



# 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:

**Next meeting: October 13, 2015 • 7 pm @ 1723 Main Street**



**2015 Legends will be announced soon.** <http://www.historicportnorris.org/legends.htm>

### 1723 Main Street Progress

Have you been by the home of the Port Norris Historical Society lately? It is looking really good. We have just completed having the foundation all repointed, a new back sill put in and any bad wood replaced along with covering up a couple old doors on the side and back. What a difference. The siding was all milled special from hard to get white cedar to match the original. Now we will complete the painting of the building. We thank the 1772 Foundation for a matching grant to help us get this work done, as well as all who have contributed with monetary donations and your time to help with all the projects. Next we will start looking to the inside so that someday we will have display of all our treasured items. *Thank you everyone.* See more photos <http://www.historicportnorris.org/building.htm>



Uncle Sam Ricci watching while onions are topped.

### Moment in History: The Ricci Family

Thank you to Sam Ricci Sr. and family for your story.

#### Part Two

In the early 1940's an irrigation well was drilled in the field behind our house. It was over 60 feet deep. It not only provided water for our crops, it produced a core sample of high quality sand and stone. Since sand mining was extensive in this area my parents decided to have the material tested. It met the standards for sandblasting sand and water filtration sand and stone due to it's silica content. Between 1950 and 1955 strange looking equipment and structures began arriving to the farm. A small pond was dug and a dredge was placed in it. I didn't understand what the dredge was at the time, but I knew there were frogs under it ready to be picked off with my Beebe gun. My parents knew that some day the farm would not support 4 more families – my cousin, and my two brothers and myself. We did not realize it but that stuff was the beginning of Ricci Bros Sand Co. and our future. They bought the Dilks Basket Factory

## Moment in History: The Ricci Family Part Two

in Dividing Creek and had the two buildings moved to the farm. Those buildings served as our office and shop. And are still in use today. They made the right decisions at the right time. I am still looking for that crystal ball. The first load of sand was sold around 1958. Until 1979 we sold concrete sand and asphalt sand to contractors between Millville and the shore area. We continued building the dry processing plant and finally in 1980 we sold our first load of dry sand. Next we installed bagging equipment and we were then Industrial Sand producers in competition with 6 other companies in this area. That little pond has grown to over 70 acres during the last 56 years of mining. Many years ago we lost a bid on a 100 acre farm to a large local sand company but even so, we have reserves for over 50 years. The farm is now a lake and we are presently mining in the old Port Norris Fruit Company property. We can not now expand out side of that property because of DEP limitations. Municipal mining restrictions have also reduced the area we can mine. I will continue my search for that old crystal ball.

My mother's parents were from a small island north of Sicily called Ishca. John Battaglia and his wife Anna settled in Bridgeton and raised their family there. The first wife of John Battaglia died and his second wife was Gabriella Florantino. When they immigrated from Italy, the Battaglias were processed either in Philadelphia or Ellis Island. During the process, the official doing the processing had difficulty pronouncing their name and informed my grandparents that they were now named Butler. It seems to me that there should have been an Italian speaking person doing the processing. I remember our family gatherings when we would spend holidays at their home. With a half dozen cousins in one house there was always a noisy time as we played inside. During one gathering we were chasing each other around the house as my grandfather was asleep in his chair adjacent to our speedway trail. Next thing I know, my feet were running but I was not moving. Grandfather had grabbed me by the collar and made me sit next to his chair. Sit here and don't move. I guess I was his favorite grandson!! There is so much more to tell that it would take volumes to get it on paper. This history has taken me back to many fond memories of my youth. Tracking ones family history should be on everyone's bucket list – *Sam Ricci Sr.*



Above: Aunt Jay Ricci (bent over) and mom Ricci (Alma) in the background sewing onion bags. John Ricci Sr., (curly hair) and Pat Ricci Fleetwood looking at the camera.



Right: Happy Sam Ricci with his new Farmall tractor.

**Pickings of the Month Sept 6, 1888**

Night before last a lady taking her wire bustle off laid it on the bed and did not remove it. Sometime in the night her husband awoke with it fast on one of his feet and thinking it was a burglar began to kick and scream. This awoke his wife and she soon found the cause of his trouble.



**Sept 14, 1889**

The first mail bag went to Bivalve Post Office yesterday.  
See More Pickings at <http://www.historicportnorris.org/pickings.htm>

**Delaware Bay Watermen’s Memorial FUNDRAISER REVIEW** Meet the Artists & Preview Party on September 13



The afternoon was a bit breezy on the Delaware River but the setting could not have been more perfect. It was a very successful event and we thank everyone who donated food and their time, especially Deborah and her family and friends, along with all who attended. Special thank you to Rob Huntley for the life music. Please keep your eye on the website for more updates and the progress of the first of 3 pieces we will be doing. <http://www.historicportnorris.org/watermen.htm>

**Names for the Memorial**

We are looking for names and stories of Watermen who drowned or died in the line of duty while working in their industry on the Delaware Bay. [Click here for the form.](#)

**Membership and Renewal for 2016**

If you are not a member, we would love to add your name to our growing list of members. Please give some thought to joining the PNHS. Click here to **renew or join**, <http://www.historicportnorris.org/membership.htm>

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.

**See us on Facebook and our website [historicportnorris.org](http://www.historicportnorris.org)**

If you are getting this email from a friend and would like to be added to our list, please [click here](#) and we will add you. If we received your email at one of our events and you do not wish to receive this newsletter, click here [web@historicportnorris.org](mailto:web@historicportnorris.org), we will remove you from the list. We do not sell or share your email with anyone!



**NORRIS ASKS**

**Was there ever a hotel in Port Norris?**  
*See answer below*

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 Alvina Baum, Secretary  
 Robin Berry, Assoc. Secretary  
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