



October, November, December 2014

ASBURY PARK NEW ERA/ MORRO CASTLE COMMEMORATIONS

The 80th anniversary of the famous 1934 *Morro Castle* maritime disaster is taking on even more significance this year as the 1854 wreck of the *New Era* will also be recognized- a marine tragedy that occurred exactly 80 years prior to the *Morro Castle* and on exactly the same site off the Sixth Avenue beach in Asbury Park.

"This site is very important to the history of the Jersey Shore and changed American maritime history forever. I urge people to turn out and learn about these incredible stories," local historian Gary Crawford said.

A special presentation was held at the Jersey Shore Arts Center, Main Avenue and Main Street in Ocean Grove, on Sunday, Sept. 7th. Local historians Dr. Richard Fernicola, James Foley, Dan Lieb, and Crawford were speakers at the event. The proceeds were split between the Historical Society and the Arts Center. The well-attended lecture yielded over \$500.00 to both organizations.

The Historical Society held its annual *Morro Castle* commemoration ceremony on Monday, Sept. 8th. The ceremony took place at the *Morro Castle* monument, which the historical society erected five years ago to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the disaster.

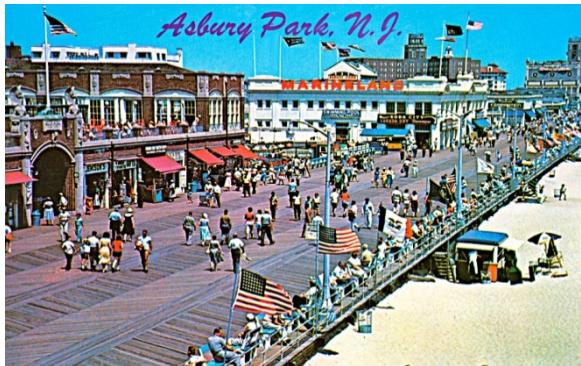
The *New Era*, (shown above) which carried German immigrants, became grounded off of what would later be Asbury Park on Nov. 13, 1854. Rescue efforts failed and stranded passengers were forced to remain on the ship



overnight during a bitter nor'easter. Out of 425 passengers, only 163 survived the voyage.

On the morning of Sept. 8, 1934, the *Morro Castle* was in flames, exploding, and heading straight for Convention Hall in Asbury Park having caught fire at sea. One hundred and thirty-seven people aboard died, with many victims and survivors coming ashore in southern Monmouth County.

Many maritime safety improvements resulted from these two tragedies. The *New Era* shipwreck spurred Congress to appropriate additional funding to improve the US Life-Saving Service and because of the *Morro Castle* disaster, ships are no longer built with flammable materials and lifeboats drills are mandatory.



A Stroll Through Time with Kate Mellina

On Thursday, October 23rd, Asbury Park's former Councilwoman and perennial booster, Kate Mellina returned to give her presentation: *Greetings from Asbury Park(s)-A 125 year Stroll Down the Boardwalk* at the city's public library. Asbury Park's boardwalk has gone through numerous transformations in the past 125 years, shaped by fire, storms, war, recessions, political intrigue and popular taste. Kate, author of the Coaster's weekly "Time Warps" feature, started collecting Asbury Park postcards and photos in the late 1990s to learn about the Asbury Park she'd missed.

What she found confused her: "Buildings would appear, disappear and change names or appearance -- seemingly overnight. Band shells, businesses, swimming pools, amusement rides and miniature golf courses would sprout up, move, and then disappear," she said.

Research sometimes helped and sometimes added to the confusion, as when books and history websites placed a building or business in the wrong location -- or even in the wrong town.

Attendees took a whirlwind tour of rare boardwalk images, shared their memories, and joined in a lively debate. Where else but in Asbury Park?

Bus Trip to NYC 9-11 Memorial and Museum

Our annual bus trip, held on Saturday, October 25th in conjunction with the Historical Society of Ocean Grove, was to the NYC 9-11 Memorial and Museum. This tribute to our national tragedy was recently completed and opened to the public. The National September 11th Museum presents the event in multimedia displays, personal accounts and several monumental artifacts, each with its own important story to tell.

The cost of the tour included not only museum admission, but a walking tour of lower Manhattan, which is the oldest part of what is now New York City. Guests viewed the new WTC Freedom Tower, and also visited Wall Street and Battery Park City.

And the Winner is...

The drawing for the 50-50 was held at the November meeting. Pam Horner drew the winning ticket, which was purchased by Carolyn Kiczek of Skillman, NJ. The fund raising effort raised approximately \$1560.00, half of which was given to the winner.



Monmouth County Archives Day

The APHS participated in the *Monmouth County Archives and History Day* on Saturday, October 11th. Susan Rosenberg (right) and Kristin Stine represented APHS at its table. Newsletters, books membership applications and 50-50 tickets were made available to event attendees.



Celebrating the West Side's Unique Musical Legacy

Long before Asbury Park became known for rock music, the city's African American community rocked on Springwood Avenue. Between 1910 and 1970, the city's West Side pioneered the sounds of jazz, gospel and rhythm & blues. Two upcoming exhibits by Charlie and Pam Horner chronicle Asbury Park's black music scene from Count Basie to Billy Brown, through an impressive collection of rare photos and memorabilia. Please visit www.classicurbanharmony.net for more information on this important form of American Roots Music. Charlie and Pam are organizing two exhibits, the first during the *Light of Day 2015* events. An exhibit that will be

featured at *Heaven Art and Antiques*, 721 Cookman Avenue, will consist of many framed photos and possibly the sign from the former Turf Club, which will hopefully create interest for its future restoration and reprints of important period photos. It will be on display from January 11-19, 2015.

Following this, there will be a larger show at Monmouth University's Pollock Gallery- *Asbury Park's Springwood Avenue Harmony: Celebrating the West Side's Unique Musical Legacy* will be on display through the month of February. There will be an Opening Reception on Wednesday, February 4th, from 6-8 PM. Both exhibits are free to the public.

For more information, please visit the AP Historical Society web site at: www.aphistoricalsociety.org.

Below: The Vibes, ca. 1957.

Center: Bobby Thomas, upper right: Lenny Welch (Courtesy Charlie and Pam Horner)



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