



SCUTTLEBUTT

OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND – *THEN & NOW*

“ALL OF LOT 9, THE MAJOR PART OF LOT 10 AND THE EASTERLY ONE-HALF OF LOT 25”

PART TWO: FROM 1913 TO THE PRESENT

By Gordon Katz

Dr. Frank Townsend married Anna Rayne in Snow Hill on May 4, 1915. Two years later, the couple purchased a lot on the east side of Baltimore Avenue between Caroline and Talbot Streets (part of lot numbers 50 and 51 on the 1875 plat) and built a large cottage there that served as the family’s residence. Dr. Townsend invested in other Ocean City real estate, including buying a half-interest in a twelve acre parcel near the Isle of Wight Life Saving Station and about a dozen lots in the “Ocean Heights”



Dr. Townsend’s residence on Baltimore Avenue (above) and the North Washington Pharmacy on the Boardwalk at 6th Street (below)



development in West Ocean City. He also purchased two more Boardwalk properties, one in 1930 on the north corner of 6th Street where he built the “North Washington Pharmacy”, and a second one in 1936 farther north between 12th and 13th Streets.

Dr. Townsend was responsible for another Ocean City landmark, a bandstand he erected on the beach opposite his pharmacy at Somerset Street. Frank Sacca, the owner of the Adelphia Restaurant and Hotel on Baltimore Avenue and Dorchester Street, was an accomplished musician and led the concerts held there. Afterwards, the crowds who had gathered dropped in for refreshments at Dr. Townsend’s soda fountain. Mr. Sacca persuaded the Town Council to add a band shell to the structure in 1949, but after his death in 1955 the facility was gradually abandoned and became an eyesore. The city finally tore it down in 1969.

Dr. Townsend carried on as the town’s doctor until his death on July 2, 1945 at the age of 69. In a show of respect, most businesses closed for several hours during his funeral on the busy Fourth of July holiday. He didn’t leave a will, and his property passed in equal shares to his heirs at law, his wife Anna and his two children, Frank Jr. and Sara. Frank Townsend, Jr. was also a physician, having earned his medical degree from the University of Maryland in 1942. During World War Two, he served as a Navy lieutenant in the Panama Canal Zone, Bethesda Naval Hospital and the Separation Center in Bainbridge, Maryland. After completing his tour of duty in 1946, he returned to Ocean City and resumed his late father’s medical practice in the town.

Dr. Townsend, Jr. and his wife, the former Lillian Taylor, assumed full ownership of the property at Somerset Street in 1965 after Frank’s mother and sister transferred their interests to them. The old pharmacy building was torn down and replaced in 1966 by The Colony apartment building, featuring six storefronts on the Boardwalk level and eight one bedroom units on the second floor. The Townsends agreed in December 1977 to sell the apartment building to Edward and Irene

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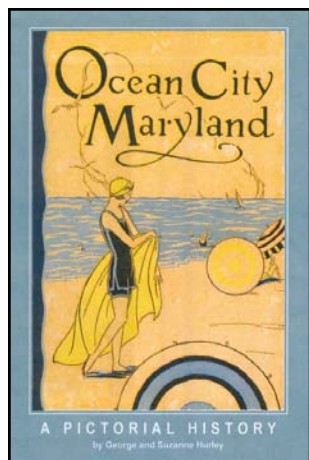
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Coming Soon! "Ocean City, Maryland: A Pictorial History" By George & Suzanne Hurley



Thanks to an extremely generous donation from

Museum Society member Janice K. Davis, and the Board of Directors of the Ocean City Museum Society agreeing to match her donation funds, the book "Ocean City, Maryland: A Pictorial History" by George and Suzanne Hurley is being reprinted for the fourth time. It is our most requested item in the gift shop. This book has been out of print for ten years. Look for it sometime in

late July or early August in our gift shop and online through our website www.ocmuseum.org. The retail price for this treasure will be around \$20. Janice Davis was quoted as saying that "she wanted to be able to give her grandchildren a copy of the book which captures so much of their family history and heritage." We will keep you posted on

Free Summer Programs Are Back!

Once again your favorite summer programs are happening at the Museum. Daily Programs begin at 10:00am on July 4 and continue through the summer to August 27, 2011. All of our programs are great family entertainment and they are still free!

Join us every Monday for the Ocean City Beach Patrol as members give their tips for a great safe time on the beach. Learn the art of semaphore and spell out your own name.

On Tuesdays, Bob Stevens presents O.C.B.C (Ocean City Before Condominiums). Hear Bob tell how Ocean City was transformed from a

quaint fishing village to the premier beach resort of today. A special focus of Bob's program is dedicated to the women of Ocean City and their part in shaping the town's history.

Bring the family on Wednesday for Coast Guard Auxiliary members teaching audience participants to tie their own bowline and many other useful knots.

Thursdays are for Sharks. Sandy Hurley unravels the myths and mysteries behind these underwater predators.

On Fridays, find out who were the "Storm Warriors" and what did

they did. Participants can see if they have what it takes to become an honorary Surfman. Certificates and Badges awarded to successful applicants.

On Saturdays guests can see the seahorses at the Museum receive their morning meal. Hear interesting facts about other local sea life of the area. Make sure to check out the shark jaws in the aquarium room.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for these great programs. While you are at the Inlet, take some time to tour the Museum. There is something of interest for everyone.

Then & Now..... Continued

“Eddie” Devlin was an Atlantic City boardwalk entrepreneur, who had dropped out of law school in 1950 to open a small souvenir stand on the Million Dollar Pier that eventually expanded into a chain of six stores in various resort towns called “Irene’s Souvenirs”. His real estate portfolio included five other boardwalk properties, skillfully assembled before casino gaming was approved in the New Jersey resort in 1978. Devlin had close ties to local government officials, which he acknowledged simply by saying that “Being connected in Atlantic City politics helped. We’ll leave it at that.”

The purchase of The Colony apartments was the Devlin family’s second foray into Ocean City’s boardwalk scene that year. In March 1977, the family was identified as the buyers of the former site of the Life-Saving Station at the corner of the Boardwalk and Caroline Street, which had been the subject of recently concluded litigation between the city and the heirs of Stephen Taber. Devlin paid \$282,000 for the five thousand square foot lot, which included a brick building that was used by three local nonprofits as a bingo hall. Local business owners thought the price he paid was more than twice what the property was worth. When the family announced early in 1978 that it had paid \$1 million for the Townsends’ property, it was clear that the stakes were being raised for those doing business on Ocean City’s boardwalk.



Looking south down the Boardwalk ca. 1968. The Colony apartment building is on the right, across Somerset Street from the Atlantic Hotel. The pier building can be seen on the left.

Dennis B. Devlin, Eddie and Irene’s twenty-four year old son and the apartment building’s new owner, stated “The public doesn’t realize what Ocean City boardwalk property is worth”, adding that he didn’t feel the price was too high “compared to prices in Atlantic City, N.J. or Ocean City, N.J.”, two towns in which his parents already operated. The building had drawn the attention of the Devlins not because of the handful of rental units on the second floor, but because of the opportunity to maximize the rents charged for the stores at the boardwalk level and thus ensure a handsome profit on the deal.

The Devlins remained property owners in Ocean City for about a decade. Dennis Devlin initially made a favorable impression in the local business community, but he was later dogged by legal issues. Both he and his parents sold out in 1989, cashing in smartly on their investments. Dennis Devlin sold The Colony apartment building for \$3.9 million to a company headed by Ocean City businessman Antonio “Tony” Russo, the owner of Tony’s Pizza restaurant on the Boardwalk at North Division Street. Devlin took his profits and moved to Daytona Beach, Florida, where he and his mother purchased the Desert Inn motel located on that city’s famous beachfront.

WELCOME ABOARD

NEW MEMBERS!

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

SUPPORTING

Dory Cunningham

Bladensburg, Maryland

INDIVIDUAL

Coralee Frascchetti

Berlin, Maryland

Emily Neville

Berlin, Maryland

STUDENT

Charlie Saunders

Germantown, Maryland

Marguerite Saunders

Germantown, Maryland

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Saving Station
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We're on the web!

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*The Times and Tides of Ocean
City, Maryland*



Remember the 1962 Storm?

The Ocean City Museum Society is planning a storm party for the 50th anniversary of the 1962 storm. Details will follow in upcoming issues. To commemorate the storm, the Board elected to have a limited number of the book "Tides of March" by Beryl and Bill Dryden reprinted. This book was originally published in 1962 right after the storm and features many rare photographs. A must have for storm watchers and Ocean City history buffs. Look for it in our gift shop and online in early July priced at around \$10.00.

Children's Day at the Park ~August 7, 2011

As part of the Museums of Worcester County's celebration of the Week of the Child, The Ocean City Museum Society invites you to join us for fun, games, prizes and educational activities at the beautiful Sunset Park in downtown Ocean City on August 7, 2011 from 12:00 to 4:00pm.

There will be crafting and sailing of ships from recyclable containers, educational activities, games and prizes and so much more. Come one, come all!!! Anyone that wishes to lend a hand to help make this event a success, please contact Diane @ 410-289-4991 or email diane@ocmuseum.org.

The Museums of Worcester County will be offering children's activities at some of the Museums during the week of August 1 through August 7. Contact individual museums for specific events details.



**Sailing ship made of
recycled materials**