



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: May 14, 2019 7:00 pm • 1723 Main Street

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



Port Norris Office A Trip Back in Time for the Fast-Moving Bank

By Tony Stanzone

Editors Note: The following story is reprinted 1992. Enjoy the read.

The Port Norris office of United Jersey Bank/South, located about 20 miles south of Bridgeton, is United Jersey's southern-most location and one of its most unique.

No super highways or public transportation systems lead to Port Norris, the community of a few hundred residents, in which the office is located. You get there via narrow, winding country

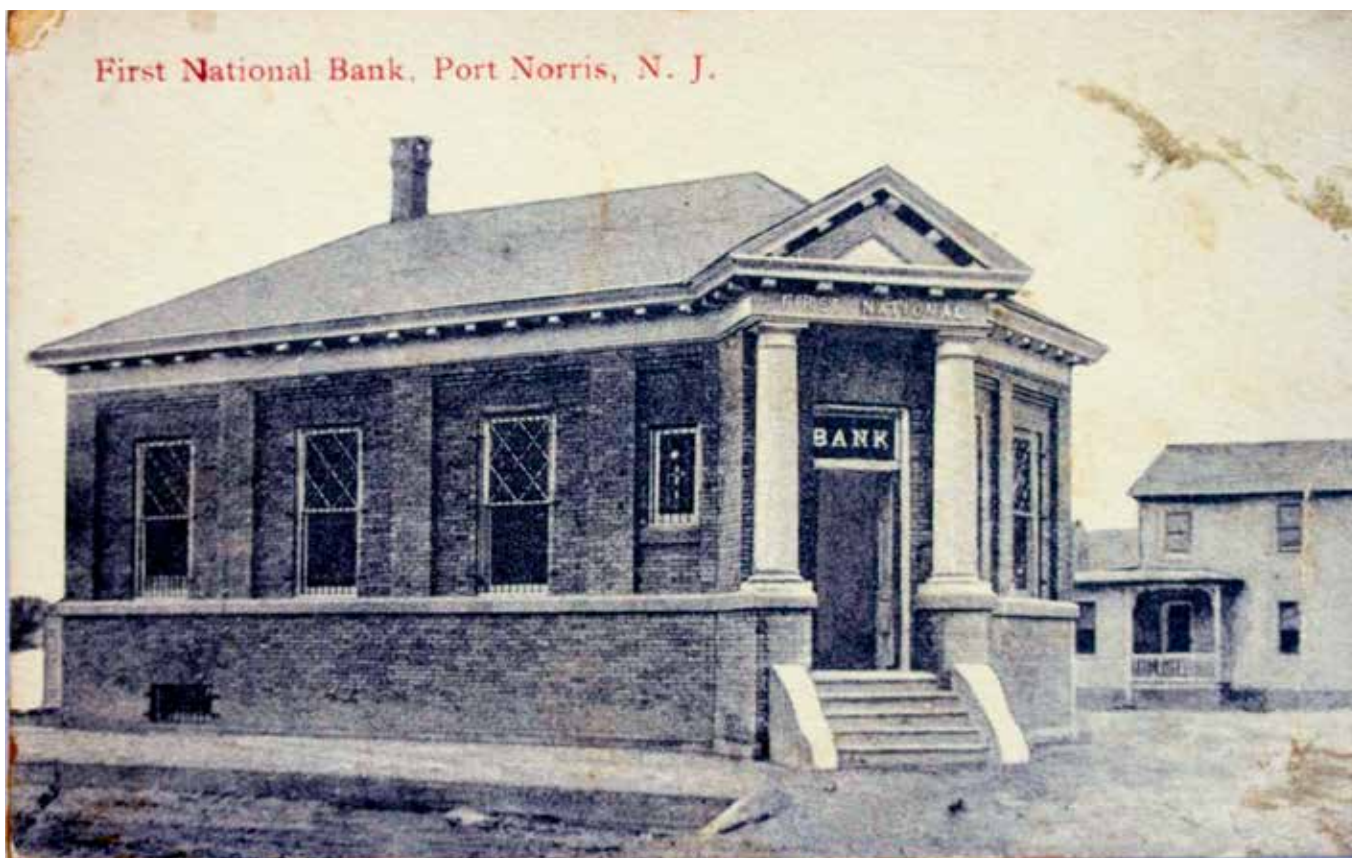
roads that follow the bends in the Maurice River as it makes its way to the southern end of New Jersey and the Delaware Bay.

For visitors from United Jersey and customers from outside the area who use the office, traveling to Port Norris is more than a trip down country roads, it's a surprising and pleasant trip back in time.

Port Norris traces its roots back to the early 1700s. It was originally known as Dallas Ferry. In 1810, a wealthy Philadelphian purchased the village and named it after his son Norris.

Once a thriving commercial center, Port Norris was known as the "oyster capital of the world". Oysters harvested from the Delaware Bay were brought to Port Norris for shucking, processing and shipping. Unfortunately, disease has attacked the oyster crops in recent years, crippling this once thriving industry.

Since the late 1800s, the building on Main Street which houses our bank, has served as the town's bank. Through the years



it has been known as Fidelity Surety and Safe Deposit Company, First National Bank of Port Norris, Tradesman's Bank and the Bank of New Jersey.

In 1982, the office was purchased by United Jersey Bank/Cumberland National which is now part of United Jersey Bank/South.

The staff includes Ann Johnson, Manager; Joanne Hickman, Head Teller and tellers Darlene Shevechenko and Lois McDowell.

According to Ann, the bank has been a meeting place for people of the area for over 100 years. "People still stop in to do their banking and to pass news along about happenings in town or to catch up on the latest events," said Ann.

The staff and the customers are not ashamed of the lack of modern changes in their community. They are proud of the old-fashion way of life and the old-fashion way of doing business. They take pride in maintaining a very personal and friendly approach to serving their customers.

Ann sighted a recent loan transaction for an out-of-town customer as a prime example of how the Port Norris office puts United Jersey Bank/South's "C.A.R.E." (customers are really everything) program into action.

A customer from King of Prussia, Pa. applied for a home equity loan promotion for his second home in the fashionable ocean resort of Stone Harbor in Cape May County. The Port Norris offices was the most convenient office for the customers to use even though they had never been to Port Norris.

When closing time came, Ann met the customers at her office on a Sunday morning. While signing for their \$90,000 loan and opening a new deposit account, they talked of the pleasant trip down to Port Norris and their "culture shock" upon seeing the town and the little bank office.

As they shared coffee with Ann, they expressed thanks for the outstanding service they had received and stated their surprise and approval that a large regional banking company included small offices in towns like Port Norris.

This story points to one UJB/Financials strengths – diversity in locations and services. We are a large corporation that serves densely populated urban and suburban centers with fast-moving, modern financial products but still includes an office in a town that lives a different life-style and is proud of being known as "a trip back in time."



THEN



Saint Anthony's Parade on Main Street with the Bank in the background. 1930's

The bank was organized on October 26, 1910 and was issued #10036 for its National charter. Between 1910 – 1933 the bank issued \$460,630. In National currency. The bank issued \$5's, \$10's, and \$20's in both the old large size format (3" x 7 ½") from 1910 – 1929; then in 1929, the currency was changed to the small size format that we use today.

The bank's cashier was Lemuel Robbins Jr. and the bank president was E.B. Brandford. Their facsimile signatures appear to the bottom left and right of the notes respectively. There may have been other bank officers whose signatures appeared on the large notes, but my knowledge in this area is lacking. Often these notes are still held by descendants of the bank officers.

- Robert A Kotcher

NOW



The bank is today is privately owned.

Sun National Bank in Port Norris to close Aug. 27, 2010.

PressofAtlanticCity.com

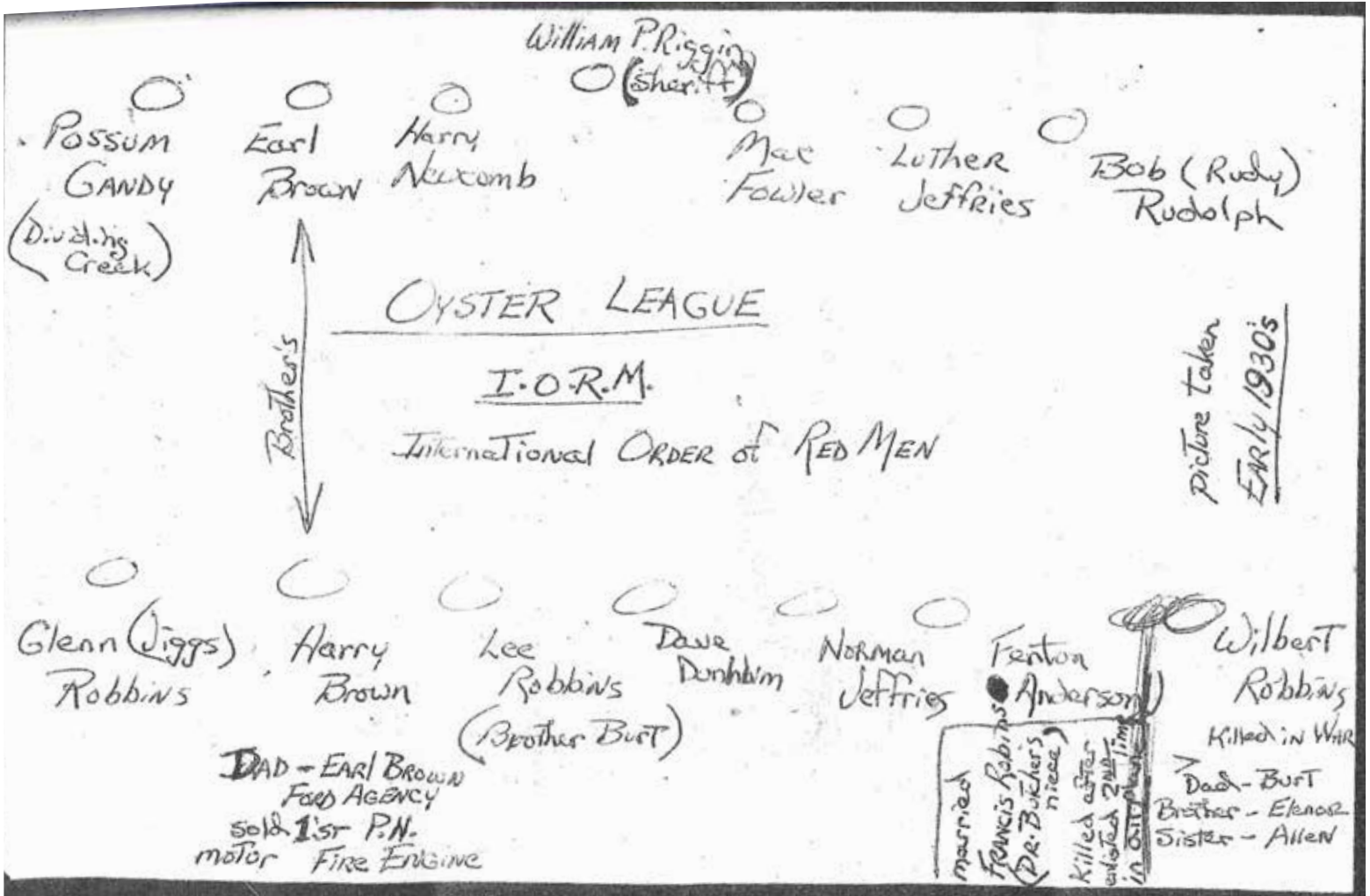
KEVIN POST Business editor Jun 5, 2010

The closing of a bank branch always inconveniences people, who must either switch banks or travel farther to manage their finances.

But when the only bank branch in town closes, the effect can go beyond inconvenience.

That's what Donna Moore fears for Port Norris, and old oystering town near the bay in Cumberland County. . . .

'Tis the Season



Women of Port Norris

We would like to give a shout out to the women of Port Norris all the time, but especially during the month of March, which is Women In History Month. At our regular meeting roundtable, as well as on Facebook, we asked for stories of Port Norris women past and present. Thank you for sharing.

Megi Deanne Duncan “The only woman that impacted me from Port Norris was my 8th grade teacher/confidant Vertie Kunkle. She means so much to me She’s the best. I love that lady so much. Like u have no idea what she helped me through just by being her. Wonderful tough intelligent gentle loving Mrs. Kunkle”.



Port Norris Legend 2012, Vertie Kunkle

Libby Truitt shared with us, “Doris Moore baked 100+ lemon meringue pies, using her own resources, to raise money for the Mauricetown Historical Society! The pies were delicious, and our Society is very thankful for Doris’s generous donation of

her time and baking skills. Doris baked the pies to help raise funds to build the Cookhouse. The cookhouse was built by the society in the early 2000s based on pictures of the original cookhouse”.

Joyce Massey grew up in Port Norris and shared it was a great place to grow up.

Rachel Cobb spoke of her grandmother, Beulah Cobb, who demonstrated strength and character while raising a family of six children with so little. She was a very resourceful lady and lived among neighbors who supported each other during tough times.

Alvina Baum shared that sister Mary Ella had inner strength that helped their family get through the day to day when times were lean.

Mary Linda Lacotte said Phil Galiyano, her aunt, was a hard-working lady. She worked at Newcomb’s Market and drove a school bus for Dagastine’s Transfer prior to opening and operating Westside Luncheonette from her home for 39 years. She was well known for her good cooking.



Port Norris Legend 2011, Philoemina Galiyano



Commercial Township Veterans Memorial

DEDICATION

May 18 at 11 AM – 1 PM

Commercial Township Veterans Memorial

8879 Highland Street, Port Norris

[See More on Facebook](#)

[To order a dedication brick, click here.](#)

Mauricetown Historic District was added to the state and federal register of historic places.

We congratulate everyone who worked so hard to make this happen. [See Video](#)
New signs for the town will soon be up.



Check out all our neighbors websites and activities. You can find links to their websites from our community page [See More](#)

Port Norris Pickings

March 29, 1889

The sloop Hatie Burten, Capt Lewis Andrews, arrived at Long Reach yesterday with a load of Chesapeake oysters.

Samuel Sweeney fell from his scow into the river a few days since, but fortunately came out with only a good wetting.

April 5, 1888

Curtis Schellinger could not miss the Easter entertainment of the little German band in Philadelphia, of which he is a member, so he took the trip and since he came back, all you can get out of him is Habish a Sach, but this must not get in the NEWS. A certain groceryman not far from the depot received a visit from a cigar drummer who, as an inducement for him to buy, said he would, if given an order, throw in a box for the grocery free of charge. The order was given and on Saturday the cigars came and also the extra box, which when opened was empty. He says he will get square with that drummer and don't you forget it.



April 30, 1890

George Crouse, oyster dealer at Maurice River, yesterday sent via W. J. R. R. ten barrels of Maurice River Cove plant oysters consigned to a firm in Germany to be used as an experiment.

The schooner Cygnet left yesterday for the planting grounds, with a new bow sprit.



NORRIS ASKS

Do you know what year the Bank in Port Norris was organized?

The bank was organized on October 26, 1910 and was issued #10036 for its National charter. Read more about the Bank in this newsletter.



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 2019

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

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, Assst. Secretary
Faye Hickman, Treasurer

Trustees

Eileen Bernhardt
Ginny 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](#)