

The Port Norris Historical Society
ZOOM Meeting: February 8, 2022

Members Present on ZOOM: A. Baum, R. Berry, V. Campbell, R. Cobb, G. Guidera, B. Hall, F. Hickman, J. Hickman, L. Hoffman, J. Lacotte, M.L. Lacotte, J. Massey, L. Reaves, S. Ricci, D. Smith, P. Smith

Round Table - Remembering Ethalinda Blackman: Members present shared memories of Ethalinda Blackman. Comments by members: Lucy Blackman and a sister Elizabeth were Ethalinda's aunts. Her father was Carl Blackman and related to Bertie Jeffries. Rachel C. noted she has a feature of Ethalinda on the front page of our latest newsletter. Joann and Ervin Hickman were close friends while growing up in Port Norris. Both Erv and Alvina have pictures of Ethalinda. She also shared that Ethalinda stopped in to visit our building on one of her trips back to Port Norris. Ethalinda Blackman has made monetary donations to our organization. Recently we received notice from attorneys she gifted 10% of her estate to the PNHS. Dick S. would like to nominate her as a 2023 Legends honoree.

January Meeting: The January Secretary's minutes, the January Treasurer's report, and the meeting agenda for February were emailed to active members on February 7, 2022.

Review of Meeting Minutes: Gloria G. made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2022, meeting, with a second by Ginny C. Members present on zoom unanimously approved the minutes present on zoom.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer's report for the month of January 2022 was submitted by Treasurer, Sam R. and emailed to active members.

A motion was made by Joyce M. and seconded by Faye H., with a unanimous vote taken to approve the January 2022 Treasurer's report.

Donations: A monetary donation was received from a co-worker of Rachel C. in memory of her father.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Membership: Ginny reported we have (50) members (35 paid members plus 15 honorary members). Reminder to send dues for 2022 to Sam R.

Correspondence: Gloria G. reported sending sympathy cards to Liz and Bob Hoffman, and Janet Page. Thank you notes were sent to Guy and Anna DeFabrities as well as Liz H. Also, a get well note was sent to John H.

Collections: In Pat's absence, Faye's reviewed items Ed Adams recently donated including: a 16 page history titled, A River Named Maurice, eighteen issues of "South Jersey Magazine" from Summer 1979 to Spring 2000, an article titled "The Man Who Rolled to Bivalve", a copy of the "Orange and Blue Tattler", a CB radio license and an article about Ed Adams' father. In addition, he donated an engraved lighthouse, a game from the Rennoc company (when in Port Norris) and an WWII invitation for eating for ground observers from 1944. Faye donated a copy of her father and uncle's lease for oyster grounds, given by her nephew. Rachel C.'s mother, Dorothy, donated a pair of Norman Cobb's Boy Scout leggings.

Welcome: Faye H. reported (10) welcome bags have been assembled. There are five houses on the list of new residents to visit. Please notify Pat or Faye if members know of any new family/individual that has moved into town.

*A break in the meeting agenda after committee reports allowed for Jim Blumenstein to speak to members regarding his history project. Please refer to the end of the minutes for a recap of his conversation. *

Millville Thunderbolt Club – Dick S., Pat S., and Rachel C. visited the Millville Thunderbolt Clubhouse for Rachel to take photos of Hall of Fame plaques and other memorabilia of athletes from the Port Norris area. Dick was given an Orange and Blue plaque of Larry Milbourne, as the club had duplicates. In answer to a question raised, Joyce M. stated she believed the first class of Commercial Township students to graduate from Millville High School was the Class of 1947? (Joyce's brother, who will be 92 years of age was a member of that first class).

Building:

Dick is waiting for a return phone call from Plowman's to get an estimate for the (6) replacement windows for the upstairs rooms.

Newsletter: Rachel C. stated the latest issue of the newsletter is on the website and features Ethalinda Blackman, a memorial to Drew Tomlin, photos from the Seed Swap, and several photos of the Millville Thunderbolt Club Hall of Fame athletes from the Commercial Township.

Seed swap: Rachel C. felt the seed swap was a fun event. Taking into consideration, the short time of the publicized notice and the cold weather, there were approximately 18-20 adults and children who participated in the swap. The Cain family children was so involved in the entire process. They have a greenhouse and produce stand. Jamie Warner, who has her own business, suggested we host another seed swap in late fall at the end of the growing season. Plants as well as seeds can be part of the seed swap.

Yard Sale: Rachel C. presented the idea of sponsoring a yard sale this fall. It would be possible to combine the Fall seed swap with a yard sale.

Legends Awards: Mary Linda L. reported letters were emailed to Legends and/or family contacts with details regarding the luncheon. Deadlines were stated in the email, with February 15th being the date to receive Legends' guest lists. Invitations will be mailed by March 5th, with responses needed by April 5th. Final lunch counts to be reported to NJ Motorsports Park on April 15th. Rachel C. will send images of Port Norris to Liz and Alvina to select the one favorite for the front of the invitation. Once a selection is made, Rachel will send the invitation to the printer. A meeting of interested members will be scheduled with Julie Scott of the Motorsports Park during the first two weeks of March to discuss plans for the event.

Other Comments and concerns:

Belinda H. noted during a recent visit to the Port Norris Post Office the Postmaster asked her if she could identify any one in the photo of area veterans. (Photo displayed on plexiglass in post office).

Mary Linda L. will be revising/updating the active member directory for distribution at the March meeting.

Liz H. questioned the location of photos which had been displayed for several years in the Port Norris school. Since the school closed two years ago, she has concerns as to what has happened to these photos. She explained these photos were hung at eye level throughout the building by Ed Adams, Steve Moore, Dick S., and herself during the first couple of years of the historical society's existence.

Rachel suggested a possible bus trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show as fundraising event. Ginny C. will contact Donna Pio for information.

Alvina shared the notice with members of the passing of Leroy Goldblatt, the son of Izzie Goldblatt.

***Guest, Jim Blumenstein:** Jim, a history teacher at Sterling High School, expressed his interest in local history, especially of the Bay Shore area. He is currently taking course at Rutgers for a master's degree in history. In an effort to gain more information, he joined our zoom meeting hoping to connect with people living in this rural area. His project is centered on the great migration of generations of African American families leaving the Chesapeake eastern shore area and moving to Port Norris between the early 1900's and 1940's and how it has impacted our history/life today. Jim has focused on the people who networked between rural areas, not into the major cities. Beginning primarily with seasonal work in the oyster industry, the migration transitioned with their families moving here once jobs were established. Based on both economic and social conditions, this migration was not a one way route, as originally thought, but a movement to and from the Chesapeake and Port Norris areas. Through his contact with Mr. Hunter, African American Heritage Museum of South Jersey, he is aware that families moved to Millville, Bridgeton, and Atlantic City after the 1950's when the oyster industry declined. Although church and census records are part of his research, he would like the oral history to drive his project. Members provided suggestions for Jim to contact as he moves forward with his project. Rachel C. suggested Mike Godsman, who is writing a book about the African American people of Cumberland County. Ginny noted a book, The Warmth of Other Suns, written by Isabel Wilkerson. Belinda H. mentioned Ronald McBride, whose father was the first African American to own an oyster boat. One of our current Legends to be honored is Charles Amos Camper, who was born in the Crisfield area.

Next meeting: March 8, 2022. Rachel C. stated we would like to hold an in-person meeting in March. A decision will be made closer to the date, based on guidelines and statistics.

Mary Linda Lacotte, Recording Secretary