

SCUTTLEBUTT

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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.

THE LITTLE WALLS THAT WERE

BY GEORGE HURLEY

Sometimes when we look at objects over a long period of time we take them for granted. I was reminded of this recently during Mayor Meehan's New Year's Day Open House at City Hall. A lady in attendance mentioned that her grandfather used to refer to the cement block walls that decorated the front yards of old residences on Baltimore Avenue as "Storm Walls". I had never associated a practical purpose for their existence. I had always regarded them simply as decorative walls that showed the perimeter lines of ones' property. During my elementary school days on field trips to the firehouse or the bank, the boys could line up and walk the top of the walls from Third Street (where the school was located) all the way to N. Division Street. The teachers didn't mind because it kept otherwise unruly young boys in a uniform straight line.

In the 1890s the Sinepuxent Beach Corporation began developing the town north from N. Division Street to 5th Street. Many of what is now recognized as early Ocean City's leading families purchased property along Baltimore Avenue. During that time the boardwalk pilings were so high that one could eas-

ily walk beneath it. Consequently whenever a coastal storm occurred the sand from the beach would be washed down the side streets and on to the avenue and beyond. A common practice in those days was to have a vegetable or flower garden in the front yard. The salt laden storm sands could easily kill the plants and ruin the gardens.

During the course of a discussion with City Manager Dennis Dare, he commented that when he was the City Engineer rebuilding many of the city's new avenues and streets that it was not uncommon to find several layers of old sidewalks. He explained that there would be a layer of sand and then a layer of oyster shells, then a layer of sand and another layer of oyster shells. Older citizens of the town had told him that as a storm left a load of beach sand on the streets (and before the days of having heavy earth moving equipment available) it was easier to just leave the storm sand and create a new topping on the street or sidewalk.

Early this spring (March 2009) I noticed still another venerable old residence being demolished on Baltimore Avenue. Protruding barely six inches

above the adjacent modern concrete sidewalk was one of the little walls. After digging down in the sand I determined that the little wall was originally three blocks high with a three inch cap on top. The original wall would have stood 27 inches above the sidewalk. Now the top cap was less than six.

The little walls were only found on Baltimore Avenue between N. Division and 5th Streets.

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Board of Directors**J. D. Quillin, III***President***Thomas D. Wimbrow***Vice President***G. Alfred Harrison***Treasurer***Janet Cherrix***Secretary***Albert Berger****Marion Chambers****Robert L. Jester****Joseph E. Moore, Esq.****Robert Rothermel****Robert T. Stevens, III****Lillian Townsend****Nancy L. Howard****Richard W. Meehan***City Council Liason***A SCHOLAR AND A GENTLEMAN**

Long-time Museum Society member Jim Hiteshew recently graduated Magna Cum Laude from York College of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. He has donated a



Jim Hiteshew shows his project to Museum

copy of his senior thesis, which will eventually become his first book, ***The History of the Ocean City Life-Saving Station and Museum***, to the museum's archives. It tells the story

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 land-owner, Stephen Taber. Finally, it covers the transforma-

tion of the station house from a neglected municipal building to the landmark that it is today.

Because of Jim's intense appreciation for the old station and the museum he has decided to bequeath the sum of \$5000 to the Ocean City Museum Society to be used for its care and upkeep.

We don't intend to get the check anytime soon, but **THANKS**, Jim for your generosity!

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY!

All of Worcester County's 10 museums will be open on Monday, May 18, from 1-4 p.m. to celebrate 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.

Each year the advisory committee of the International Council of Museums decides on a theme for this special day of celebration. The theme this year is "Tourism".

This is a great time to visit some of the local museums. It will take more than a day to visit all of them this summer so get an early start by dropping by on May 18th in celebration of International Museum Day.

Be sure to pick up a "Passport To Discovery" for the kids. Children age 5 to 14 can earn a Museums of Worcester County T-Shirt if they collect 3 or more stamps on their passports.

For more information contact Sandy Hurley by email: Sandy@ocmuseum.org or by calling (410) 289-4991.

THE 10 MUSEUMS OF WORCESTER COUNTY

- **St. Martin's Episcopal Church** at the intersection of Route 113 and Route 589 in Berlin
- **Calvin B. Taylor House Museum** on Main Street in Berlin
- **Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum** on the Boardwalk at the Inlet in Ocean City
- **The Queponco Railway Station** on Patey Woods Road in Newark
- **Mt Zion One-Room School** at Ironshire and Church Street in Snow Hill
- **Julia A. Purnell Museum** on West Market Street in Snow Hill
- **Furnace Town Living Heritage Museum** on Old Furnace Road in Snow Hill
- **Girdletree Barnes Bank Museum** on Route 12 in Girdletree, between Snow Hill and Stockton
- **Isaac Costen House Museum** on Market Street in Pocomoke City
- **Sturgis One-Room School Museum** on Willow Street in Pocomoke City

AN OCEAN CITY MEMORY “PIXTON’S POPCORN”

BY MARY ANNE PUSEY

The story, as it has been passed down from the family, is that in the mid-1930s my father Edmund with wife Gertrude Pusey were approached by Edmund’s grandmother, Sarah Derrickson, about helping out his cousin Carrie Phillips Fisher and her family, who had come upon hard times. Edmund agreed to help and proposed that he and Everett Fisher, Carrie’s husband, form a business partnership with Edmund providing the financial backing while Everett was in charge of the daily operation. Using the maiden name of Edmund’s wife, Gertrude, the business first open as Pixton’s Popcorn at its present location on the boardwalk at Talbot Street in 1937.

The popcorn stand was well received and continued to operate under the partnership until, it is said, some legal problems with the government surfaced. Because Edmund felt Everett was totally responsible for this, he completely removed himself from the partnership. Everett went on to open the business under its present name of Fisher’s Popcorn. I can’t say exactly when this occurred, but would assume it was sometime in the mid-1940s. I have fond memories of stopping by the business as a young child with my parents, and can recall that wonderful combination of scents to this day!



Gertrude (Pixton) & Ed Pusey with his grandmother Sarah Derrickson. Ed was co-owner of Pixton's Popcorn.

Photograph courtesy of Mary Anne Pusey

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS!

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

FAMILY

**Christopher Aycock
& Ashley Adams**
Forrest Hill, Maryland

Brian & Michelle Bankert
Ocean City, Maryland

Joshua Fradel
Ocean City, Maryland

Mary M. & B. F. Payne
Gaithersburg, Maryland

INDIVIDUAL

Paul Bowden
Bel Air, Maryland

Da’aga Hill Bowman
Arlington, Virginia

James W. Hancock
Ocean City, Maryland

W. Dale Houff
Luray, Virginia

Jim Shockley
Ocean City, Maryland

LITTLE WALLS CONTINUED.....

Mrs. Mabel Rogers was the woman that made the comment on New Year’s Day that caused me to research this article. Her grandfather’s home still stands on the corner of 3rd Street and Baltimore Avenue with its little wall system intact. His name is worthy of mentioning. It was Charles Tilghman Lassable Parcel Andrew Manslip Johnson Jackson. His mother had given him as middle names, the surnames of all the Presbyterian ministers she had known.



Grace Cropper Brittingham and her children Betty, Johnny and Suzanne sit on a “little wall” outside of their family home on Baltimore Avenue in this 1940s photo.

Courtesy of Suzanne B. Hurley

Additionally my wife has told me that her grandmother, Grace Cropper, confided to her many years ago that every housewife considered it her duty along Baltimore Avenue to keep her section of sidewalk swept each and every day.

The Avenue with its decorative and utilitarian little walls must have been classic for a seaside village.

Look What We Found!

Jacket from the Ocean City College Baseball Team 1973

Gift of Charlie Muskat

The college offered forty-two classes for the fall semester of 1973. Along with basic liberal arts classes, courses in the hospitality industry, environmental studies, law enforcement and aerospace were available. Standard real estate courses and a course in Security Exchange Commission Licensing and Introduction to Recreational Facilities were offered for the first time. The residences of the college were at the Plim Plaza Hotel on 2nd Street and the Boardwalk.

In May of 1973 twenty-one students would graduate. Senator Barry M. Goldwater was the commencement speaker. In his speech he encouraged the youths to "keep interested in America as it was conceived".



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

Student.....\$ 5.00 _____ Supporting.....\$ 100.00 _____

Individual.....\$ 10.00 _____ Sustaining.....\$ 250.00 _____

Family.....\$ 30.00 _____ Benefactor.....\$ 500.00 _____

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