



# Port Norris

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# The Past for the Future

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

**PNHS Next meeting: May 8, 2018 7:00 pm • 1723 Main Street**  
**Please Join Us for Our Special Guest: JOHN LAWS – Book Signing**  
[Visit our website for more details.](#)



## Women in History

March is Women in History Month. At our March 13th meeting we asked members to share about strong women in their families.

**Mary Linda Lacotte** shared family photos and spoke about her grandmother, Maria Siciliano Dagastine, and her life as an immigrant coming to America and settling in Port Norris.

She was born in Italy in 1875, she married Pasquale Dagastine in Italy in 1893 and she immigrated to the US sometime around December 1900, arriving in January 1901. She could not speak any English. Uncle Tony, Antonio Dagastine, their first son who was born in Italy, was about 5 yrs. old and came over with her. Her husband had already been here a year and worked. She came over with just \$10., which seemed to be the going amount to travel with. She brought a trunk with her and Mary Linda has it still today.

Mary Linda also has her passport, nothing like what we have today, they are more like a certificate, very elaborate.

The ship that Maria came over on, was not great. She said that the captain would tell them to pray a lot, on their journey across the ocean. That ship was actually taken out of commission two years later. It was not easy to come to the US. Hard to imagine today. She had 3 children in Italy, 1 survived, and 13 here in the states and 10 survived. 16 total.

It is said that she carried a pistol in her apron pocket. She would be in the fields and woods on the farm. She was ahead of her time.

Maria died in 1951. When Mary Linda was young she had learned to speak Italian with her grandmother, but after she died the family only spoke Italian when they didn't want the kids to know what was being said. They could try to figure out names being said but the use of it was lost.

The family Can House was on Strawberry Ave. See the photos next page of ladies who worked there. They canned beans, pears, and tomatoes.

The story goes that Maria's father lived in Philadelphia and her husband came over first and lived with him working in a dairy, until she came over. She did not like the climate in Philadelphia and they heard they were picking strawberries in Port Norris and she liked the idea of a small town. They were living above a barn, and if there were staying they could not live like that. So Mary Linda's grandfather worked hard and bought a piece of land, and at night would chop the trees down to build a small house. That house was over on Parsons Lane.

Maria brought the wine cookie recipe with her that we share on our website. [Click here if you would like to try these cookies.](#)



Grandmom is Mary (Maria) Siciliano Dagastine with her dog Beauty taken in 1948 at the Dagastine homestead.

Courtesy Mary Linda Lacotte



Women (left to right) 1st lady unknown, 2nd lady we believe to be Millie Perry (Barbara Adams mother)  
3rd (middle) lady is Rose Leonetti Dagastine (Sam Dagastine's wife), 4th lady is Frances Dagastine Macrine  
Hager, 5th lady is Helen (aka Phil) Dagastine Galiyano, 4th and 5th ladies are sisters.  
Courtesy Mary Linda Lacotte.



Women (left to right)  
1st lady Helen (aka Phil) Da-  
gastine Galiyano,  
2nd lady Rose Leonetti  
Dagastine (Sam Dagastine's  
wife). Others unknown.  
Courtesy Mary Linda Lacotte.



**Rachel Cobb's** granny is the lady at the far right. As a young girl, Rachel knew her granny always sewing, canning and cooking, and being a terrific grandmother. When this photo was donated to the PNHS, her whole family was surprised that Beulah Cobb was involved in such a social activity.

Here is the full article of this memorial celebration.

## P.N. Dedicates War Memorial

November 14, 1954

### Crowd Gather For Splendid Service

Official dedication of the recently purchased and erected memorial to all persons who have served in the Armed Forces from Port Norris was held yesterday on the township land in Port Norris located at Railroad Ave. and E. Main St.

The program was enjoyed by a large crowd which gathered for the ceremony which opened with special selections by the American Legion Band of Millville directed by Gerald Lilly.

Louis Dagastine, president of the sponsoring civic groups, presided as master of ceremonies and spoke on the purpose of the memorial. Rev. Gordon C. McNaughton, pastor of the Port Norris Methodist Church gave the opening prayer followed by a silent prayer by Rev. I.N. Holly, pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church.

Unveiling of the monument was Mrs. Marie Danna and Mrs. Myrtle Gaskill, Port Norris, followed by presentation of the monument to the town by president Dagastine and acceptance in behalf of the Port Norris residents by Mathias Taylor, chairman of the Commercial Township Committee.

The dedication was then conducted by Rev. Vernon E. Spencer of the Port Norris Baptist Church and the main address was given Rev. David J. Spratt of the Cedarville Presbyterian

Church, past chaplain of the Shoemaker Post American Legion of Bridgeton.

The wreath in honor of the war dead was placed by Mrs. Beulah Cobb of Port Norris, raising the flag by Mrs. Rose O'Brien [[PNHS Legend](#)] assisted by Francis O'Brien of the U.S. Air Force and Donald Taylor [[PNHS Legend](#)], former Marine. National Anthem was then played by the legion band followed by the benediction by Chaplain Clinton S. Howell of the State Department Veterans of Foreign Wars and the salute by the combined firing squads of the VFW and the American Legion. Taps were sounded by the band.

The attractive monument was erected by Mathias Taylor and the landscaping was accomplished by the Cumberland Nurseries.

*Editors Note: Today the War Memorial is in the Cemetery on North Ave. and Brown St.*

**Dick Smith** spoke of his mother, Jane Robbins Smith, as a member of the Rifle Team at Drexel University. She kept this to herself until she was in her 80's. Dick discovered her championship metals in a drawer while helping her out one day. She earned a ribbon for being an expert shooter, and winning the East Coast championship. He also shared that when she was first dating his father, he suggested he teach her to target shoot. It was quite a surprise to him when his girlfriend knocked off all the targets at first try.

**Pat Smith** spoke of her sister, Vivienne Tripley, she was in the first class of the Women's Army Corp., during WW11. Vivienne became a recruiter for the Womens' Army Corp., traveling around the country recruiting women. Her sister was featured in a film clip in the newsreels that were shown before a feature movie.

## Strong Living Women

Our members voiced admiration for women who are still living and very much apart of the community.

**Ginny Campbell** acknowledges Meghan Wren. Her accomplishments and impact in our community are many. One exceptional achievement was she completed a 13.1-mile swim across Delaware Bay on August 3, 2013! She is the founder of the Bayshore Center at Bivalve and of course saved the A.J. Meerwald. She is a inspiration to all women. We look forward to seeing what's next for Meghan.

The Port Norris Historical Society has a strong membership with many outstanding ladies. *We celebrate them all!*

# The Industrial Directory of New Jersey

Cities, Towns, and Villages Having a Population of One Hundred and Over With their Respective Populations, Railroads, Banking, Express and Postal Facilities; also Alphabetically Arranged List of Articles Manufactured in New Jersey, with Names of Firms and Location of Factories, Cities and Towns Offering Special Industrial Opportunities

Compiled And Published By The New Jersey Bureau of Industry Statistics Department of Labor Under Direction of  
 Lewis T. Bryant, Commissioner Trenton, New Jersey 1918  
 (Revised Every Third Year; Next Issue, 1921)

## Bivalve (E 10), Cumberland County. (Commercial Township.)

On the Central Railroad of New Jersey; station in the village; also on the line of the Bridgeton & Millville Traction Co. Population, about 200. Banking town, Port Norris, distant one mile. Money order post office, telegraph and telephone connections. Express service from Maurice River, N. J.

Bivalve is one of the greatest oyster shipping centers in the country. Hundreds of boats engaged in the oyster industry gather there during the dredging season, and the crop, which reaches hundreds of thousands of bushels, is shipped from here by rail or water to all parts of the country. The only industries of the place are those connected with the oyster trade, such as making and repairing boats and dredges. The water supply is obtained from artesian wells, and there is one chemical engine for fire protection.

The children of Bivalve attend the public school at Port Norris. The spiritual wants of the people are ministered to by one "mission."

An oyster canning industry would be welcomed, and about 50 persons, men and women, would take employment in that or any other form of industry suitable to their capacity. The only natural material of commercial value found here is "salt hay." Land for industrial purposes will be given free of cost, and direct financial aid might be extended to an approved industry that settled there, if such assistance should be desired.

The industries in operation at Bivalve are as follows:

Robert Du Bois, sailmaker; employs 3 men.

James Muloley, sailmaker; employs 2 men.

Newcomb & Harker, shipwrights and dredge makers; employ 7 men.

For further information address Joseph N. Fowler, or Wm. Yates, Bivalve, N. J.

## Haleyville (F 9), Cumberland County. (Commercial Township.)

Nearest station, Mauricetown, on the West Jersey & Seashore Railroad, distant two miles. One mile to nearest freight station of Central Railroad of New Jersey. Population, 300. Banking town, Port Norris or Millville, distant respectively three and one-quarter and nine miles. Money order post office; telegraph and telephone. Express service, Adams Company.

Haleyville is about one mile from Maurice River, which runs into Delaware Bay, and is navigable for medium draught boats. Railroad service is satisfactory, and land in the vicinity of the river or the railroads can be secured for factory purposes at very low prices. The villagers would welcome any good permanent

industry, and assist it in every reasonable way. A fair supply of labor can be readily obtained.

There is one public school in the village, and two churches, both of the Methodist denomination. There are no industries of any kind at present outside of farming; a cannery of fruits and vegetables would find an exceedingly good field here, as just the right kind of crops for that purpose is raised in abundance. The soil is good, the land practically all under cultivation, and no farms are reported for sale. The only immigrants in the place are a few families engaged in farming.

For further particulars, address the Postmaster, Haleyville, N. J.

## Mauricetown (F 9), Cumberland County. (Commercial Township.)

On the West Jersey & Seashore Railroad, and the Central Railroad of New Jersey, distant from stations one and two miles respectively; seven passenger trains in and out daily. Population, 550. Banking town.

Port Norris or Millville, distant respectively four and eight miles. Money order post office, telegraph and telephone. Express service, Adams and American companies.

Mauricetown is situated on the west side of Maurice River, about 15 miles from where it empties, into Delaware Bay. The river has a depth of 10 feet at the wharf, and is, therefore, navigable by vessels of medium draught. Building and repairing boats for the oyster trade is an important industry of the place. The village is partly sewered, and gets its water supply from artesian wells. There is at present no organized fire protection.

There is one public school in the place, and one church owned by the Methodist denomination. Of fraternal organizations there are Masons and Odd Fellows. Public sentiment favors extending every reasonable form of encouragement to manufacturing industry, and factory plants of almost any kind would be welcomed. Local preference is expressed for a glassworks, or a cannery of vegetables and fruits. About 50 men and 30 women can be secured as operatives. There are large deposits of glass sand and pottery clay here. There are facilities here for the development of a water power. Land for factory building purposes will be given free of cost, and financial help may also be given in the case of an approved industry, if such should be desired.

The soil of the surrounding country is good, and the crops consist of everything that can be grown in this climate. Some parcels of uncultivated land for sale at prices ranging from \$20 to \$50. For particulars regarding this property, and other matters pertaining to the town address Howell & Howell, civil engineers, Mauricetown, N. J.

The industries now here are:

John Bailey, sawmill; employs 8 persons.

Benj. F. Downs, sawmill; employs 7 persons.

E. C. Vanaman & Son, ship and boat builders; employ 12 persons.

## **Port Norris (E 10), Cumberland County. (Commercial Township.)**

On the Central Railroad of New Jersey, station in the town, and distant one mile from the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad. Population, 1,900. One bank, Port Norris National. Money order post office, telegraph and telephone. Express service, American and Adams companies. Value of taxable property, \$700,000.

Port Norris is five miles from Delaware Bay, and about one mile from Maurice River. The water supply is obtained from wells. The railroad service is excellent, there being several trains daily to and from the town on both roads. A trolley line connecting with other nearby towns runs through the place. For fire protection there is a chemical engine and a volunteer company. One weekly newspaper is published and there are two public schools of the grammar grade, and one building and loan society. The churches, five in number, belong to the Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Colored Baptist and Colored Methodist denominations. Of fraternal organizations there are Red Men, Knights of Pythias, American Mechanics, Golden Eagles and several others.

Industrial plants of any kind furnishing steady employment would be welcomed, and for an approved industry the building site would be furnished 1/2% of cost. Local preference is expressed for a glass works, canning factory, or garment factory, conditions being regarded as specially favorable for these industries. The number available for employment is reported at about 50 men and 50 women. The soil of the surrounding country is good, and the farm products consist of garden vegetables of all kinds, with berries and other small fruits. No farms or farm lands reported for sale. Of foreign immigrants there are 25 Italian families. The only industries of the place are the Lumberton Sand Company, which employs 7 men, and the Harry Stowman marine railway and spar building plant, which employs 5 men.

For further particulars address W. H. Robbins or H. H. Hollinger, Port Norris, N. J.

## **Call for Nominations**

**The PNHS is accepting nominations for our 2018 Legends Awards.**

In 2008, the Port Norris Historical Society began a yearly tradition of honoring those who have made a significant impact on our community. Honorees come from three categories: 19th Century, 20th Century, and Living Legends. Be they business owners, community leaders, or simply great citizens, they represent what is great about Port Norris.

If you have someone from the past or living who meet the criteria of a Port Norris Legend, download the form and let us know. At the June 12th meeting, the members of the Port Norris Historical Society, review and nominate and vote for this years legends.

Those who are chosen as a legend will be honored on November 3. A close friend or family member if available will be asked to present a oral casual presentation of that legend. It is a wonderful time, sharing stories.

In addition to continuing to preserve the history and keep it current for today the dinner is our primary fund-raiser for the year. We appreciate all who can attend and participate.

See all our past Legends on the website.

[historicportnorris.org/legends-list.htm](http://historicportnorris.org/legends-list.htm)

Nominations to be reviewed May 8th at our next meeting.

## **Delaware Bay Watermen's Memorial Dedication June 2, 2018 . 11 AM Bayshore Center at Bivalve on the Docks**

At last the Delaware Bay Watermen's Memorial Bell will be dedicated. There will be brief remarks, and reading of the names and of course ringing of the bell. We hope you will join us. It has been a five year journey and we are excited to see this memorial become part of the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. Check our webpage for up to the minute details. [historicportnorris.org](http://historicportnorris.org) DBWMC: The Bayshore Center at Bivalve, The McBride Family Oyster Enterprises, Port Norris Historical Society.

## Port Norris Pickings

### March 1, 1888

Mr. Wash Robbins, set apart Tuesday afternoon as the time to cut the watermelon he has had in his store window. A number of his friends were present, and enjoyed his hospitalities, in the way of refreshments and the melon, which, strange to say, was fit to eat, after having been kept so long.

### March 19, 1888

Things are getting settled down again after the bad weather of last week, and should the good weather continue in a few days business will be booming at Long Reach.

### March 4, 1889

Some days ago four of the best looking ladies in Port Norris paid a visit to Mrs. Hannah Chard, who lives about a mile out of Port Norris. Mrs. Chard says that if she lives until April 7th next she will be one hundred years of age. She relates that her husband died about seven years ago, that they had a family of twelve children, only four of whom are now living, and that she is of German origin and was born in New York state. To a remark that one of her sons made a short time ago, that she was too old to get on her knees and to pray, she replied that she hoped that was a duty she should never be too old to perform. She often speaks of going home and anticipates a most happy union in a home beyond. This aged lady is quite active for one of her years and enjoys the company of her many friends.

### April 3, 1888

Through a mishap yesterday morning in getting underway the sloop's M. L. Robbins and Henry and Howard fouled, causing the latter to go on the bank of the meadow where she now lies.

### April 8, 1889

The sloop "Eliza Carlisle" was capsized in the cove on Saturday, but the crew were all saved. They were taken off by the crew of the schooner "Bay Queen," of Leesburg. It is also reported that a man was drowned off the schooner "Calvin Dilks," of Newport, Saturday. There was a report that the schooner "Marion Mayne" was capsized out in deep water, but this proved to be false, as she harbored in the mouth of Dividing creek Saturday night and the crew walked home.



### NORRIS ASKS

### Who is the local author who wrote many books of the bayshore area?

Margaret Louise Mints-Ogden, She was born January 21, 1917 and died on November 14, 2000. She wrote "ANGELS IN THE NIGHT" The Lighthouses and Lights Along New Jersey and Delaware, The Fading Trail: A Story of the Eastern Woodland Indians of South Jersey, just to name two of her books. See more about her life on her PNHS Legends page. [historicportnorris.org/legends-55.htm](http://historicportnorris.org/legends-55.htm)

### 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  
John Hickman  
Sam Ricci

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



## 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,](http://historicportnorris.org/membership.htm)  
[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!

**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.](#)