay Sunsets - \$250 award

Grand Prize Winner takes home \$500!

To learn more or submit, visit [ocmuseum.org](http://ocmuseum.org).

STATION 4 TOUR



Learn about the United States Life-Saving Service as we take you on a trip back in time. During this interactive tour, you will visit each room of Ocean City's once-active 1891 Life Saving Station. You will learn what day-to-day life looked like and what was required of the United States Life-Saving Service Surfman. What did downtime look like? What would they eat? Who was the Keeper? What kind of medicine did they use? All these answers plus more! This program is free with paid admission, and no registration is required. Program dates: July 10th, & 17th, August 14th & 21st at 1:00 pm.

**Historic House Tour**

*Save the date*



*May 11th 2024*

## TOM

### The Story of the Man Who Built the Capitol Theatre in Ocean City ... And Then Gave It Away

*Everybody needs a place to rest  
Everybody wants to have a home  
Don't make no difference what nobody says  
Ain't nobody like to be alone*

*Everybody's got a hungry heart ...*

"Hungry Heart", Bruce Springsteen (1980)

"Tom" was Thomas Noah Connaway, the oldest child of Henry Clay Connaway and Anne Thomas (Quillin) Connaway. He was born in Berlin, Maryland, on May 9, 1874, and named after his maternal grandfather (Thomas N. Quillin) and paternal grandfather (Noah Connaway). His father Henry was a successful butcher, with a shop located at 18 North Main Street in Berlin, and the owner of significant real estate holdings in the area. The 1880 federal census report shows Henry and Annie, as she was familiarly known, living with Tom, his two younger siblings, Henry, Jr., and Louise, and three Black domestic servants, Hetty Selby, age 10, Elizabeth Hammond, age 36, and Robert Collins, age 50.

### THE EARLY YEARS

We know nothing about Tom growing up. His father, along with many other Berlin merchants, lost his business in the great fire on the night of August 4 - 5, 1895, as reported the following day: "This town [Berlin, Maryland] was almost destroyed last night by a fire that originated at 8:30 o'clock in the stables of C. W. Henry from a cigar. Seventy-five houses were consumed, including nearly all the stores and about twenty residences. The total area burned was about six acres ..."



Henry rebuilt his establishment (this time using brick) and moved in on Christmas Day, 1897. By that time, he had been appointed postmaster at Berlin, a prized job in those days with its guaranteed government paycheck. He hired Tom as assistant postmaster, at an annual salary of \$150. The post office operated out of the front portion of Henry's store on Main Street.

Henry Connaway died on July 11, 1903, "after a lingering illness", at the age of 59. Tom lost his job at the post office and began what would become a lifetime of drifting. In March of 1904 we find him in Washington, D. C., where he, along with his mother Annie, executed a mortgage instrument, pledging his share of his late father's estate in return for a loan of \$2,050. From there, he moved on to Baltimore. In February 1905, Tom returned briefly to Worcester County, this time to borrow \$2,500 from his mother, which he used to pay off the earlier loan, and then left town again.

### **THE INCIDENT IN BALTIMORE**

On July 20, 1905, Tom purchased a .38 caliber revolver at a sporting goods store in Baltimore. He then headed for Schneider's German Café, located at 117 West Fayette Street, where he had traced his romantic interest at the time, Miss Mollie Appel. Miss Appel was having dinner there in the outdoor summer garden with her escort, a man named Sylvester Kennedy, when Tom showed up around 6:30. According to the newspaper accounts, Tom approached their table, and without a word, began shooting. Miss Appel was wounded in the shoulder. Tom followed her and Mr. Kennedy as they made their escape from the restaurant, firing two more shots. He paused in the bar, raised his pistol one more time and fired into the ceiling, and then collapsed on the floor.

**BERLIN IN ASHES.**  
The Maryland Town Practically  
Destroyed by Fire.  
**SIX ACRES SWEEP BY FLAMES.**  
Seventy-five Houses Consumed  
on Sunday Night.  
The Total Loss Estimated at About  
\$175,000—Only About \$25,000 Insur-  
ance and Most of that in Local Com-  
panies—The Fire Started from a Cigar  
in a Stable—Previous Fires that Have  
Devastated Eastern Shore Towns.

**SHOT IN CROWDED CAFE**  
Miss Mollie Appel Wounded By  
T. N. Connaway At Schneider's.  
**HER COMPANION HURT TOO**  
Connaway Fired 4 Times At Her  
And Then At Himself—Victims  
Not Seriously Injured.

The Baltimore Sun gives us a little insight into Tom's affairs leading up to this incident, in a report published on July 21: "Connaway comes from Berlin, Md., where he was once postmaster [assistant postmaster]. He has been in Baltimore for about a year. For a while he kept a saloon at St. Paul and Saratoga streets. For a few weeks, he has been a conductor on the Madison avenue cars [streetcars]. He is not married."

Tom's sister posted his \$1,000 bail, and he was released from jail on July 26. At a hearing on August 14, at which his mother and sister were present, both Miss Appel and Mr. Kennedy declined to press charges against Tom. Following a stern but sympathetic lecture from the magistrate, Tom was freed and beat a hasty retreat to Worcester County.

## **DRIFTING ALONG FOR TWO DECADES**

For the next two decades, we find only bits of information about Tom and what he was doing. Whatever it was, he didn't do it for very long. In December 1909, he purchased a half-interest in a tract of land known as the "John Bishop Farm" from his uncle, Samuel Quillin. He sold his interest to his mother two months later. By that time, Tom was in Philadelphia. He returned to Berlin later that year and was hired by local merchant E. S. Furbush. Mr. Furbush had been appointed postmaster after Henry Connaway's death and had also purchased Connaway's store on Main Street.

On January 15, 1910, the Democratic Messenger published this story:

"The town of Berlin is in a state of excitement over the discovery that former Postmaster, Thomas N. Connaway (sic) has turned safe robber ...

"Mr. Furbush had been missing money from the safe in his store for a long while, and he was sure it was being rifled by some one who was well acquainted with the store and its surroundings."

According to this account, Mr. Furbush caught Tom rifling the safe on Christmas Eve, 1909. Tom confessed to having stolen "several thousand dollars" while employed at the store, and forging Mr. Furbush's signature on checks. The article goes on, "Hoping to regain some of his money Mr. Furbush kept quiet for a few days, but the whole affair leaked out Wednesday morning [January 12] when it became known that Connaway had left for parts unknown." We don't know where Tom went or whether he was ever prosecuted for the theft. It's possible that his mother covered Mr. Furbush's loss.

From wherever Tom had fled following the discovery of his crime, he was back in Worcester County in August 1914, when he bought the 16-acre “Wigwam Farm”, located on the west side of the county road “leading from Chaneytown to Berlin” from the “heirs at law of John Fooks (colored)”. Tom sold the farm in July of the following year.

In late 1917, Annie Connaway purchased the Glendale Hotel in Ocean City, located on the south side of Wicomico Street, about midway between Baltimore Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue. She might have acquired the hotel, the Connaway family’s only investment in Ocean City, to provide Tom with another opportunity to settle down. If so, it didn’t happen. Tom’s World War I Draft Registration Card, completed on September 12, 1918, shows that he was working at the Sun Shipbuilding Company in Chester, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. That job didn’t last long; in the 1920 federal census report Tom, now 46, was back in Berlin, living with his mother, and unemployed.

Annie’s Glendale Hotel burned down on March 30, 1922. Curiously, Tom was reported as being the owner in the newspaper accounts of the fire. Annie did transfer title to the now vacant lots to Tom later in 1922. He sold the property in 1925 to Virgil Williams.

A year earlier, Tom had purchased 17 lots in West Ocean City. The parcel was situated on the north side of the highway leading to Ocean City (MD 707, today’s Old Bridge Road), east of Herring Creek, and just to the east of the present-day intersection of US 50 and MD 707. We don’t know for what purpose or how Tom acquired this property. The 1938 plat of the proposed dual highway from Herring Creek to Ocean City shows a dwelling and several cottages located there that were eventually moved north of the right of way of US 50 during construction.

## **THE CAPITOL THEATRE**

Tom seems to have finally found his calling in 1925. The heirs of Samuel Cropper, who had died in 1924, were selling the real estate he had owned on the southeast corner of Baltimore Avenue and Worcester Street in Ocean City. The real estate included two lots, one fronting on the east side of Baltimore Avenue, with a dwelling and store, and the other, a vacant lot, fronting on the south side of Worcester Street. Tom paid \$6,100 to acquire the two lots and improvements.

Tom opened the “Capitol Theatre” on the formerly vacant lot on Worcester Street in May 1927. Why he chose to get into that business isn’t known. The cavernous two-story structure reportedly seated 800 patrons. There was no mistaking the building; Tom had the roof emblazoned with “CAPITOL THEATRE” in giant white letters. He wasn’t the only operator of a moving pictures business in Ocean City; a few blocks north at North Division Street, the Showell family opened their 500-seat theatre at the same time. The Trimper family’s Windsor Theatre on the Boardwalk near South 1st Street also competed for the same crowd of summertime moviegoers.

The Capitol Theatre had to be remodeled almost immediately after its opening, in order to accommodate the crowds expected to attend the Maryland Shriners’ ceremonial scheduled in September. Tom announced shortly after that event that the theatre would remain open all winter, an unusual move for an Ocean City business at that time.

On January 25, 1928, the Evening Journal reported, “The Capitol theatre at Ocean City was entered early Monday morning [January 23] by thieves and ransacked, tickets, valuable papers and a little cash being taken. The greatest damage to the theatre was the destruction of the motion picture projecting machine, which the thieves overturned, breaking valuable lenses. The presence of a high-powered roadster near the scene furnishes the only clue for the authorities ...”

Tom told the Journal reporter in a subsequent interview that he thought “the robbery and wrecking of his motion picture house was accomplished by some of his personal enemies, because of the fact that little loot was stolen, while a motion picture projecting machine, valued at several hundreds of dollars, was wrecked and overturned by the robbers.” He blamed the robbery on “a bootlegging feud, which exists at the Maryland resort at the present time between two rival gangs,” and that he believed “their attack was directed against him because he refused to aid one of the factions.”





Tom apparently got the message; his business wasn't targeted again, and the theatre was back in operation by March. No one was ever arrested for the break-in.

Tom faced another challenge in the summer of 1929, this time from Worcester County State's Attorney Godfrey Child. Mr. Child had been directed by State officials to ramp up enforcement of what the newspapers characterized as "Maryland's ancient blue laws", which prohibited places of amusement from operating on Sunday. All three of Ocean City's theatres, along with "boardwalk amusement stands and alleged gambling places" were wide open on Sundays, provoking loud protests from local clergymen. On Sunday, June 30, Sheriff Walter D. Dennis showed up at the Capitol Theatre, threatening to arrest Tom unless he agreed to shut down his theatre on Sundays. He "complied with the Sheriff's request."

While Tom had made his peace with the local bootlegging gangs, others apparently had not. On Tuesday, September 3, 1929, one day after the unofficial end of the summer season, a fire broke out along the Boardwalk between South Division Street and Worcester Street. Eyewitnesses reported "a blue colored flame shot skyward as from an explosion igniting the entire rear sections of the Conway, Bryan and Rapoport Brothers amusement buildings." All the buildings along the Boardwalk were destroyed in the blaze. The Denton Journal identified the casualties:

"Playland, owned by Thomas H. Conway and Joseph Bryan, \$30,000; Rapoport Brothers' store owned by Joseph and Nathan Rapoport, \$25,000; Fun House, owned by Thomas H. Conway, \$10,000; Jester's Restaurant, owned by Lloyd Jester, \$4,500; cigarette store, owned by Jack Burns, \$1,500; Joe's, owned by A. H. Monkhouse, \$1,500; amusement store, owned by Jimmie Velis and Thomas Conway, \$1,500. Damage to Ocean City's boardwalk and lighting system is estimated at \$1,000."

The Capitol Theatre was spared from the flames. City Council president William B. S. Powell announced the next day that an immediate investigation would be launched to determine the cause of the fire. He walked that statement back one day later at the direction of Mayor William W. McCabe. No official cause was ever reported.

## **THE END GAME**

The 1930 federal census report shows 56-year-old Tom residing on Worcester Street in Ocean City, with his occupation given as the owner of a merchandise store. His household included Sadie Adams, a 35-year-old widow he employed as his housekeeper, her 16-year-old son, Sammy, and a boarder, Clarence Carey, 25, who worked as a grocery store salesman. These three individuals each have their own interesting stories, but we'll have to save those for another time.

The year 1931 brought two deaths in the Connaway family. On March 18, Tom's younger brother, Henry Clay Connaway, Jr., a dentist living in Salisbury, passed away. His death was followed less than six months later by the passing of Tom's mother, Annie Connaway, on September 3.

The death of his mother must have hit Tom hard. She had clearly been the one who supported him throughout his lifetime of mostly directionless wandering, and now she was gone.

On May 23, 1932, Tom executed a series of deeds. He gave the Capitol Theatre property and adjoining lot and buildings on Baltimore Avenue, along with his property in West Ocean City, to his housekeeper, Sadie Adams. He also gave his entire share of his late mother's estate to his sister, Louise. And then he disappeared.

The final fact that we know of Tom's life is that he died on December 21, 1934, and is buried in St. Paul's Episcopal Church cemetery in Berlin. No obituary was published.

## **EPILOGUE**

The original Capitol Theatre building burned down on February 8, 1964. A new structure was completed in time for the summer season. The theatre closed in the 1970s, and was later converted to an under-21 dance club.

## Bank Building Q&A

**QUESTION:** What is the expected finish date for the Bank Building?

**ANSWER:** Construction/renovations finish in May 2024.

**QUESTION:** What can we expect to find in the Bank Building?

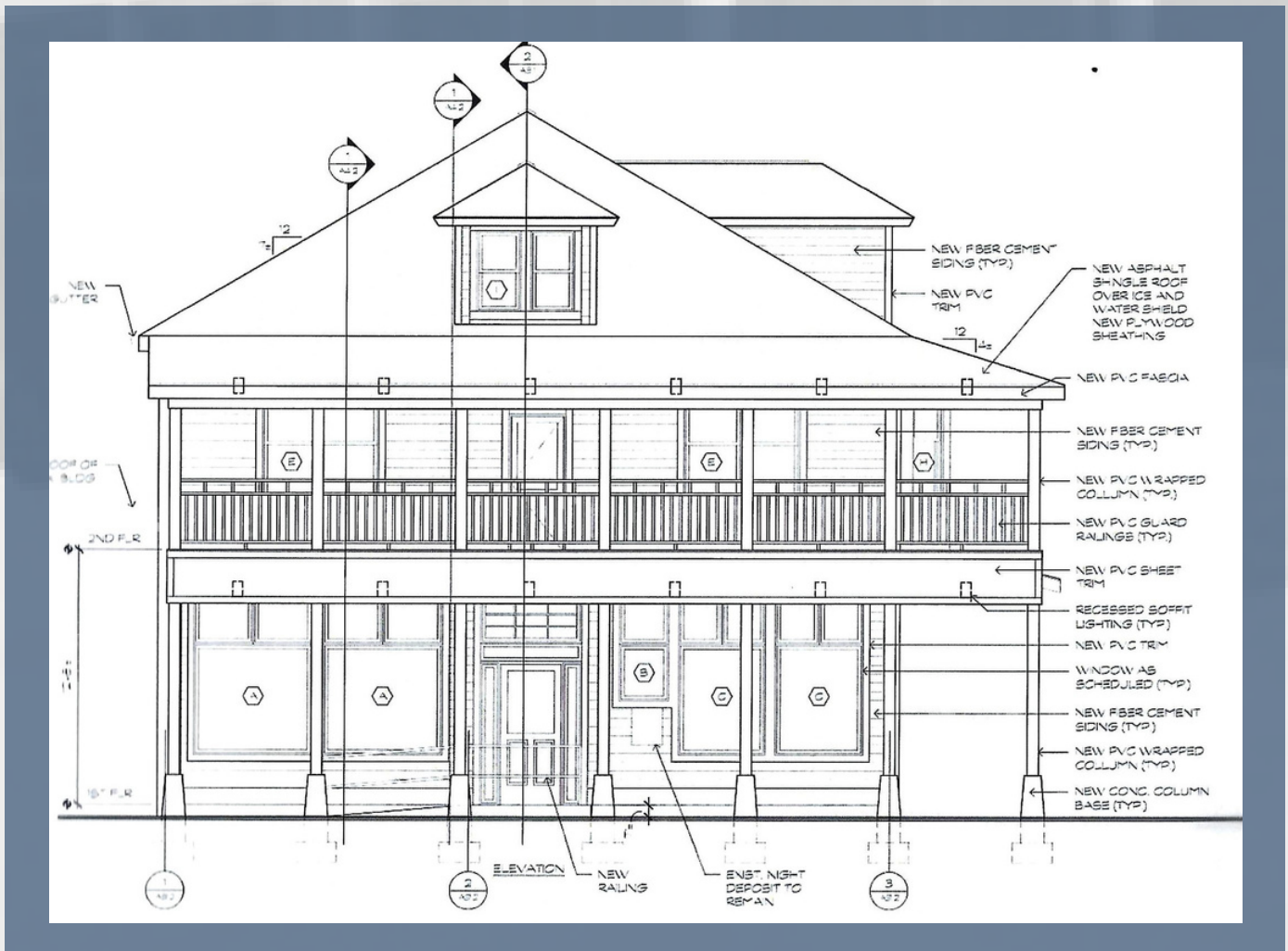
**ANSWER:** The first floor of the bank building will serve as the main exhibit hall and will provide open floor space for community members to attend programs and events: Main exhibit hall  
Potential exhibits include: History of Downtown Ocean City, History of Native Americans, History of Ocean City's Restaurants and Hotels, History of Building (Bank of Ocean City History)

**QUESTION:** How old is the bank building? Was it always a bank?

**ANSWER:** The bank building is 113 years old. Before it was the Bank of Ocean City, it was Mc Gregor's Grocery Store.

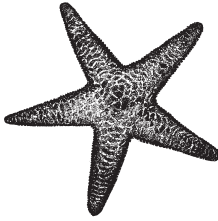
**QUESTION:** Can the public access archival records at the bank building?

**ANSWER:** A designated research space on the first and second floors will allow the public to access museum archival records and look at historical maps, photographs, and other items from the museum's collection.



# KID'S CORNER

Can you find these five items hiding in this historic photo?





# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

LINDA ALBRO  
BALTIMORE, MD

JEN ANSELMO  
STEWARTSVILLE, NJ

MARYANNA BENNETT  
CLEARWATER BEACH, MD

RAE ELLEN BEST  
VIENNA, VA

MARK & LIZ BOASTFIELD  
RICHMOND, VA

ROB BUKSZAR  
OELLA, MD

KELLEY BURD-HUSS  
MORGANTOWN, WV

KATELYN CARROLL  
SILVER SPRING, MD

DENISE CERVANTES  
OCEAN PINES, MD

JAIME DAY  
NARBERTH, PA

DONALD DAWSON  
PASADENA, MD

MARK DECASSAN  
EDINBURG, VA

DAVID DELLMAN  
COCKEYSVILLE, MD

STACEY A. EVANS  
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

GARY FARBER  
NEW PALESTINE, IN

THOMAS GAFFNEY  
BETHEL, CT

TRACEY GIBBONS  
PARMA, OH

SPAULDING GOETZE JR.  
SNOW HILL, MD

ED GOUNDRY  
FREDERICK, MD

DEBBIE GOUSHA  
BERLIN, MD

NANCY HARRIS  
ELIZABETHVILLE, PA

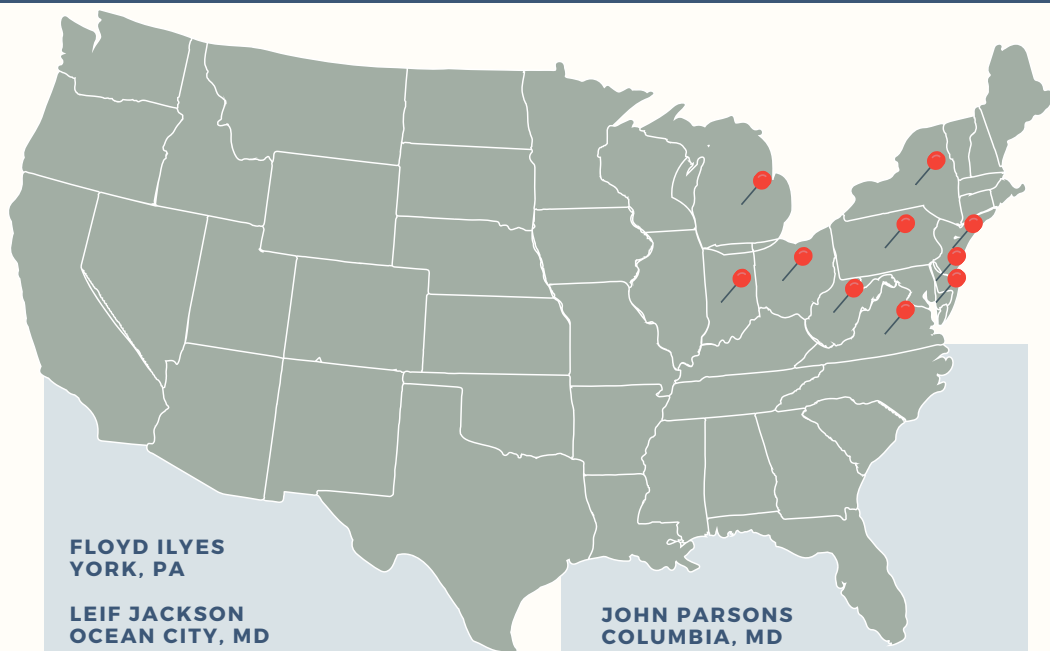
THRASA HARRIS  
FAIRFIELD, PA

TRACEY HARTMAN  
ANNAPOLIS, MD

JAN HEMMA  
DANVILLE, PA

CHARLENE HOECHE  
PIKESVILLE, MD

BARRY HUSICK  
EVERETT, PA



FLOYD ILYES  
YORK, PA

LEIF JACKSON  
OCEAN CITY, MD

SPENCER JOYCE  
ANNAPOLIS, MD

BARBARA KIMBALL  
ALEXANDRIA, VA

DAN LASIK  
STERLING, VA

BRITT LEHNERD  
DARLINGTON, MD

LARRY LEWIS  
BALTIMORE, MD

LAWRENCE LEWIS  
LIVONIA, MI

KELLY LITCHARD  
SHICKSHINNY, PA

HEATHER LUQUETTE  
ARNOLD, MD

RADA & MANNY MACHIN  
OCEAN CITY, MD

ERICA MASEDA  
STEVENSVILLE, MD

MIKE MCHUGH  
LOVETTSTOWN, VA

MELISSA MEYD-KRICKLER  
FREELAND, MD

AMY MILLER  
SPARROWS POINT, MD

TAMSEN MOLENDEN  
MARTINSBURG, WV

KATHY & JIM MORAN  
CHESAPEAKE CITY, MD

TERESA MURRAY  
BISHOPVILLE, MD

KEN & DEBBIE MYERS  
RANDALLSTOWN, MD

KATHY O'BRIEN  
ELKRIDGE, MD

NANCY O'HARA  
SHREWSBURY, PA

JOHN PARSONS  
COLUMBIA, MD

V.P. RITTER  
CROWNSVILLE, MD

ARIANA ROSE  
NORTH TONAWANDA, NY

PAT ROTH  
NEW CUMBERLAND, PA

REBECCA RUARK  
READING, PA

MICHAEL SMITH  
COLORA, MD

EDWARD SNOOK  
SUSSEX, NJ

KELLY STOTLER  
BERKELEY SPRINGS, WV

KRISTIE ST PIERRE  
SNOW HILL, MD

DAVID THOMPSON  
BEL AIR, MD

DORETTE THOMPSON  
OCEAN CITY, MD

JOEL TODD  
SELBYVILLE, DE

HARRY & SANDY TOMPKINS  
ARMONK, NY

RAGHU VALLABHANENI  
REISTERSTOWN, MD

JENNIFER WEGMAN  
FLEETWOOD, PA

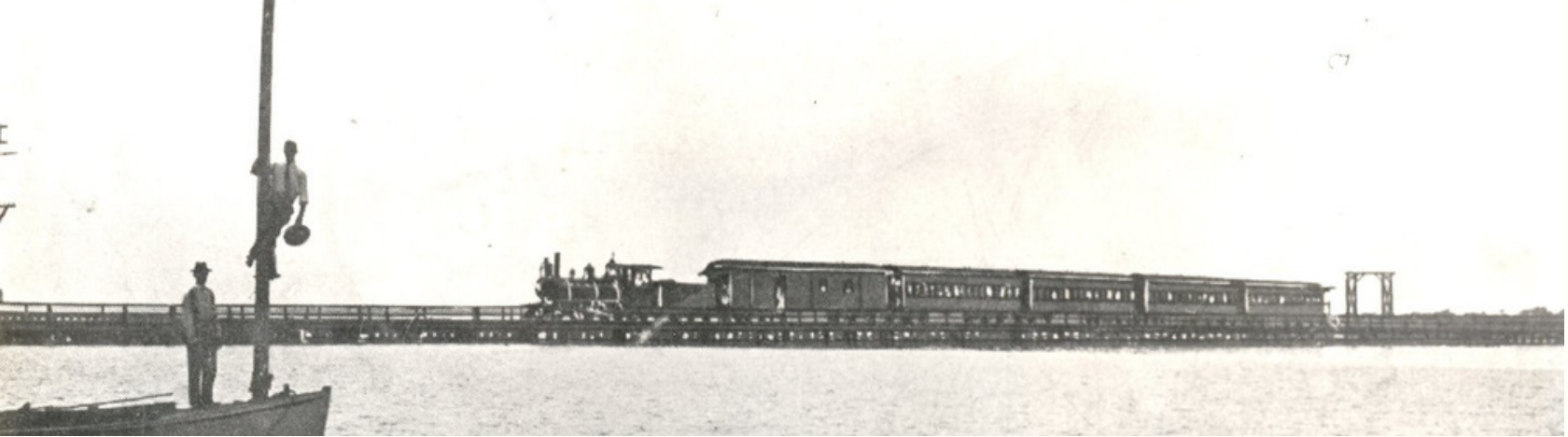
JOANN WILLIAMS  
CHAMBERSBURG, PA

PAT WILLS  
LINTHICUM HEIGHTS, MD

WILLIAM WONG  
SILVER SPRING, MD

SANDRA WRIGHT  
BURTONSVILLE, MD

SVETLA YORDANOVA  
CROFTON, MD



*In 1876, a wooden railroad bridge was built over the Sinepuxent Bay. The bridge entered the town at South Division Street and ran to a Baltimore Avenue depot. When the 1933 storm destroyed the railroad bridge, there was not enough demand for train transportation to rebuild the bridge.*

## Volunteer Spotlight

Karlee Mannain was one of our education interns this past summer. After completing her summer internship, Karlee volunteered for the museum during our off-season. In addition to keeping our aquariums clean, she provided interpretation to our weekend visitors!

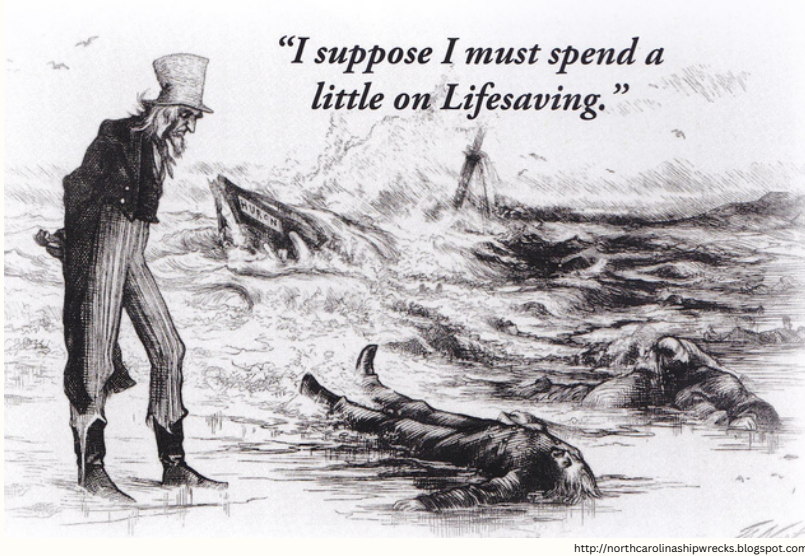
Thank you, Karlee, for your hard work and dedication.



### Volunteer Opportunities

**Are you looking for a way to get involved, but don't want to make a full time commitment? The Ocean City Museum Society has a place for you. We have one day events or longer commitment opportunities. Simply fill out our online form and someone will be in touch soon!**

# OCEAN CITY LIFE-SAVING STATION MUSEUM



"DEATH ON ECONOMY," HARPER'S WEEKLY, DEC 29, 1877

“

The Thomas Nast wood engraving "Death on Economy" was published in Harper's Weekly on December 29, 1877. It shows Uncle Sam looking at the victims of the USS Huron shipwreck. The Huron was an iron-hulled gunboat of the U.S. Navy. During a fierce storm on November 24, 1877, the screw steamer ran aground off Nags Head, North Carolina. The heavy seas prevented most of the crew from reaching the shore, and the Huron received no assistance due to the nearby Life-Saving Station not yet being open for the season. It was reported that the wreck took the lives of ninety-eight men.

A month later, the Nast editorial cartoon was published, and "Death on Economy" was part of the widespread criticism against the federal government for its failure to provide adequate funding for the United States Life-Saving Service. The caption on the cartoon reads: "U.S. 'I suppose I must spend a little on life-saving service, life-boat stations, life-boats, surfboats, etc.; but it is too bad to be obliged to waste so much money.'" The wreck of the USS Huron was just one of several deadly shipwrecks along the U.S. coast in the winter of 1877-78.

In response to the criticism, Congress funded the building of additional life-saving stations and extended months of operation. Eventually, the United States Life-Saving Service became an independent agency in the Treasury Department, with Sumner I. Kimball becoming its first and only General Superintendent.

Written by Cara Downey

”

The Ocean City Museum Society

## Board of Directors

Newt Weaver, *President*  
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Gordon Katz, *Treasurer*  
Joseph Moore, *Board Attorney*  
Mary Adeline Bradford  
Amanda Cropper  
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John Lynch  
Hunter "Bunk" Mann  
Michael Maykrantz  
Shirley Moran  
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Cara Downey, *Assistant Curator*  
Allan Beres, *Museum Aide*  
Deborah DeFressine, *Museum Aide*  
Robert Gilmore, *Museum Aide*

## Volunteer

Harry Ballantyne  
Beth Ladd  
John Sisson  
Karlee Mannain

## Museum Hours

May-October: 10:00-5:00 PM, Open Daily  
November-April: 10:00-4:00 PM, Sat & Sun

**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO WOULD ENJOY A MEMBERSHIP TO THE MUSEUM? VISIT [WWW.OCMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.OCMUSEUM.ORG) TO LEARN MORE!**

- Individual \$10.00
- Family \$30.00
- Supporting \$100.00
- Sustaining \$250.00

**The mission of the Ocean City Museum Society is to inspire and support the interpretation and appreciation of the cultural and natural history of Ocean City, Maryland, the Worcester County coastal region, and equally, the historical role performed by the United States Life-Saving Service, and to preserve, with subsequent mandate, the 1891 structure that once served as the Ocean City Station.**

OCEAN CITY LIFE-SAVING  
STATION MUSEUM  
P.O. BOX 603  
OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND 21843

