



Port Norris

Be a Part of History Today

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Port Norris Historical Society is dedicated to preserving the history of our unique village, located in Commercial Township in Cumberland County, NJ.



Current Happenings:

PNHS Next meeting: January 12, 2016 • 1723 Main Street

SPECIAL TIME: 6:00 PM At 6:30, members Norman Cobb and Jim Robbins will share stories of scouting in their youth. Others with memories to share are welcome to join the conversation. Our regular meeting will begin at 7:00. We invite all members to join us as we begin 2016.

Moment in History:

From “Cumberland County and South Jersey During the Civil War”

by Isaac T. Nichols

Pg. #86, SRH

As Printed in 1/1/1907 but the time frame is from 1855-1865.

From Downe Township then extending from the Fairfield line to Maurice River and the Cove, came First Lieutenant Charles M. Pease with a delegation of stalwart young men from Port Norris, Mauricetown and vicinity. They enlisted in Company G, 24th New Jersey, Captain Hoagland and among the number was a fighting family of five brothers known as the Cobbs, as follows: Caleb Cobb, Joseph W Cobb, John W Cobb, Jacob F Cobb, Alfred S Cobb, the latter dying of fever at camp, near Chain Bridge, Va., November 14th, 1862. The two McDaniel's brothers came with them, Charles McDaniel's enlisting in Company G and Major McDaniel's in Company F. Jacob C Shinn, of Company G, one of Port Norris's best citizens, after whom “Shinn Post”, Grand Army of the Republic was named.

Was another patriot whom fate had willed should sleep in an unknown grave. Missing in action at Fredericksburg, Va., December 13th, 1862, is the record. Perhaps, in that great cemetery on the heights of Marie by the side of the Rappahannock, where the silent forms of 17,000 Union soldiers slumber.

“On his grave the sunlight lingers,
And the silvery moonbeams fall,
There he sleeps far, far from kindred
Sleeps until the last great call.”

‘Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the town of Port Norris, Bivalve and Shell Pile too . . .

As large number of oystermen were running their oysters to market, and are laying up their boats for the season, and The Big Christmas Tree on Main street was all decorated in red, green and blue, not a creature was stirring... well, only one mouse, sniffing the oyster stew at the Seashell Restaurant, on Main Street.



Read More at historicportnorris.org/holiday.htm

During our December meeting, those in attendance shared favorite Christmas memories. Here is a summary of those cherished times.

Carole Robbins told the story of Marie and Sam Cobb, who had a store in what is now our headquarters here on Main St. Beginning around 1955/56, most of the men in town were known for being last minute Christmas shoppers. Some of the popular items purchased were: lipstick, dusting powder, compacts, boxed nylons, Evening In Paris perfume, Lettie Lane Chocolates, Christmas sheet music and sing along books. (who remembers any of these ?). One of the “hottest” tunes recalled was “Oh My Papa” by Eddie Fisher. Other favorites were stockings filled with candy canes and Peanut Clusters for kids.

Carole's favorite gift was a lovely dollhouse, which she still treasures today.

Ginny Campbell recalls how her large Polish family would gather around long tables in her grandmother's living room (and sometimes extended into the adjoining room) for a traditional Christmas eve meal known as “Wilia”. Dishes served were sauerkraut and mushroom soup, (which as a kid she wouldn't touch), fish and pierogis, among many other things. Along with the cheese and potato pierogis, her grandmom filled some with plums and would hide a large silver coin (usually a dollar) in one. Ginny says it was always her cousin, the big eater, who found it. She and her sister continue the tradition, however, just on a smaller scale, as families grow, move away or are no longer with us.

Faye Hickman has always liked dolls. When she was 10, she received this Toni doll (right). It originally had a pretty yellow dress, but is adorned with a Christmas dress today. The doll resides in a display case now. Faye says she loved playing with the doll and all of her many outfits.

Rachel Cobb shared her memory of how excited she and her sisters were to see what Santa brought them on Christmas morning. However, they had to wait for their Dad to have the movie camera set up and ready, along with all the bright lights. So... they waited excitedly in the hallway, and when they were finally called into the living room, they were blinded by the lights!

Liz Hoffman recalled how, in their house, the kids had to get up, first brush their teeth and do all their morning rituals before opening gifts. One year, their son, Jim, really wanted a bike. But after all the gifts were opened, there was no bike. Jim never said a word. When all the wrappings were gathered up for the trash, her husband, Bob, told his son to take it all out to the porch. When he did, he found the bike and was overjoyed. He kept repeating " I got it, I got it!" It was definitely a fun memory.

When **Alvina Baum** was a little girl she and her sisters were in her grandmother's parlor this one Christmas eve. Her sisters would call her to the window saying, "Can you hear the sleigh bells?" trying to convince her it was Santa, and as a little girl she thought she did hear them.

In **Dick Smith's** home one Christmas morning, he and his brother woke up their dad at a very early hour. The following year, when they again awoke very early in the morning, they found themselves unable to open their bedroom door. Dad had tied one end of a rope to the knob of the door (which opened in) and the other end to the bathroom doorknob, leaving them unable to get out of their room. They kept trying and trying to open that door, with no luck. So they just went back to bed.

Norman Cobb shared a story from the year 1952. His dad had died on Dec. 4 and the family thought they would skip having a Christmas tree that year. But his nephew had a birthday on Dec. 23 and Norm's mom changed her mind. They went out and found a little cedar tree and put it in the front window for Lawrence who was turning 8.

"Back in the day ", Sunday school kids had to recite Christmas "pieces" and **Dot Cobb** remembers how hard she tried to do a good job. The reward was a box of Weber's Chocolates, which was a big deal, because at that time, kids did not receive a lot of candy.

Sam Ricci recalls that when he was a kid, family relatives took turns having everyone at their house for Christmas. One year when Sam was 7 or 8, all the kids (boys and girls) slept in the attic of their aunt's home. The beds had feather pillows and , of course, they had to have a pillow fight! There was lots of noise and feathers flying from ceiling to floor. The aunt yelled, "What's going on up there?" Hearing her footsteps on the stairs, they quickly jumped into their beds and were as quiet as a mouse. When she turned on the light, there were feathers floating all through the air.

Pat Moore and her siblings were not allowed downstairs until their parents were awake. So they would move about slowly and quietly getting up on Christmas morning. The house had an open staircase that had a view of the living room and dining room, but it also had a squeak. One year, her brother came up with the idea



Faye Hickman showing us her Toni doll she got for Christmas, when she was 10.

that he would slide down the stairs on his belly and the next brother would hold onto his legs and slide down behind him and so on, making a human chain and thus making it possible to see the tree and whether or not the bikes were there. Pat was at the top of the chain when her dad heard them and opened the bedroom door and said, "What's going on?" It scared Pat so much that she let go and down went her brothers. The next year they had to come up with a better idea..

When **Joyce Massey** was 3 or 4, her family spent one Christmas eve at her grandmother's house, 'far away' in Bridgeton. Joyce was sure Santa would not know where to find them if they were not in their own home. She put up quite a fuss, cried and wouldn't go to bed and her uncles told her she would get coal in her stocking. In the morning her brother had little gifts, but she did not. Her mother was trying to teach her a lesson. She never said a word. When they arrived home later that day, there were plenty of gifts for Joyce from Santa. A happy ending after all.

Jim Robbins remembered that his family never had a tree up before Christmas, so it was always a surprise to the kids to see the decorated tree on Christmas morning. He said his parents also must have had a great hiding place for the gifts, because as hard as they looked, they could never find any of them before the holiday.

As a little girl, **Lisa Kincaid** always wanted to open her gifts early, but had to wait. When she was a little older, her mom and dad allowed her to hang her stocking on the bedroom doorknob, so that she could have something to open right away. Each little gift in the stocking was individually wrapped, which took some time to open. One year, as she and her sister, Dawn, were opening their stockings, Dawn found hers filled with # 110 film. However, Dawn did not have a camera of her own and it soon became obvious that there was probably one waiting for her under the tree. To this day, Lisa still wraps all the little gifts for her family.

Ken Kincaid's father owned a hardware store in Oaklyn, and Ken loved to help decorate the store for Christmas. He also loved the trains that his dad sold in the store. One Christmas, Ken awoke to find his dad had put all the trains in his bed, telling him he could have them since he loved them more than anyone else.

Pickings of the Month

Dec. 9, 1889 A branch of the Camden Fidelity and Trust Deposit Co's banking house is to be established here. The former post-office building has been secured for the purpose and is being fitted up.

Dec. 12, 1889 Thomas Blackman, of E. C. Albertson & Co., of your city, was here yesterday looking for a building to locate in during the holidays for the sale of pianos and organs.

Dec. 12, 1889 The fixtures for the Fidelity Trust Surety and Safe Deposit Company arrived by C. R. R. yesterday.

See More Pickings at historicportnorris.org/pickings.htm



Around the table at the December 8, meeting.



*Merry Christmas Everyone &
Happy New Year!*



Membership and Renewal for 2016 We would love to add your name to our growing list of members. Please give some thought to joining the PNHS. Membership fees are for Individual - \$10, Family - \$15, Benefactor - \$50 and over, and Student - \$1 (no voting privileges) and entitles you to discounts on our merchandise.

Would make a great stocking stuffer!

Click here to renew or join, historicportnorris.org/membership.htm.

Or mail your check to: Port Norris Historical Society, PO Box 187, Port Norris, NJ 08349.

Thank you for your support. Membership is key to applying for grants as well as your dollars help us continue with all of our endeavours.



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NORRIS ASKS

Name the TV movie filmed in part in Port Norris areas in 1974.

Answer: "The Migrants" A stark look at the lives of migratory farm workers, focusing on one family. The film was Emmy nominated as the Outstanding Drama of the 1973-74 season.

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