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# FROM THE FRONT PORCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF MOORESTOWN



## View From the Porch

I moved my family to Moorestown six years ago for one reason: Main Street. Bigger homes in nearby towns were available at similar price points, but the allure of “walking into town” far outweighed the need for extra bedrooms and a basement. Then, four months ago we welcomed a new baby boy into our family. Our small cape cod style home suddenly became “cozier” than the original realtor description promised. We again considered a possible move to a larger home in a neighboring town. However, it was Main Street that once again won us over. The smells curling out of the Pie Lady Café, the laughter of kids zipping by on bikes, and the beautiful architecture that lines the street sets a perfect scene for pushing the baby carriage. Whether you call it Main Street, or King’s Highway, or the Old Salem

Road, the artery running through the heart of Moorestown is the perfect symbol of the pride we all take in our town and its history. Businesses have made sacrifices, individuals have made investments, and civic groups have used their ingenuity to create and preserve the beloved road’s signature character and charm.

As the Historical Society of Moorestown reflects on the support we received during our jubilee year, we want to thank everyone for showing us the same sacrifice, generosity,

and commitment that has made Main Street such a gem. We are humbled by your many gifts, the mayor’s proclamation, and the large showing at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. We look forward to serving Moorestown in this new decade and the many more to come.

*Mickey DiCamillo, President*  
*mdicam@hotmail.com*



Moorestown: Main Street looking towards Church Street [from the Moorestown Library web site; "Historic Photographs of Moorestown"]

**New Jersey  
History  
Speaks**  
**LECTURE  
SERIES**



Save these  
2020 Dates:  
**February 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**March 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**April 8<sup>th</sup>**

For details visit [www.moorestownhistory.org](http://www.moorestownhistory.org) or  
[www.moorestownlibrary.org/events/](http://www.moorestownlibrary.org/events/)



### House Tours and Gift Shop Hours:

2nd & 4th Sunday 1-3 PM  
Tuesdays 1-3 PM

### Research Library Hours:

Tuesday 1-4 PM  
Second Sunday of  
each Month 1-3 PM

### Address

Historical Society of  
Moorestown  
Smith-Cadbury Mansion  
12 High St.  
Moorestown, NJ 08057

### Phone

856-235-0353

### Web Site

[moorestownhistory.org](http://moorestownhistory.org)

### E-mail

[moorestownhistory@comcast.net](mailto:moorestownhistory@comcast.net)

### Facebook

[facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown](https://facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown)

*Published by  
The Historical Society  
of Moorestown*

**December 2019**

# *"A Great Time had by All"* at HSM 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event

**We would like to extend our thanks** to all the members of the historical society and the community who came out to Laurel Creek Country Club on November 16 to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Historical Society! Your support means everything to us – it helps us to carry out our mission and it shows just what an amazing town Moorestown is!

The evening at Laurel Creek Country Club sparked from beginning to end. During the cocktail hour, attendees perused and bid on the various silent auction items that lined the room. After the delicious dinner buffet, attendees were treated to a talk by our celebrity speaker, Robert Wittman, who is a former Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and founder of the FBI Art Crime Task Force. Mr. Wittman gave a fascinating presentation on his career as an undercover agent and the recovery of over 300 million dollars of stolen art and historical artifacts, many of which took place in the Philadelphia and South Jersey area. After his presentation, he signed copies of his book, *Priceless: How I Went Undercover to Rescue the World's Stolen Treasures*. Thank you so much Robert for joining us for our special occasion!

The evening would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event Committee members who planned, organized, set up and broke down, and conducted the event. Huge thanks go out to trustees Mary Berardi, Lynne Brill, Nancy Chumney, Mickey DiCamillo, Cathy Hartley, Stephanie Herz, Julie Maravich, Jill Weiss, and Linda Vizi.

— Stephanie Herz

*Thanks also to our business and event sponsors:*

## **BUSINESS SPONSORS**

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D P Lawn Care  
Lewis Funeral Home  
The Recycled Designer  
Neil K. Johnson, Architect

## **EVENT SPONSORS**

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Mr & Mrs Jon E Ingersoll  
Ann Condon  
Diane & Joe Matisoff  
Diane Reid



**Robert Wittman entertained us with stories about his days on the FBI Art Crime Task Force at the 50th Anniversary celebration**

**The Historical Society  
of Moorestown**

### **Officers**

#### **President**

*Michael DiCamillo*

#### **1st Vice-President**

*Mary Berardi*

#### **2nd Vice-President**

*vacant*

#### **Treasurer**

*Cathy Hartley*

#### **Recording Secretary**

*Lynne Brill*

#### **Corresponding Secretary**

*Jill Weiss*

### **Trustees**

*Mary Berardi*

*Lynne Brill*

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*Lisa Knell*

*Julie Maravich*

*Liz Rosenthal*

*Linda Vizi*

*Lenny Wagner*

*John Watson*

*Jill Weiss*

### **Newsletter Editor**

*Lisa Knell*

### **Library**

*Stephanie Herz*



# The Jersey Shore:

## the Past, Present and Future of a National Treasure

*As the shore developed into a center for shipping and commerce, lighthouses became a necessity. The one located at Sandy Hook is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse in the United States*

**The Historical Society of Moorestown selected the perfect evening** for the October installment of its NJ History Speaks Lecture Series. A 94 degree day served as the backdrop for Dominick Mazagetti's speech entitled "The Jersey Shore: the Past, Present

and Future of a National Treasure." The Moorestown Library hosted this event on October 2nd.

Mr. Mazagetti is an atypical historian. A banker and attorney by trade, one of his former employers inspired him to take an interest in historical topics. Mr. Mazagetti became a history columnist for the *Hunterdon County Democrat*. His interest in the past led him to write full length books on the subject. The first, *True Jersey Blue*, featured a series of letters from two New Jersey Civil War soldiers. A biography of Continental Army General Charles Lee served as the topic of his second.

Mr. Mazagetti then chose to chronicle the history of the Jersey Shore. It's difficult for modern Garden Staters to imagine the shore towns as anything other than havens for recreation. They weren't always. They do have a lot of history, however.

During the seventeenth century whaling drew people to the beaches. Consumer products manufactured from blubber, baleen (more commonly known as 'whalebone') and ambergris, a substance used to manufacture perfume, were in demand. Shore communities sought to satisfy the public's interest.

The speaker added an interesting historical aside to this phenomenon. He explained that early Cape May whaling families could trace their ancestry back to Mayflower passengers.

The Jersey Shore provided a haven for those operating outside the law. Such individuals took advantage of the opportunities its isolated location provided.

Pirates set up shop along the Garden State's coastline. Mr. Mazagetti explained that New Jersey residents enjoyed working with them. The buccaneers sold goods for cheaper than market price without charging tax.

Smugglers utilized the opportunities afforded by the state's abundant shore front. They had a reputation comparable to the marauders of the high seas. According to the speaker, contemporaries thought of them as, "Like pirates, only quieter."

The boundary between freebooting and entrepreneurship blurred with the advent of the American Revolution. "Privateers" received licenses from either the state or the Continental Congress. They operated out of locations such as New Brunswick, Tom's River and Chestnut Neck. These mercenaries proved themselves effective allies. The British described one of their bases of operations as a "nest of vipers."

As the shore developed into a center for shipping and commerce, lighthouses became a necessity. The one located at Sandy Hook is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse in the United States. Mr. Mazagetti added that George Meade designed several in the state. While most famous for his exploits as a Union general during the Civil War, Meade also worked as a civil engineer.

At the turn of the nineteenth century the modern era of the Jersey Shore began. In the 1830s, the concept of "vacation" came into vogue. Shore towns became retreats for Philadelphians. Communities such as Cape May, Long Branch and Tucker's Island thrived.

Dr. Jonathan Pitney utilized crafty advertising to take advantage of this interest in shore based recreation. He marketed the benefits of Absecon's "sea air"; capitalizing on the mid-century belief that salt water carried medicinal properties. He advocated for a railroad to transport vacation-goers to his hotels. His efforts encouraged construction of the Camden-Absecon Railroad.

These developments provided for the growth of Atlantic City. Less than twenty years later, 300,000 people traveled by train to that community.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Long Branch became a sophisticated resort community. Its prominence attracted some notable vacationers. Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park received its name from the fact that a number of American Commanders-in-Chief spent their holidays there.

These days when one thinks of the Jersey shore, images of gambling, bikini-clad bathers and posh resorts come to mind. Mr. Mazagetti explained that religion played a major role there beginning in the eighteenth century.

Itinerant preachers visited shore communities in the early 1700s. In the 1820s the Second Great Awakening impacted the area's development. A Vineland camp meeting founded Ocean Grove in the 1860s.

Throughout the twentieth century, different shore towns worked to establish their own unique identities. The speaker described these as "boutique communities." In the 1970s, Cape May rebuilt into a "Victorian showplace" based upon the local architecture. Long Branch re-branded itself as "high-end chic." Atlantic City became an East Coast alternative to Las Vegas with the return of legalized gambling.

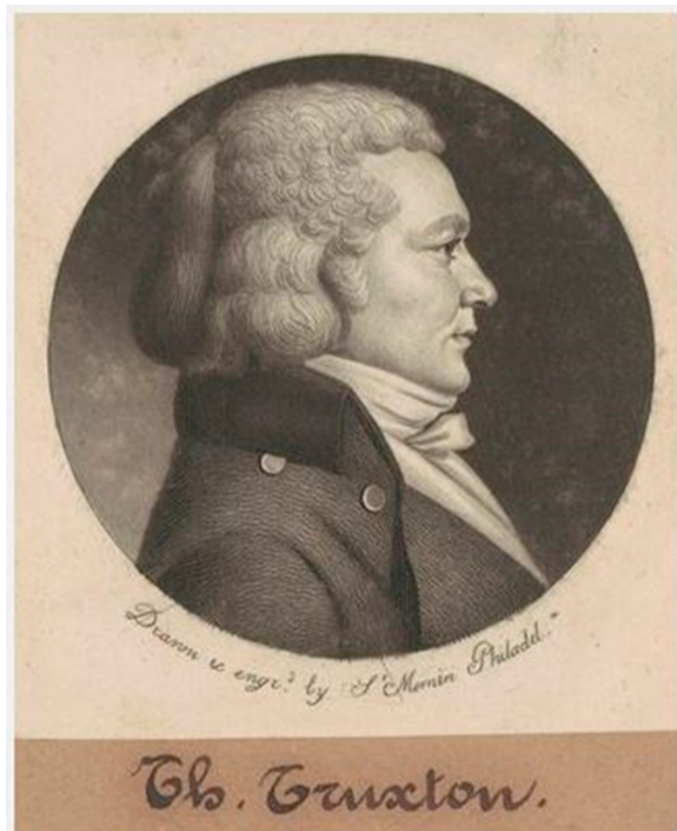
The speaker assessed the current state of the Jersey Shore. He mentioned how the region's geography has changed over hundreds of years. Climate change has added its own additional complication. It raised the issue of who should be financially responsible for beach replenishment.

Mr. Mazagetti concluded his remarks by stating that the New Jersey Supreme Court has ruled that the "beach is a public trust." While legal for communities to charge for access to them, they must provide that ingress. That ensures the people of New Jersey will continue adding to the history of this wonderful national treasure for generations to come.

# INTERESTING HISTORY of houses in Moorestown: **BISPHAM/WALTON HOUSE**

Moorestown is lucky to have a number of 18th century homes still standing. We all know about the Smith-Cadbury Mansion (1738) and Main Street has at least 11 documented homes built in the 1700s. These homes are easy to keep track of because their Historical Society plaques proclaim their antiquity. But did you know that there are a few 18th century homes that are off the beaten path or hidden from view on the main roads? One such home is set back on the south side of Marne Highway, across from Lockheed Martin's Gate #5.

According to the Moorestown Township Environmental Resource Inventory in the township Master Plan, the oldest portion of the Bispham/Walton House was built c. 1770. But this listing does not reveal the most interesting fact about this beautiful old farm house. Between the years 1812 and 1816, the house was occupied by Commodore Thomas Truxtun (1755-1822), one of the US Navy's most important early heroes.



National Gallery of Art, Charles B. J. Févret de Saint-Mémin, Thomas Truxtun, Saint-Mémin Collection of Portraits (series), 1799.

Thomas Truxtun began his career as a merchant seaman when he was 15 and by the age of 20, he achieved his first command. The first four ships that he commanded were privateers. As a commander during the American Revolution, he captured ten enemy ships and he was responsible for the return of Benjamin Franklin to the US from his tour as Ambassador to France. He had a reputation for bravery and tenacity as a disciplined but fair commander and a superior seaman and leader.

Truxtun was appointed as one of the six captains in the new US Navy by President George Washington in 1794 and was assigned to the USS Constellation. He won two important battles against La Vengeance and L'Insurgence during the undeclared war against France between 1798 and 1800. During his time in the Navy he also wrote a well-regarded treatise on latitude and longitude in 1794. He resigned from the Navy in 1802 and retired to Perth Amboy, NJ.

On July 22, 1804, Truxtun received a visit from his friend, Vice President Aaron Burr who 11 days earlier had shot and killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel in Weehawkin, NJ. According to Eugene S. Ferguson in his book *Truxtun of the Constellation*, Burr was trying to escape the angry public and press in New York and feared for his life. Truxtun entertained his guest overnight and in the morning, personally conveyed him in his carriage to Cranbury, NJ where Burr departed for Philadelphia where he believed he would be met with less hostility. After living in Perth Amboy for a few years, the large Truxtun family moved to Cranbury, NJ in 1808.

By 1812, the Truxtun family had moved again, this time to a plantation named Woodlawn in Chester Township, just outside of Moorestown. On March 11, 1812 Truxtun purchased the 40-acre property which consisted of three tracts from Dr. George Davis. According to the Burlington County Tax Ratables, 1812 [New Jersey State

(continued on page 5)

## BUSINESS CORNER

### BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

Local businesses play an important role when they support the preservation of Moorestown's history. We welcome and thank our business members!

#### BENEFACTOR

Powers Kirn, LLC  
Counselors at Law

#### FRIENDS

Passariello's Pizzeria  
& Italian Kitchen

D P Lawn Care

Lewis Funeral Home

The Recycled Designer

Neil K. Johnson, Architect

GCF Organizing

Your generous support helps to sustain the Society's commitment to preserving Moorestown's heritage for generations to come.  
*Again, thank you!*

**New Business memberships are always welcome; for details, visit us at <http://moorestownhistory.org/membership/become-a-business-partner/>**

Library]; Call Number: FHL Film 411288; Page Number: 19; Family Number: 3, Truxtun resided on 40 acres in Chester Township. Several letters to his friend Charles Biddle in Philadelphia are signed from him at Woodlawn in Moorestown, according to the *Autobiography of Charles Biddle, Vice-President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania* written in 1883. Prior to the ownership of George Davis, the property was owned by Joshua Bispham.

In 1816, at the urging of his friend Charles Biddle, Truxtun ran for Sheriff of Philadelphia and won. The Truxtun family moved yet again to Philadelphia where they remained until he died in 1822.

Silas Walton was another notable owner of the plantation in the later 19th century. The house remained in the Walton family until 1983. It is now owned along with the four acre lot it sits on along with two other modern buildings by Virtua Memorial Hospital of Burlington County. Hopefully the current owners realize the important historic legacy over which they have stewardship.

— Stephanie Herz

The Silas Walton/J. Bispham/  
Commodore Truxtun  
House, November 2019.

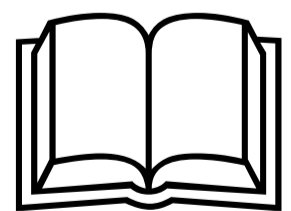


*Silas Walton/J. Bispham/Commodore Truxtun House, Moorestown-Mount Holly Road near Long Crossing, Moorestown Twp., date unknown. By Nathaniel Rue Ewan in "Early Houses of Burlington County, New Jersey" [Photograph Album], 1932-1949.*



**The staff of the library continues its ongoing mission** – archiving, indexing, filing and researching questions about Moorestown from people near and far. We were especially heartened recently by the news of a substantial anonymous donation directed to the library for the purchase of “administrative items such as new computers, software and archival materials.” This couldn’t have come at a better time as we have been considering the addition and/or updates of all of these items to increase our capabilities in the library! Thank you, Anonymous, from the bottom of our hearts!!

— Stephanie Herz



**LIBRARY  
NEWS**

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Hello Members!

You might not think of it this way but your membership constitutes an unbroken line of like-minded individuals interested in collecting, preserving and sharing local historical documents, artifacts and memorabilia. Our 50 years as an organization could not have been accomplished without the help of a dedicated membership. We're deeply grateful for your generosity and support!

A warm welcome to our new members:

- Amanda Bergh • Stella Hearn • Jeannie Doyle • Robert Fulmer & Lynn Hammell •

A beautiful color version of this newsletter is available on our website at [moorestownhistory.org/newsletter](http://moorestownhistory.org/newsletter)

Looking forward to sharing history with you in 2020!

Jill Weiss, Membership Chair [moorestownhistory@comcast.net](mailto:moorestownhistory@comcast.net)

**Thanks to all who donated and bid on items for the Silent Auction fundraiser at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration — it was a great success!**



**Are you good at fundraising? If so, we need your help!**

**We are seeking individuals with energy and ideas to help us in our fundraising efforts.**



**Jobs — big and small — that we need help with:**

**Activities/Events:** Helps plan, organize and hold Society events.

**Docents:** Museum and special exhibit guides.

**Exhibits:** Helps create interesting displays.

**Fund Raising:** Helps plan and hold income-generating events.

**Museum:** Helps with maintaining collection.

**Oral History:** Collects oral histories and oversees written work.

**Photography:** Attends events and take digital photos for our archives and publicity.

**Programs:** Helps select programs and speakers, coordinates meetings.

**Publicity/News/Web:** Helps get Society information to the members and public.

If you can help out, call the Society at 856-235-0353



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### BASIC MEMBERSHIP:

- Student (\$10)     Individual/Family (\$35)

### DONOR LEVELS:

- Stories From the Past Sponsor (\$50)  
 History Partner (\$100)  
 Library Sponsor (\$250)  
 Patron (\$500)     Benefactor (\$1000)

RENEWAL

NEW

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[moorestownhistory.org](http://moorestownhistory.org)  
 for member benefits!

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**Mail to:** P.O. Box 477 Moorestown, NJ 08057

**Or renew online at:** [moorestownhistory.org/membership](http://moorestownhistory.org/membership)

# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

## DECEMBER 2019

- 3 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 6 **Holiday & Volunteer Appreciation Party**  
*Smith-Cadbury* 5:30 – 8:30 PM
- 8 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, gift shop, research library, 1-3
- 10 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 17 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 18 *Smith-Cadbury* closed for holiday break until **January 7, 2020**

## JANUARY 2020

- 7 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 8 NJ History Speaks presentation of *The King's Highway* with filmmaker Jason Sherman  
7:00 at Moorestown Library
- 12 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, gift shop, research library, 1-3
- 14 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 21 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 26 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3
- 28 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4

## FEBRUARY 2020

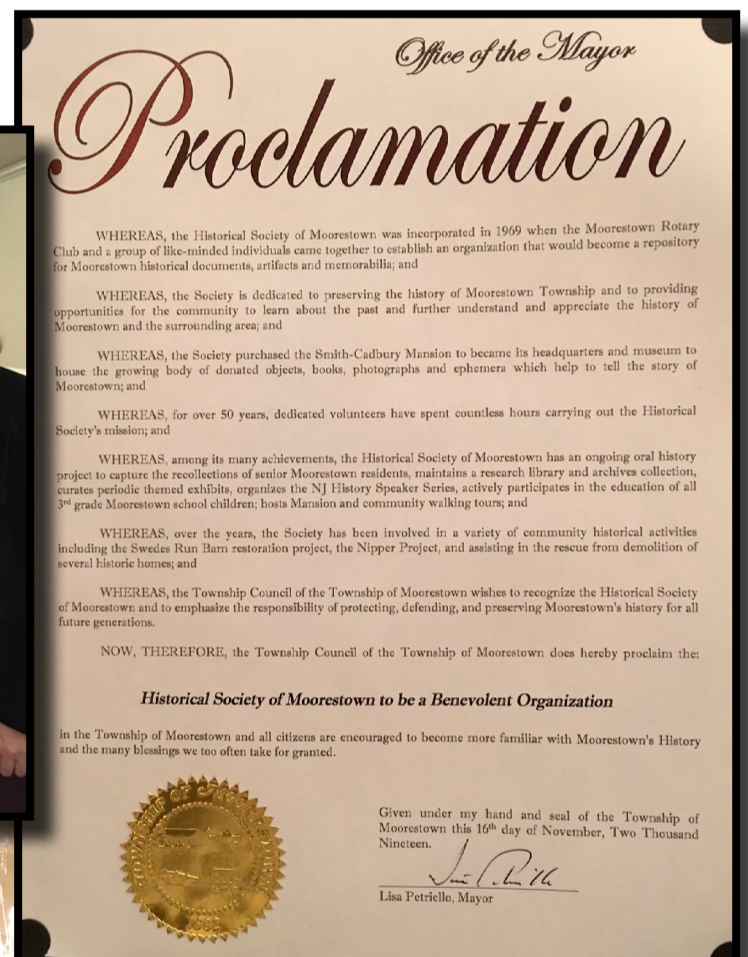
- 4 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 9 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, gift shop, research library, 1-3
- 11 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 12 NJ History Speaks at the Moorestown Library; check [moorestownhistory.org](http://moorestownhistory.org) for details
- 18 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 23 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3
- 25 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4



**"WHEREAS, among its many achievements, the Historical Society of Moorestown has an ongoing oral history project to capture the recollections of senior Moorestown residents, maintains a research library and archives collection, curates periodic themed exhibits, organizes the NJ History Speaker Series, actively participates in the education of all 3rd grade Moorestown school children, hosts Mansion and community walking tours; and**

**WHEREAS, over the years, the Society has been involved in a variety of community historical activities including the Swedes Run Barn restoration project, the Nipper Project, and assisting in the rescue from demolition of several historic homes; and..."**

Excerpt from the Proclamation, signed by Moorestown Mayor Lisa Petriello (pictured above, left, with HSM President Mickey DiCamillo and Deputy Mayor Nicole Gillespie) and read at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in November 2019



## Historical Society of Moorestown

Smith-Cadbury Mansion  
12 High Street, Box 477  
Moorestown, NJ 08057

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Permit NO. 183

• Historical Society of Moorestown Membership Year  
April 30, 2019—May 1, 2020 / Time Travelers Member •

DECEMBER 2019

### PHILADELPHIA TO LAKEWOOD AND ASBURY PARK

The tide of travel oceanward from Philadelphia is to the south, in the direction of Atlantic City, yet some portion of it finds its way north to Lakewood, Asbury Park, etc. This week's route which has been out of print, covers these points. The details are as follows:

**Philadelphia.** From public buildings, take Market Street, thirteen squares through lower business section, straight through to Pennsylvania Railroad ferry, foot of Market Street. Cross the ferry to

**Camden, N. J.** Ferry exit is on Federal Street. Follow Federal Street straight out to the city limits, where take the Moorestown road through Merchantville and straight to

**Moorestown** (12 miles). Continue direct on the Moorestown road to Hartford, and on through Masonville and Hainesville to

**Mt. Holly** (20.5 miles). The road leaves Mt. Holly east by north and continues on the main highway, which is a good macadam road,

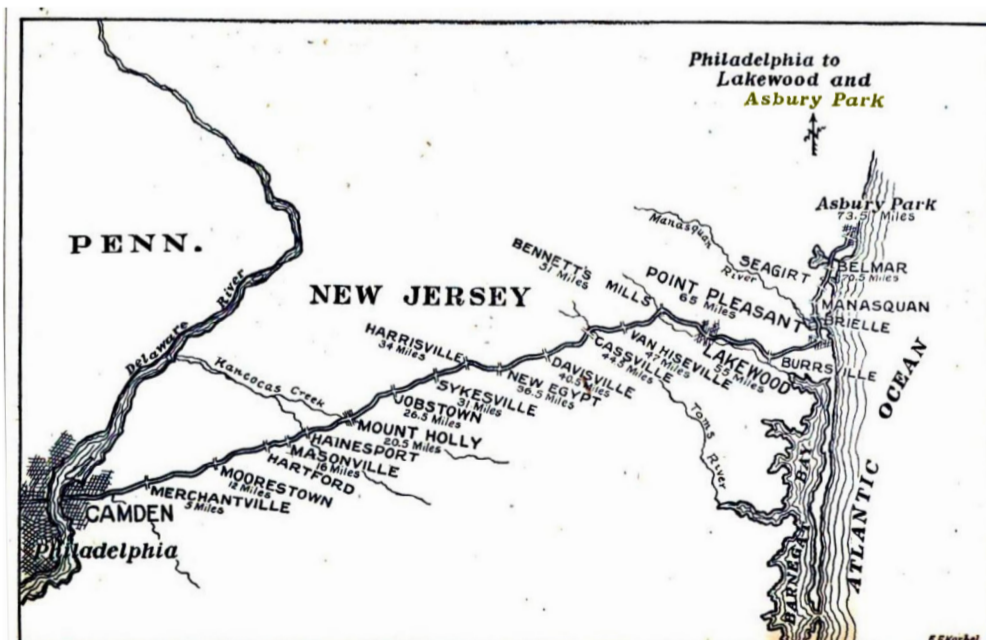
...[directions continue through Jobstown, New Egypt, Davisville, Cassville, Lakewood, Point Pleasant, and Sea Girt]...

**Belmar** (70.4 miles). Continue straight ahead across Shark River Inlet to

**Asbury Park** (73.5 miles).



In 1909, "Automobile Topics" published this map along with directions on how to drive from Philadelphia to Asbury Park, NJ — a journey to the Jersey Shore that goes through Moorestown and from West Jersey to East Jersey and from the Delaware River to the Atlantic Ocean ... all without a GPS system!



Source: Automobile Topics ("The only weekly published for Automobile Owners"), Volume 17, page 980, January 9, 1909; the car is from an ad in the weekly: a TYPE "C" FIFTY touring car sold by the Pennsylvania Auto Motor Co; both via Google Books