



# 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.

### NEXT MEETING AUGUST 9, 2022



## Remembering a Legend and a Friend

### Alvina J. Baum

### August 3, 1934 - June 1, 2022

Alvina Baum was a Legend in every sense of the word. In April we held our annual Legends Awards ceremony, at which time we honored Alvina and others. Several of her family and friends were there to celebrate her. Sadly, Alvina was unable to attend in person, but with the aid of FaceTime technology, her son, Chris, at home with Alvina while granddaughter, Lindsey, walked about the banquet room with her cellphone which made it possible for Alvina to see and speak to many of the guests.

Alvina was a founding member of the Port Norris Historical Society and held the office of Secretary for several years. Later, the job was divided and Alvina continued as Corresponding Secretary. She was a Trustee at the time of her death.

Alvina has had a significant impact on the PNHS, and to ensure that her legacy continues, the membership voted to create an Honor Roll as an addition to our Board.

It will read "Alvina J. Baum, Founding Member, Secretary, Trustee, Legend (2007-2022)".

Alvina gave much to this organization. There are a few projects that she had hoped to see completed and when that happens, we will dedicate them to her. Her contributions will forever be a guiding light.

ALVINA J. BAUM 87, of Haleyville, passed away on Wednesday June 1, 2022 surrounded by her loving family. Born in Bridgeton, NJ on August 3, 1934 she was the daughter of the late Alvin and Ina



Adams Nickelson. She was married for 53 years to the love of her life, the late Richard H. Baum. After graduating with honors from Camden High School in 1951, she later received an Associate's Degree from Cumberland County College. She retired from the State of NJ Vineland Developmental Center where she was Administrative Assistant to the Director of Nursing.

Alvina enjoyed family gatherings, gardening, traveling, and feeding and watching the birds. Other joys included lounging on her deck listening to the sounds of her pond, the birds, and the frogs. She especially enjoyed mornings spent with her

granddaughter Lindsay. A charter member of the Port Norris Historical Society, she was recently honored as a living legend of Port Norris. Alvina was an active member of the First United Methodist Church of Millville where she had been a Sunday School teacher, money counter and served on various committees. Past involvement as a Lay Speaker with The United Methodist Women strengthened her faith. She delighted in the friendships and memories created serving the Lord and her community.

[Reprinted from her obituary page](#)

### [Facebook Livestream Funeral](#)

I remember first seeing Alvina in my parent's luncheonette in Port Norris and I thought she was the cutest teenager I had ever seen. I was not aware at the time she and I shared the same great-grandmother. In later years we would share stories concerning our family backgrounds. She was one of the most sincere persons I have ever known. Even right at the moment I am recalling her smile and hear her laugh. She and the knowledge she had will be greatly missed. So very sorry she is gone but it will be only for a while. She will brightly shine.:heart: ~ Linda Lee Reeves

I first met Alvina at a Parent-Teacher Conference when I had her son, Tim, as a student. She later became one of my favorite substitute teachers for my classroom. She was a great disciplinarian and very competent in delivering my lesson plans. Because of my friendship with her daughter, Robin, I became very close to Alvina and her family. I consider them my "second" family. I was privileged to be asked to sing at her and Dick's 50th wedding anniversary celebration. Over the years, I have shared many conversations, stories, laughter and special moments with Alvina. These are the memories I will cherish. ~ Joyce Massey



Our relationship with Alvina over the years has been very special. Her sense of humor and approach to life was very endearing. We miss her and what she brought to our lives. ~ Pat and Dick Smith.

I met Alvina at my first PNHS meeting in the Fall of 2007. Alvina quickly became a friend and mentor. She was always there for me to chat with and gave unconditional support. I was so happy we honored her as a Living Legend. I miss just picking up the phone to say hi and hearing her cheery hi back. ~ Rachel Cobb

# LEGENDS AWARDS HELD APRIL 30, 2022

## Living Legends:

**Alvina J. Baum**

**Georgianna (Georgie) Corona**

**Elizabeth (Liz) Hoffman**

## 20th Century Legend:

**Elizabeth (Lizzy) Hoffman Lore**

It was a great day. We want to celebrate each 2022 Legend. We will do that in our next newsletter when their web pages are complete.



## Graduation 2022

The local eighth grade graduation was held on June 15 at the newly named Commercial Township School (formerly Port Norris School). It is always an honor to participate in the celebration and this year the Port Norris Historical Society gave awards to TWO students. The awards, named in memorium for our dear friend, Ethalinda Blackman, were presented to Liliana Hair and Art Ballata.

*Congratulations to all the students.  
Enjoy high school!*



It was a picture-perfect day for Bay Day at the East Point Lighthouse. Bay Day is a celebration of our community on the bay. We enjoyed meeting and talking with everyone who came by on such a busy weekend.



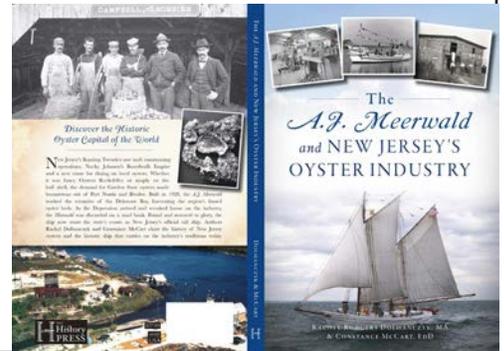
BAY DAY JUNE 4



At our June meeting, we hosted guest Rachel Rodgers Dolhanczyk, AMA, who spoke about her new book, *THE A.J. MEERWALD and NEW JERSEY'S OYSTER INDUSTRY* and co-authored with Constance McCart, EdD.

Rachel presented several images of the Meerwald family and spoke about the very interesting history of how the A.J. Meerwald came to be what it is today.

“New Jersey’s Roaring Twenties saw mob rum-running operations, Nucky Johnson’s Boardwalk Empire, and a new craze for dining on local oysters. Whether it was fancy Oysters Rockefeller or simply on the half shell, the nationwide demand for New Jersey’s Delaware Bay oysters made boomtowns out of Port Norris and Bivalve. Built in 1928, the A.J. Meerwald was a new type of schooner, specifically built for oystering the Delaware Bay oysters while under sail.”



## A New Treasure



In an old Victorian house on Main St. in Greenwich, sometime in the 1950's, lived two young sisters, Ethalinda and Mary Day Blackman. Their ages were about 4 or 5. The house was across the street from the historic Gibbon House and in the back was a barn with a hayloft. That is where Mary Day found the bust of an old doll. The girls' parents took it to the 'doll hospital' in Bridgeton where a new body was made, as well as clothing, etc. Over the years, due to damage from one of their dogs, Ethalinda had the body replaced one more time. That doll has now been donated to us in Ethalinda's memory.



A few years ago, Ethalinda donated a cradle that once belonged to the Hand family and this is where the doll now rests her head. We are delighted to add her to our museum.

The doll's head dates to the mid-1800's and is paper mache. It appears to be made by Greiner.

If you have something you would like to donate, contact us [collections@historicportnorris.org](mailto:collections@historicportnorris.org)

## A New Treasure and a Trip to Maine



In mid-May, I set out (by car, not by boat) to bring home a model boat from Maine to add to our museum collection. This long-awaited trip was planned before the pandemic and I was very excited to finally get on the road.

This very old boat model was donated to the Port Norris Historical Society by Belva Prycl, former SJ Bayshore artist now living in Damariscotta, Maine, in memory of John and Belva Penn.

The other timely part of this journey gave me the opportunity to view the A.J. Meerwald, which has been undergoing a 1.4 million dollar restoration in a shipyard in Belfast. I have sailed countless times on this historic schooner and was thrilled to see it under the immense tent being worked on by many craftsmen and women.

Here are a few of my images from the shipyard. It will be sailing home to Bivalve soon. If you wish to help, visit their website, [bayshorecenter.org/our-ship/aj-meerwald-restoration/](http://bayshorecenter.org/our-ship/aj-meerwald-restoration/)  
~ Rachel Cobb



Photo Rachel Cobb



## Port Norris Pickings

### June 30, 1888

A large fishing party, among whom were Dr. H.C. Fithian, Samuel Robbins and others of this place, were taken to Fortescue yesterday afternoon by W.L. Hand in his big hack.

### July 2, 1888

The Port Norris Base ball club on Saturday afternoon played the Dividing Creek nine at the latter place. The game resulted in a victory for the Port Norris club by a score of 17 to 5. Some excellent playing was done on both sides, but the best was done by the Port Norris club, notably the three baggers by Robbins, McConnell and Turner and the battery of the Port Norris club, Baily and McConnell, is one of the finest, that has ever been seen in this place, with the other players equally good in their respective positions, the nine would be almost invincible.

### July 10, 1889

The Port Norris and Picked nines played their second game of ball yesterday. The score was 14 to 3 in favor of the Picked nine. We think it would be better for the Port Norris club to send the Picked nine to Cedarville on Thursday.



## NORRIS ASKS

### What year was the AJ Meerwald launched?

The Schooner AJ Meerwald is New Jersey's official Tall Ship. She is a restored oyster dredging schooner, whose home port is in Bivalve, New Jersey. Launched in 1928, AJ

Meerwald was one of hundreds of schooners built along South Jersey's Bayshore before the decline of the shipbuilding industry which coincided with the Great Depression.



Today, the AJ Meerwald is used by the Bayshore Center at Bivalve as a traveling classroom and vehicle to enjoy area's waterways. The AJ Meerwald was added to the National Register of Historic Places on November 7, 1995. [bayshorecenter.org/our-ship/](http://bayshorecenter.org/our-ship/)

A special thank you to Virginia Campbell for editing talents

**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.



## Membership and Renewal for 2022

We would love to add your name to our growing list of members. Please give some thought to joining the PNHS. Membership Fees:

General Individual - \$10. General Family - \$15.  
Benefactor Individual - \$30. Benefactor Family \$35.  
Patron Individual - \$50. Patron Family \$55.  
Student (under age 17) - \$1.00 (no voting privileges)

Membership 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.

*Membership fees are tax deductible.*

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 if 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!

### Officers

Rachel Cobb, President  
Richard Smith, Vice-President  
Gloria Guidera, Corresponding Secretary  
Mary Linda Lacotte, Recording Secretary  
Sam Ricci, Treasurer  
Elizabeth Hoffman, Co-Treasurer

### Trustees

Alvina Baum  
Eileen Bernhardt  
Virginia Campbell  
Faye Hickman  
John Hickman  
Joyce Massey  
Rev. E. Barnes, Lifetime Honorary Trustee

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