



# Port Norris

# The Past for the Future

## 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: March 13, 2018 7:00 pm • 1723 Main Street**



## The Biographical Reviews

are from a book titled

Biographical Review Leading Citizens of Cumberland County New Jersey  
Printed BOSTON Biographical Review Publishing Company 1896

**WILLIAM H. PARSONS**, a shipbuilder of Greenwich, was born in Port Norris, this county, July 8, 1856. His grandfather, who came to this country from England, died young, leaving a son, Dayton B. Parsons. The latter, born in Port Norris in the year 1818, grew up in the town of his birth. He learned the carpenter's trade, and thereafter followed it during the greater part of his life. He was also engaged to some extent in agriculture on a farm of his own. He married Miss Elizabeth Thome, of Maurice River township, and became the father of seven children, namely: James, who lives in Bridgeton, this county; Phoebe, the wife of Mr. Richard Norwood, of Solomon, Md.; Mary, who married Mr. Wightfield Thompson, of Dyer's Creek, Cape May County; William H., the subject of this sketch; Samuel, now deceased; Albert, also deceased; and Anna, who died at the age of two years. The father died in 1886, and the mother, May II, 1896, having reached her sixty-eighth year. Dayton B. Parsons was a man of Christian piety and active virtue.

From an early age up to the time of his death he was a consistent and faithful member of the Methodist Episcopal church, and was for many years one of the most earnest class leaders of the church in Port Norris.

William H. Parsons was partly educated in the schools of Port Norris. When, about 1869, his father moved to Bridgeton, he attended the Bank Street School, an institution of considerable reputation at that time.

When quite young he went into the shipyard of Blew & Phillips, under which firm he acquired his knowledge of shipbuilding. After working for Blew & Phillips for five years he went to Port Norris, and there established a shipyard of his own.

Here he remained five years also, chiefly occupied in building and repairing oyster boats. His next place of business was Cedarville, N.J., where he plied his trade for three years. At the expiration of that time he returned to Bridgeton, where

he again had a yard of his own, and found so much to do that he had to employ from twelve to fifteen men in order to fill his contracts.

From Bridgeton he removed to Port Norris again, established a yard there, and carried it on for three years. He then left the St and took up his abode in Solomon, Md. In 1890 he sold out his interests in Maryland, came to Greenwich, and established his shipyard at Cohansey River. Here he has since built six new oyster boats, estimated to be worth from two to five thousand dollars, besides (hung a large amount of repairing. Mr. Parsons has unusual facilities for conducting his work. Among them is a marine railway, by which the boats and everything hard to move are transported by steam. This method is used nowhere else on the creek, except at Bridgeton. Twenty men are employed in the yard.

On November 27, 1878, Mr. Parsons married Miss L. Emily Foster, of Bridgeton, a daughter of Elmer Foster, a former resident of Cedarville. Born of this marriage were: David B., Lizzie, Irene, and Ruth. Mr. Parsons gives the support of his vote to the Republican party. He is a member of the order of Knights of Pythias, of Port Norris, and belongs to the Cohansey Lodge of Red Men of Bridgeton. Like his father, he is a man of deeply religious nature, and has always been a conscientious member of the Baptist church. He has held the double office of Deacon and Sunday-school superintendent for the past two years in Greenwich. He is also active in other church work, and wields an influence for good throughout the community. Mrs. Parsons is a member of the Second Presbyterian Church of Bridgeton, the former home of her husband. Mr. and Mrs. Parsons are among the most esteemed citizens of Greenwich.

Editors Note: We have to assume that Parsons Lane in Port Norris was named for this family. If you have any information to share, send us a email. [info@historicportnorris.org](mailto:info@historicportnorris.org)

**BARTON F. SHARP**, a member of the firm of Sharp Brothers, dealers in wall paper, paint, and picture frames, in Bridgeton, was born in Mauricetown, Cumberland County, October 30, 1866.

His grandfather, Ephraim Sharp, was a native of Haleyville, this county. Daniel Sharp, who was born in Haleyville, October 23, 1838, received his education in the public schools.

When sixteen years of age he engaged in teaching, and substantially followed that profession until he came of age. At that time he took employment on a vessel between Boston, Mass., and Galveston, Tex. Some time after, sailing to different ports, he purchased an interest in a vessel, and took command of her. His seafaring life lasted four or five years, after which he settled in Salem, Salem County. After carrying on a grocery store for a short time, he sold it out, and became principal of the Bank Street School, a position that he held for three years. In 1872 he was elected County Clerk for a term of five years. At the expiration of his first term he was re-elected for a second term. While teaching in the Bank Street School, and subsequently while discharging the duties of Clerk of the County, he invested largely in oyster-vessels; and the latter years of his life were almost exclusively devoted to this line of trade. In 1887 he was elected school superintendent of Bridgeton, and he also held the offices of Pilot Commissioner and Secretary of the Board of Trade for a number of years. He was a Past Master of Evening Star Masonic Lodge of Bridgeton. He married Miss Mary B. Compton, daughter of Charles Compton, of Mauricetown. Light children were born of the marriage, six of whom lived to maturity. These were: Harry H., Emma C, Barton F., Charles C, Walter M., and Daniel Sharp, Jr. after finishing his education in the West Jersey Academy, for which he prepared in the Bank Street School in Bridgeton, became assistant agent of the Central Railroad at Port Norris, this county. He was afterward employed there as baggage master and extra conductor, remaining in the service of the Central for nearly five years.



BARTON F. SHARP

For five months of the five years he was employed in the Bridgeton post-office. In 1880 he secured connection with the railroad, and established a store at Port Norris, where he sold clothing and boots and shoes until March, 1893. On March 7 of that year he and his brother, Charles C, entered into the partnership at present uniting them, and have since acquired a most profitable patronage. Mr. Sharp on November 2, 1888, married Miss Leila Vail, daughter of William A. Vail, of Port Norris, and became the father of two children — Harry and May. He belongs to Neptune Lodge, A. F. & A. M., of Mauricetown; to the Idaho Tribe, I. O. of Red Men, of Port Norris, of which he was

Treasurer for six years; to Port Norris Council, Junior Order of United American Mechanics, of which he was also Treasurer; and to the Mystic Castle of A. O. K. M. C. Charles C. Sharp, the senior member of the firm of Sharp Brothers, was educated at Bank Street School and the West Jersey Academy.

He began earning his livelihood immediately after leaving school; and his first position was in a glass-house office, where he was employed for about seven months. He then obtained a situation in a drug store, where he remained for half a year, after which he entered the employment of Charles Scull. In 1891 Charles Sharp formed a partnership with Joseph Cresswell and Benjamin Master, with whom he purchased the business of Mr. Scull, and carried it on for a year. Mr. Cresswell then withdrew, and the firm name was changed to Sharp & Master, which was retained until Mr. Sharp purchased the interest of his partner and became sole proprietor. He conducted the business alone for some time, and then took his two brothers, Barton F. and Daniel, into partnership, forming the present firm of Sharp Brothers. Daniel Sharp, Jr., received his elementary education in private schools, and finished at the West Jersey Academy. For three years after leaving the academy he filled the position of book-keeper with the Ferracute Machine Company, which he joined with his brothers in business.

## New Jersey's Tall Ship has a New Captain

### Captain Johann Steinke will be the new Captain of New Jersey's Tall Ship, the Schooner AJ Meerwald.

The Bayshore Center at Bivalve the nonprofit owner and operator of the AJ Meerwald announced that the historic 1928 Delaware Bay Oyster Schooner and New Jersey's Official Tall Ship has a new captain. "We are delighted Captain Johann Steinke will be joining us for our 2018 sailing season" said Mark Showers, Board President of the Bayshore Center.

Born in Canada, Captain Steinke was raised in Fresno, California, far from the ocean. He got into sailing and tall ships after seeing the movie "Master and Commander". From that point on, he wanted to learn more about old wooden sailing ships and their

history. Since then he has worked and lived on many different tall ships over the last 12 years, ranging from schooners and square riggers, to an epic journey on a replica Viking warship. "My wife and I are excited about the move east and sailing the waters in and around New Jersey" said Captain Steinke adding "the AJ Meerwald is a beautiful ship". Captain Steinke takes the helm of the AJ Meerwald at an exciting time. The ninety-year-old ship is undergoing major improvements including a new engine and generator thanks to the generous support of the David Rutherford Estate. Mr. Rutherford, a local Cape May resident and philanthropist passed away last year and left the Bayshore Center at Bivalve a sizable bequest. "Without the generous support of David Rutherford and so many other people the AJ Meerwald would not be what she is today" said Showers.

*Press Release 2/12/17 Bayshore Center at Bivalve.*

# WINTER RECIPES

from the Port Norris Historical Society's

## Seafood Cookbook

### South Jersey Oyster Pie

1/2 pound bacon  
 1 double crust ready-to-use pie crust  
 1 small onion, chopped  
 3 stalks celery, chopped  
 3 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 small green bell pepper, chopped  
 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 3/4 cup heavy cream  
 24 oysters, shucked with liquid reserved  
 1/2 teaspoon seafood seasoning  
 (such as Old Bay®), or more to taste

Cook the bacon in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat until golden brown, about 10 minutes; remove to a paper towel-lined plate to drain, reserving the drippings. Crumble the bacon. Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F. Line a 9-inch pie pan with 1 of the pie crusts.

Heat 1 tablespoon of the reserved bacon drippings in a skillet over medium-low heat; add the onion, celery, garlic, and green pepper to the hot drippings, cover, and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Remove the cooked vegetables to a bowl. Increase heat to medium and stir 3 tablespoons of the reserved drippings and the flour together in the skillet to make a thick paste. Slowly pour the cream and 1 cup of the reserved liquid from the oysters into the paste; cook and stir until a thick gravy forms. Fold the bacon, oysters, and vegetables into the mixture; season with seafood seasoning. Pour the mixture into the prepared pie crust. Cover with the remaining crust.

Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, about 30 minutes.



### Apple Brown Betty

Serves 4

4 cups thinly sliced pared apples or 1 can (16 oz.) pie apples, drained  
 2 cups bread cubes or torn bread pieces  
 1/2 cup brown sugar, packed  
 1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon  
 2 tbsp. margarine  
 1/4 cup hot water

Grease 1-quart baking dish. Arrange half of apples on bottom of dish. Follow with half of bread, then half of sugar. Repeat layers. Sprinkle cinnamon over top, cut margarine in pieces and lay them on top, finish by pouring hot water over all. Cover and bake at 350° for 30 minutes, uncover and bake 10 minutes longer. Serve warm or chilled.

### Port Norris Pickings

#### February 1, 1888

A lady sent to one of our stores for two crochet needles and the proprietor was so much engrossed with a visitor that he wrapped up two slate pencils and gave them to the customer.

#### February 18, 1888

Past Commander W. O'Neal, Commander Major McDaniels and Q. C. Andrews have gone to Trenton as representatives of the Shinn Post of this place.

#### February 16, 1889

The schooner "Mears" arrived yesterday with about 1500 baskets of excellent oysters for Hearn & Henry. Almost the entire load was shipped to-day.

### February 1, 1890

The daily arrival of Capt. Samuel Dilahay, of the schooner "Elnora," from Chesapeake Bay, is expected at Bivalve, with a load of oysters.



Photo: Ellanora before she was named the ERHoffman. Named is spelled differently but we believe it to be the same.

# SCRAPBOOK PAGE



Vintage Postcard  
Bivalve, NJ



Port Norris  
High School Bell.  
Date unknown



## Membership and Renew for 2018

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.

Click here to renew or join, [historicportnorris.org/membership.htm](http://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.

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

### What does President's Day on the 3rd Monday of February celebrate and who celebrates it?

President's Day is a federal holiday and is officially called Washington's Birthday. Many states celebrate Washington's Day while other states officially call the day President's Day. The day honors all of the previous presidents of the United States. It is held on or around George Washington's birthday, February 22nd and Abraham Lincoln's birthday, February 12.

#### Officers

Rachel Cobb, President  
Richard Smith, Vice-President  
Alvina Baum, Secretary  
Mary Linda Locotte, Assoc. Secretary  
Liz Hoffman, Treasurer

#### Trustees

Rev. E. Barnes  
Eileen Bernhardt  
Virginia Campbell  
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Sam Ricci

**Please Note:** Meeting dates and times are posted on the website each month along with the approved minutes from the last meeting. Everyone is always welcome. [Click here to view.](#)

For a complete list of committees see our website. [View Here](#)

