



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.

PNHS Next meeting: January 13 7:00 pm • 1723 Main Street

[Visit our website for more details.](#)



PNHS 2019 Living Legends Recognized on November 2, 2019

Next month
Luther R. Jeffries, Sr.

George W. Garrison



Here is George's story as told by his son, Tim Garrison.

My dad was one of 5 children by James and Alberta Garrison. George remembers how clean, vibrant and safe Port Norris was with kids riding around and playing on the streets. A thriving town.

The Port Norris Express was started in 1938, by Sam Leonetti and Frank Damico. By mid 1960's my pop-pop was the sole owner.

George went to grad school at PMC (Class of '66, went to grad school American University for Transportation ('68). Then he got married June '68.

He almost began teaching business in Bridgeton, instead was deferred due to his fathers support in hauling sand to foundries across the North East in support of the war effort.

Irene Green



Here is Irene's story as told by her friend, Elaine Morton Rankin

Irene is a mother, a Sister, an Aunt, Grand-mother, Great-Grandmother, Great-Great Grandmother and wife to the late Melvin J. Green Sr. Being the eldest of 6 children, she was born and reared in Haleyville, New Jersey (Commercial Twp.) to her late mother Bernita Smith on July 3, 1934, and until this day she is always proud to say she was born and raised in Haleyville!

She was educated through the Commercial Township School System at the Port Norris Elementary/High School with completion through the 12th grade in 1943.

Immediately after graduating high school she began her employment in the Oyster & Claim Industry while doing homework and taking care of her neighbor's children! She then

He came home to work for his dad somewhere around 1969.

George hauled sand to foundries throughout the North East with tanks, flat beds, dumps that go to the iron foundries from Baltimore. A lot of changes to the company started in the 1980s Pop-pop died in 1980, at same time deregulation laws went into effect where they started back hauling different products like lime, talc, feldspar, etc (feldspar used with sand to make glass).

Hauling products in both directions gave them an opportunity to expand In mid 90's. This was, I guess you can say, the golden period, everything seemed to go well, they ended up buying 32 new Freightliner and Peterbuilt tractors and a few tanks (probably overextending himself) (pop-pop was once a Mack faithful).

One of his better gifts to the community ... cell service (although not everyone agrees, but we won't get into that :)

Now you'll see the building cleaned up and will be the future home of Commercial Twp Utility building. And finally cell tower that'll provide service well into the bay.

Have no fear ... cell service is near.

So how do I begin to summarize the 20 some years my dad served on the Township committee? Lol. ... it was always interesting ... Constant campaigning, street signs, phone calls, scandals,. I never would have guessed politics in Cumberland county would be so interesting? Well, I'll leave the juicy stuff to your conversations with my dad personally.

George went to the White House for signing of the Wild and Scenic River Program for the Maurice River with Bill Clinton.

Today he has an obsession with personal fitness. The man just never stops. If he's not out running the trails, he's in the yard or garden, or out and about in town mowing yards.

My dad wanted to make this clear, that this should not be all about him, his successes would not have come without the help of those around him.

Please visit George's full presentation and video on his Legend's web page. [Click Here.](#)

went on to work at the Vineland State School (currently known as the Vineland Developmental Center) where she retired after 37 years of service!

She joined John Wesley United Methodist Church in 1968 under the ministerial leadership of the late Rev. John E. Bishop. As a member there she served as an Usher, Communion Stewart, worked with the Youth Choir and Vacation Bible School during the summer, in the late years, she joined the Chancellor Choir, the Mass Choir, the Finance committee and served as a delegate of the Southern New Jersey Methodist Conference since 2005 until just a few years ago! She has taken her seat and enjoys church services and Bible Study under Rev. Thomas James. Church has always been instrumental in her life and was very important to her to instill in her children.

Working side-by-side with her late husband Melvin Sr., they reared 10 children, Diane, Linwood, Bonnie (Eddie), Carolyn (Pal), Sharon, twins Robert and Robin, Michael, Avonda (Earl) and Melvin Jr. all of which are grown and have families of their own! Her continuous prayer is for the church membership to grow and the Youth choir returns and be even stronger than years in the past.

Irene's current activities include; dual membership of the Ravishing Royal Red Hatters and the Haleyville-Mauricetown Red Hatters Clubs. She enjoys traveling every chance she gets just recently returning from California attending her grandson's college graduation, months prior she cruised out of Florida celebrating her great grandson's birthday and will soon be traveling to Georgia to visit her grandchildren there! Though she is no longer driving she still tries to go and participate at the Louise E. Moore Senior Center in Commercial Township for lunch, Bingo, Exercise classes, holiday and Seasonal activities and local trips!

When she looks back over her life; she is thankful to have good health, strength and peace of mind. She is blessed for the health of her children and they all are regular church attenders. She is blessed and thankful to have wonderful friends near and far and is blessed to be surrounded with excellent neighbors!

Please visit Irene's full presentation and video on her Legend's web page. [Click Here.](#)



NEW EVENT! February 8, 2020

The First Annual SEED SWAP!

What is a Seed Swap? It is a gathering of people, usually gardeners, who have come together to share seeds. The seeds can include locally saved seeds, excess bought seeds, seeds brought back from other regions, or donated seeds. Normally, seeds are spread on tables and people choose what they want. The goal is to bring people together to share seeds. We are working on organizing the swap, with the goal of bringing folks together and sharing in something they love and enjoy.

We now have 2 seed companies participating.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company has donated a large amount of all kinds of wonderful things to grow, as well as their Seed Catalog. [CHECK OUT THEIR WEBSITE](#). You can spend hours just looking through all of it. In addition, **San Diego Seed Company** who, yes, is the one in San Diego, California, and grows many of the same things we do here in the East, are sharing over 50 seed varieties such as lettuce, beets, melons and more. [CHECK OUT THEIR SITE AS WELL](#).

We want to encourage everyone to bring seeds that day to share and, of course, to take home something new to try. But, if you do not have seeds to bring, you are still invited to come and get seeds. We have invited the local Master Gardeners to join us and answer questions, as well.

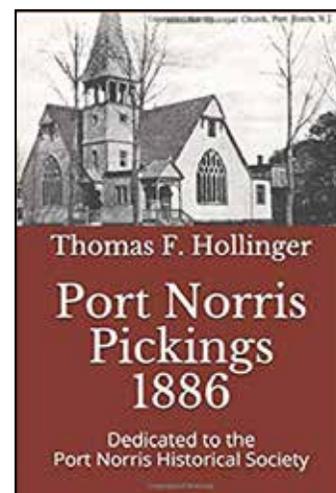
The time will be announced soon, but save the date of February 8 to be held at the Port Norris Historical Society, 1723 Main St., Port Norris. Come on out, join in the fun, and see the progress we have made on our building. This will be a rewarding event. We hope to see you there.



NEW BOOK Port Norris Pickings 1886

The Port Norris Historical Society is very grateful to Tom Hollinger for his gift of *Port Norris Pickings 1886*. He has dedicated this latest edition to us.

What a labor of love to compile these books. “This book contains information provided from newspapers of the day published in Bridgeton, New Jersey. Some people of the town, called “local correspondents” would write down the “happenings” of the week and send it to the papers to be published. The correspondents would go by nicknames or just an initial located at the end of the day’s story. Hopefully, this will give us a glimpse of what life was like in our small village many years ago. This book is the fourth in a planned series of books dedicated to our unique little oyster village, which would explode in growth and prosperity and capture the attention of an entire State.”



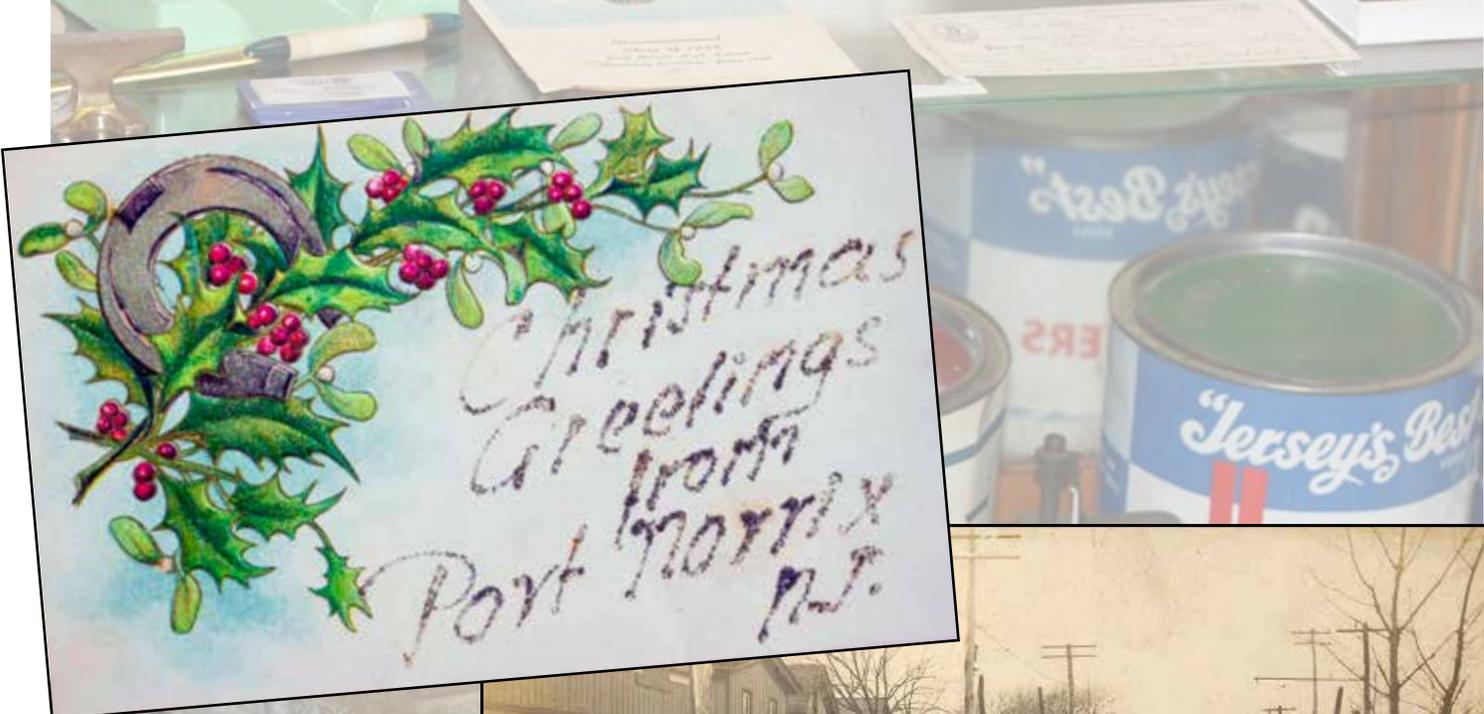
You can purchase the book from us directly, or you can get it on Amazon. \$12.95

You can also enjoy the past Pickings we normally share in the newsletter on our website. [Check it out!](#)

Scrapbook

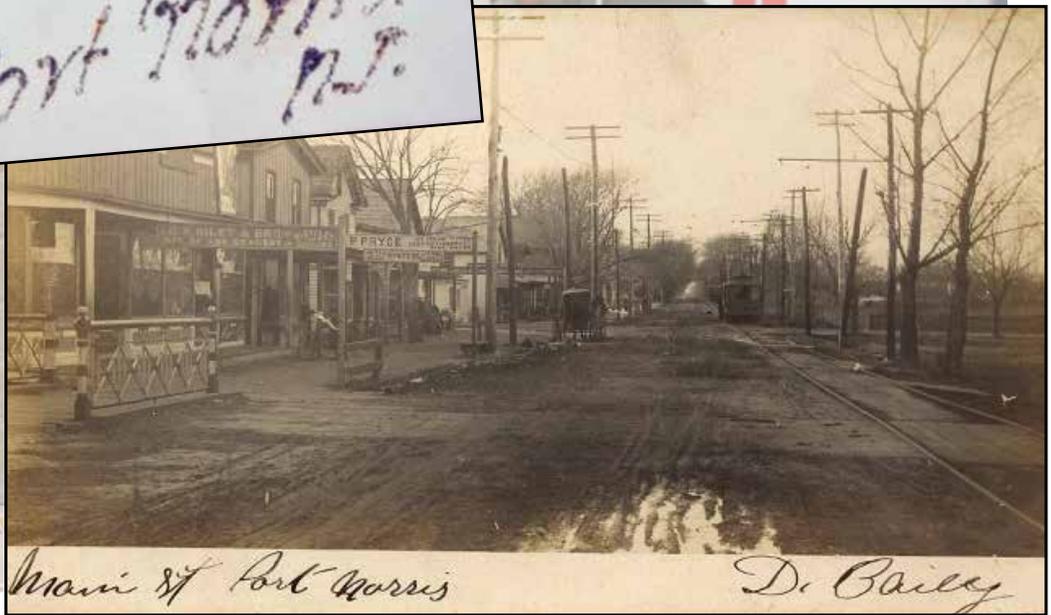
A few goodies from our collections.

Sign from entering town on Main Street.
Exact date unknown.



Two vintage postcards

Background, misc items
from our collections.



New Membership Levels

We have made some changes to our Membership beginning in 2020, with the addition of one NEW level. Donations of \$50 or more that were previously listed as BENEFACTOR will now be designated as PATRON. BENEFACTOR levels have changed to \$30 Individual and \$35 Family. General Individual and Family remain the same. (See the yellow box at right). All members receive merchandise discounts. Please check our website for listings of additional benefits. We are grateful for your ongoing support which helps us meet the needs (heat, electric, etc.) of maintaining our building. We wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

PNHS Elections

Elections were held at the December meeting with the full slate being voted as presented by Nominations Chair Joyce Massey. Elected to two year terms; Rachel Cobb, President, Co-Secretaries, Alvina Baum and Mary Linda Locotte. Trustees for two year terms; Eileen Bernhardt, Virginia Campbell, Gloria Guidera, Joyce Massey.

Port Norris Pickings

December 5, 1890

There was quite a large number of young people gathered at Mr. Garrison's Wednesday evening and they report a very pleasant time. Among those present were Messrs. Wm. Lambert and Daniel Turner, Miss Mame Heritage, and Miss Emily Fowler, the celebrated organist, and several others whose names we did not learn.

December 24, 1890

Mr. Joseph Turner, the enterprising grocyman, has quite a novelty in his front window. He has erected a chimney with Santa Claus coming out of the top. Don't fail to see it.

Harris and Buzby are doing a large business in turkeys and chickens.



NORRIS ASKS

What is The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System?

It is a government program to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The Maurice River signed on 1993. <https://www.rivers.gov/rivers/maurice.php>



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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.](#)

Membership and Renew for 2020

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 - \$30 Family \$35.00
Patron - \$50 and
Student - \$1 (no voting privileges)
and entitles you to discounts
on our merchandise.

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.

Membership fees are tax deductible.

**See us on Facebook
and our website
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 if you do not wish to receive this newsletter, click here web@historicportnorris.org, we will remove you from the list. We do not sell or share your email with anyone!

Officers

Rachel Cobb, President
Richard Smith, Vice-President
Alvina Baum, Secretary
Mary Linda Locotte, Assistant Secretary
Faye Hickman, Treasurer

Trustees

Eileen Bernhardt
Virginia Campbell
Gloria Guidera
John Hickman
Elizabeth Hoffman
Joyce Massey
Sam Ricci
Rev. E. Barnes, Lifetime Honorary Trustee

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