



SCUTTLEBUTT

Winter 2008

February 15, 2008

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Our Mission

The Ocean City Museum Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and interpreting the rich natural and cultural history of this coastal community through memorabilia collections, rotating exhibits, educational programs and area research. The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum presents:

1. The history of the United States Life-Saving Service on the Delmarva Peninsula.
2. The past lifestyles and culture of the Town of Ocean City, Maryland.
3. The local ancestral records and artifact collections through its internet service.

Money Grubbing

**By Carole Hitchens Quillen
2006**

When I was a child, in the 1950's, Ocean City was a sleepy village that sprang to life in June and died a quick death on Labor Day. There was one movie theatre in town, the Capital Theater, and it was open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. The only other form of entertainment was the "pool hall", but of course only "bad" boys went there and certainly not "young ladies". The local television station, Channel 16 WBOC, was on the air for only a few hours a day. As you can see, there wasn't a whole lot for a youngster to do. Add to that, the fact that there were VERY few children in town and you realize we had to invent our own entertainment.



Carole Hitchens Quillen atop a fire hydrant in downtown Ocean City in the 1950s

I grew up in a middle-income family, and "back in those days" (really, the dinosaurs were long gone by then) that meant the parents had to run like crazy for three months and then scrimp for the next nine. There was no such thing as an allowance for my siblings and me. If we wanted money to go to the movies or buy candy at Birch's Market, on First Street and Baltimore Avenue, we had to "find" our own. Now you might ask "how does a kid find money in a ghost town

in the dead of winter?" Well, we had to be VERY creative! There was always one or two construction/remodeling sites within bicycling distance of home and, thanks to the generosity/laziness of the construction workers, they left their soft drink bottles (we had glass bottles back then, no cans) laying around at the end of the day.

After school it was a race to see who would be the first one to hit the construction sites and get those "golden" bottles. If you took those empty bottles to Birch's Market you could get three cents apiece for

them. It doesn't sound like a lot now, but then, you could get a coke and a moon pie for ten cents, a pack of gum was five cents and, at least at Birch's Market, they still had penny candy, all this wasn't to last much longer!

There were two other means of "finding" money, but they were more like work! This involved literally "finding" the money that the summertime visitors lost. Back then, like I said, the dinosaurs were gone; the boardwalk was made entirely of boards. Now these boards were spaced so a coin could quite nicely fit between them.

.....*Continued on page 2*

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Money Grubbing continued

Back before the beach nourishment projects weren't even thought of, a northeaster' storm could cut the sand back nicely from under the boardwalk and you could literally crawl underneath and pick up a dollar's worth of coins at a lot of different locations. The other main source of "income" for us kids was taught to us by our father Horace Hitchens.

This involved walking the beach on a windy day. Now the easy part was that you had to walk with your back to the wind and, looking down, the coins that our visitors dropped on the beach dur-

ing the summer would be standing on end, with a little pile of windblown sand behind them. The wind would blow the sand away from around the heavier coins! Of course that was back before the invention of the "beach sweepers" that mechanically sift the sand on the beach to remove debris.

You may say this sounds like a lot of effort for such little reward, but then there wasn't any place to spend it except on candy and the movies!

To read more "Ocean City Memories" visit www.ocmuseum.org

Building Repairs Update

By George Hurley

During the spring of 2006, our museum qualified for a grant from Heritage Preservation of Washington DC. which underwrote the costs of having Preservation Architect, Stephen L. Harris of Annapolis, MD perform a complete review of the building and the problems that exist because of its age and its weather environment. This report provided the basis by which the Ocean City Government could justify the expenditures necessary to make numerous corrections to the building.

In 1978 when the building was moved down the beach, the Federal Government was very concerned about lead paint. Our building was completely covered with lead based paint to protect it in the harsh seaside weather. Consequently the building was sandblasted to rid it of this possible hazard and repainted with modern paints. Unfortunately for the siding, the blasting, in addition to removing the lead also removed much of the "summer wood" which is a more fragile grain in the wood. Five years ago, in house inspections found rot beginning to appear in many parts of the exterior as a result.

In 2007 the city established a plan where by for the next four years one side of the museum's exterior will have its siding replaced each year beginning in 2008.

The work has begun. Rotted areas beneath the sheathing are being repaired with rot resistant materials. All flashings are being replaced with copper. (The 117 year old former flashings were of thin lead). The horizontal german siding (lower level) is being replaced with #1 clear yellow pine (cypress is unavailable unless purchased in tractor trailer lots which is unneeded and terribly expensive). The decorative woodwork on the gable ends will be of clear fir (redwood was unavailable due to milling strikes on the west coast.) The second level vertical siding and batton moldings will be of modern composite materials which have an extremely long life and require little maintenance....plus the Fypon Company was the only supplier that could match the old moldings. All fasteners are of stainless steel and the shingle of the new roof (over the aquarium room) will be long life architectural grade. Only the north side of the building is being done in 2008. It should be completed well before Springfest.



Thank You From Jim Hiteshew

Last August I came to Ocean City for my annual vacation and as luck would have it: I had chosen the only week that it rained during the entire summer. Rather than get down about it, I took some time to ponder the subject of my senior project for my final college course. I quickly came to the decision to write about a subject that is near and dear to me; The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum.

I first visited the Museum back in the mid-1990's. I enjoyed the station and exhibits so much that I immediately joined the Museum Society. Over the years I have maintained my membership and have become a good acquaintance of both Sue and Sandy Hurley, as well as some of the other staffers.

I met with Sue and Sandy and told them of my ideas and asked if they would assist with my senior thesis. Not surprisingly, they both pledged their support. Sandy recommended that I speak to Mr. Kenneth Jordan of the Engineering Department at City Hall, as he is known as Ocean City's "unofficial historian".

The next day, I met Mr. Jordan and he jumped at the chance to help me gather information about the Town and the Station. By the end of what was "the only rainy week of the summer", I had a literal treasure trove of information.

My senior thesis will eventually become my first book, *The History of The Ocean*

City Life-Saving Station Museum concentrating on three aspects of the Station's life. First, I will tell the history of the station during the era of the U. S. Life-Saving Service, followed by an examination of an obscure court case involving the Town of Ocean City and the heirs of the original landowner, Stephen Taber. Finally, I will cover the transformation of the station house from a neglected municipal building to the landmark that it is today.

During a weekend trip to Ocean City in October of last year, I met again with Sue, Sandy and Ken. During this second research expedition, Ken once again filled my notebook with materials from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. as well as clarifying the story of the Taber land dispute. Sue and Sandy also proved themselves invaluable by allowing me access to several dozen hard-to-find newspaper articles that covered the station's history while it was being moved from its original Caroline Street location and its conversion to a museum.

I would like to thank Sue, Sandy and Ken for their enthusiasm and support, and their continued help with my research. They have helped put me on the path to success and their guidance has taught me much and has saved me an incredible amount of time. I will continue to check in with the Museum Society and I hope to give the readers of SCUTTLEBUTT updates on my progress.

WELCOME ABOARD

NEW MEMBERS!

The President and Board of Directors take great pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

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Norman Jones

Ocean City, Maryland

INDIVIDUAL

Connie Duke

Berlin, Maryland

Suzanne Murray

Emporium, Pennsylvania

Jeremy Rothermel

Blandon, Pennsylvania

Mark Your Calendars

- **Saturday, May 3rd *Seaworthy Small Ships***— Come join the fun at Springfest as the Museum Society hosts "Pinewood Sailors". Children of all ages will have the opportunity, with adult supervision, to build and sail a toy wooden boat. Three different boat building kits will be available for a modest cost and volunteers will be on hand to assist. This event will be held from 10 am until 4 pm at the Inlet Parking Lot Springfest celebration. **Contact Sandy Hurley at (410) 289-4991 or Sandy@ocmuseum.org for more information.**
- **Sunday, May 18th *International Museum Day***— This special day, which has been celebrated all over the world since 1977, provides the public with an opportunity to meet museum professionals and learn the important roles museums play in preserving history and enriching cultures. The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum will be offering free admission for the entire day with special events and displays. Since members of the Museum Society get free admission every day this is a good opportunity to visit the other small museums in Worcester County that will also be open on this date! **Contact Sandy Hurley at (410) 289-4991 or Sandy@ocmuseum.org for more information.**



Look What We Found!

Olde Town Ocean City Beer

Circa 1980

Ocean City Brewing Co., Smithton, PA.

“FOR VACATIONING ONLY * DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE”

Gift of Don Robinson



OCEAN CITY LIFE-SAVING STATION MUSEUM

813 S. BOARDWALK

P. O. BOX 603

OCEAN CITY, MD 21843

We're on the web!

www.ocmuseum.org

*The Times and Tides of
Ocean City, Maryland*

We welcome you to become a member of the Ocean City Museum Society. Please complete this form and mail with a check payable to: ***Ocean City Museum Society, Inc., P. O. Box 603, Ocean City, MD 21843***

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