ALL ABOARD!

Retracing the Route of the Nellie Bly

by Tony Marino

In January, Historical Society members Skip and Sarah Bellino, Tony and Rosalia Valenti Marino, and Dennis Ricci (pictured above, right) traveled from Atlantic City to New York by rail retracing the route taken by the Nellie Bly train operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad for 70 years between 1891 and 1961.

Nellie Bly was a journalist who circled the world in 72 days in 1889-90, beating the fictional achievement in Jules Verne’s popular novel, *Around the World in 80 Days*. To honor her adventure, as well as take advantage of it for marketing purposes, the railroad named its fastest round trip train from New York to Atlantic City after the world famous journalist. Towards the end of its 70 year run, the Nellie Bly was scheduled as a three hour return trip to New York from Atlantic City through Pennsauken and Trenton, and then up the Northeast Corridor tracks into Penn Station. Today, it takes about four hours and requires three separate rail lines to duplicate the exact route of the Nellie Bly.

The Historical Society members began their journey at the origin station of the Atlantic City Rail Line that operates between the resort and Philadelphia’s 30th Street station. In Pennsauken they transferred to the River Line at the recently opened station that now connects the two rail systems. Arriving at the River Line’ terminal in Trenton, the group then crossed the street to the Northeast Corridor station and boarded a train to New York’s Penn Station.

All three rail lines are operated by NJ Transit. Senior citizens can take advantage of discounts to make the trip for just $10.70 one way, considerably cheaper than the cost of a bus or driving a car from Atlantic City to New York. Moreover, parking is free at all AC Rail Line stations. However, the reduced cost must be weighed against the longer trip time and the need to change trains two times enroute. It would be helpful if NJ Transit implements a unified one-ticket purchase for all three rail lines.

But the train ride is smooth, the seats are quite comfortable, and there are restrooms on board. Also, the River Line affords scenic views of towns and the Delaware River as it approaches Trenton. Overall, it is a rail journey that should be experienced by anyone who wants to retrace the route of the Nellie Bly.
# Events and Happenings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Logistics</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RISLEY HOMESTEAD</td>
<td>The Risley Homestead is one of two 18th century houses in Atlantic County individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was home to many generations of Risley oystermen. The ACHS received the Homestead and its furnishings by bequest from Virginia Risley Stout in 1989. Open weekends from May through October. The Homestead is open for individual and small group guided tours. <strong>Closed on major holidays.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY</td>
<td><strong>FUNDRAISER FLEA MARKET AND BAKE SALE</strong> To benefit the ACHS, this event will be held on the grounds between Somers Mansion and the Atlantic County Historical Society, <em>rain or shine</em> – the same day as Somers Point’s Bayfest. <strong>DONATIONS WELCOME!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>ATLANTIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY</td>
<td><strong>EVENING OF BLUE GRASS</strong> In conjunction with Somers Point's Good Old Days, Saturday, September 13, 2014, for the fifth year, The Clayton/Bennett Blue Grass music players will present <em>Another Evening of Blue Grass</em>. It will take place upstairs at the Atlantic County Historical Society at 6:00 PM as a fitting conclusion to your day of fun at Good Old Days. Be sure to get here early before their regular followers arrive and fill up the seats. Last year the rafters in “this ole house” were shakin’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMITHVILLE INN</td>
<td><strong>2014 ACHS ANNUAL LUNCHEON</strong> The Atlantic County Historical Society’s 2014 will feature the installation of the nominees to the 2014-2015 governing Board and “The “Bringing History to Life Award” recipients will be honored. Members, volunteers and the public are invited to attend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZION UNITED METHODIST CHURCH</td>
<td><strong>7TH ANNUAL MEET ‘N GREET</strong> For Class of 2014 Veterans interviewed for the Library of Congress, Veterans History Project. For more information, Call (609) 927-5218. E-mail <a href="mailto:ACHSinfo@comcast.net">ACHSinfo@comcast.net</a> or <a href="mailto:Vhp907@gmail.com">Vhp907@gmail.com</a>. Get updated info at <a href="http://www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org">www.AtlanticCountyHistoricalSocietynj.org</a>. <strong>Follow us on facebook.</strong></td>
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- **Dec. 15th**
  - **3PM to 7PM**
  - **Annual Holiday Sweets Sale**
  - Location to be announced

Happy Shoppers Frank Ferry & Audrey Foster try samples of our baked goods from Sid Parker at the Holiday Cookie Sale this year.

**ACHS 100th ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK**

Available at the ACHS for $20 per copy.
Our Sincere Thanks!

Our members are kind-hearted and giving. In a word, or a few, they’re really nice, kind folks who come forward when an occasion merits it. In January our Society lost George Lonkart, as noted in this newsletter, and in tribute to George and his wife, Dale, who has served as our Librarian and in other roles for so many years, many of his friends, neighbors and colleagues made memorial donations as shown below:

**FRIEND: $1 - $49**
Barbara Westergaard, Jane & Paul Schopp

**In Memory of George Lonkart**
Grace & Charles Wagner, Vici Butler, Julie Shumate, Monica Corpus, Barbara Woodall & Geraldine Oliver, Jay Hundertmark, Carol Stephens, Judith O’Donnell, Camille Griffin, Ann Cinquina, Betsy & Howard Reed, Thomas Whaley, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Brackin, Ruth Taylor, Mary Lou & Richard Monihan, Joan Frankel, Sheryl Collins, Sally Hastings, Carol & Eward Adams, Ellen Hyatt, Judi & Jeff Siegelman, Doreen & Charles Bieber, Dorothy & Dirk Muits, Elinor & Richard Veit

**PATRON: $50 - $249**
Dr. Donald & Carolyn Perry, Joe Westover, in honor of Bob Barnett, Volunteer
Dee Morgan, in memory of her aunt, Iva L. Ingersoll Callio
Dee Morgan, in memory of Marilyn Fillmore

**In Memory of George Lonkart**
Pat & Sid Parker, Charlene & Ed Canale, Roger Steedle, Judy & Vince LoPresti, Helen & Joe Walsh, Carol Raph, Bryant Nelson, Carol & Fred Dodd, Carol-Anne Heinisch, Beverly & Bob Albertson, Nancy & Norm Thinschmidt, Richard Squires, Patricia & Christopher Malitsky, MaryBeth & Larry Ortzman, Barbara & Edwin Kroger, Carol & Dan Scanny, Diane & Ed Lovett, Diane Miller, Mary & Charles Favazzo, Lee Scanny, Lynn Silton, Mr. & Mrs. Philip Munafo, Michael Abrams, Nancy & Joseph Eachus, Anona & Bernard Day, Carole & Charles Lovett, Jacqueline & Larry Steinberg

**SPONSOR: $250 - $1000**
In Memory of George Lonkart
Michael Natale, President, JVN Communications, Inc., Egg Harbor Twp., NJ

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Welcome

The Atlantic County Historical Society is pleased to welcome and thank our newest members:

**Kelly Lynne Harris, Egg Harbor Twp., NJ**

**LIFE MEMBER**

**Jim Leeds, Cumming, GA**

Note from Sid Parker: Jim has been a member and generous donor for many years. In December, 2012 Jim and two other members of his church traveled to NJ with clothing and food for Superstorm Sandy victims. After Hurricane Katrina, Jim and other church members made six or seven trips to Mississippi to aid in the rebuilding there. He gives new meaning to “a helping hand.”

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YEARBOOKS ARE OUT!

The Yearbook Committee reports that the Society’s 2013-2014 Yearbook is in the mail to members, and copies will be available for purchase at the Society’s headquarters.

Editor Jim Mason encourages all of our members to submit material for publication, whether it be the product of original historical or genealogical research, or transcriptions of interesting primary material from the Society’s or personal collections. Share your knowledge!

Submissions, or questions concerning submissions, should be addressed to the attention of the "Yearbook Committee" at Atlantic County Historical Society, P.O. Box 301, Somers Point, NJ 08244-0301, or to ACHSinfo@comcast.net with "Yearbook Article" in the subject line. Please include your complete contact information in any submissions made by regular mail.

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Atlantic County Historical Society Governing Board

President: Richard Squires
Vice-President: Sid Parker, Jr.
Recording Secy: Barbara Perry-Silva
Treasurer: Charlene Canale
Asst. Treasurer: Pat Parker
Financial Secretary: Kevin Little

Librarian: Carol Raph
Assistant Librarian: Diane Miller
Curator: Joan Frankel
Historian: Diane Bassetti
Chaplain: Rev. Norman Goos

Trustees: Jerry Bell, Skip Bellino, Frank Perry, James Mason, Richlyn Goddard, Ruth Taylor, Ellen Hyatt, Donald Perry, Freda Heintz, Helen Walsh, Sheryl Collins.
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<th>Accession#</th>
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<tr>
<td>2013.113</td>
<td>Gift of Atlantic County Master Gardeners Association - Calendar 2013-2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013.118</td>
<td>Gift of Brendan Nolan - 3 postcards: Electric Fountain at Park Place; Atlantic City Convention Hall and Theater; Largest Convention Hall and Theater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013.149</td>
<td>Gift of Donald O. Caselli - Gaskill genealogy chart and CD with Gaskill files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013.150</td>
<td>Gift of James Leopardi - Photograph, panoramic; Atlantic City Coast Guard, Taken in front of the Jewish Community Center on Virginia Ave. Atlantic City, N.J., circa. 1943.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013.152</td>
<td>Gift of Edith Thiele - Receipt- Received of Mrs. K R Webster, lot 11-12 block 50, Somers Point, 1906, $10.00.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013.158</td>
<td>Gift of Patricia Pierson - Photo - Morris Guards 1897.</td>
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**LOVE TO SHOP ONLINE?**

Well, now you can donate to the Atlantic County Historical Society while you shop. Just sign on to [IGive.com](http://igive.com) and shop online with over 1400 of your favorite stores. Select Atlantic County Historical Society as the organization that you wish your donation to be sent. A percentage of your order through [IGive.com](http://igive.com) is calculated and mailed to the Historical Society monthly. Each store donates a different percentage. What more could you ask for? Shop and donate to our organization at the same time.
The personnel of both armies are in winter quarters and the weather is making for terrible living conditions for the soldiers. Desertion continues to be a problem for the Union as well as the Confederacy, and the rigors of camp life during the winter are exacerbating the problem.

On February 3rd, General William T. Sherman leaves Vicksburg with 25,000 men to begin what would become known as the “Meridian Campaign.” This was a strategy to drive the Confederates out of Louisiana and Arkansas. Opposing Sherman for the Confederacy is General Leonidas Polk, CSA. He will have under his command approximately 21,000 men including a cavalry contingent under the command of General Nathan Bedford Forrest, CSA. Minor skirmishes will take place on the route to Meridian, MS.

On February 14th Sherman marches his army into Meridian, MS with little to no resistance from Polk’s troops. Sherman will spend the next week wreaking havoc on the town, destroying anything and everything that may be used to further the Confederate war effort.

On February 17th the Confederate submarine H L Hunley attacks the USS Housatonic in the Charleston, SC harbor. The Hunley is equipped with a spar torpedo and rams the Housatonic detonating the torpedo. The resulting explosion causes both ships to sink.

On March 2nd the Senate confirms Major General Ulysses S. Grant as Lieutenant General at President Lincoln’s request. No army officer has received this as a permanent rank since George Washington. In addition, Grant will now become the Commanding General of the United States Army. He officially receives his Commission on March 9th.

In early March, a joint Navy and Army effort is begun called the Red River Campaign. Union troops under the command of General A. J. Smith embark from Vicksburg down the Mississippi River in the direction of the Red River. General Smith and his army are being escorted by a large flotilla of Union ships consisting of 13 ironclads and 7 gunboats. A three prong movement is to rendezvous at Alexandria, LA. The armies will link up on March 26th. As the Union forces move toward Shreveport, LA, Confederates will set fire to cotton stores along the river bank to keep it from falling into Union hands.

There are problems afoot for Mr. Lincoln in the cabinet. Most of the controversy centers on Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, who has several times offered to resign. Called the “Pomeroy Circular”, Samuel C. Pomeroy was the chairman of a group proposing to nominate Salmon Chase as the Republican candidate for President in the 1864 election and attacking Lincoln and his administration. While Chase admitted to knowing of the proposal, he denied ever having seen the circular sent to prominent Republicans. Whether he did or not remains questionable.

In the next installment, a major battle to be discussed will be the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864.
Volunteer of the Quarter  
(Posthumously)

This is one way to pay tribute to our many volunteers, for as a volunteer-run organization, we could not exist without their dedication and enthusiasm. If you think that you would like to join our volunteers, you are welcome to contact us.

George A. Lonkart  
January 20, 1940  
January 15, 2014

It is with sadness that we say good-bye to a long-term, dedicated volunteer at the Atlantic County Historical Society, George A. Lonkart. George was a team member of our library staff which unofficially meets every Tuesday when ACHS is not open to the public. It is a day when much of the behind-the-scenes work necessary to keep the library functioning gets done. A lot of this work is not glamorous……..in fact, it can be quite tedious and mundane (try counting all the yearbooks in our collection beginning from 1948)………but George did it all with a willing and humble heart. Being the rare male in this group, his carpentry and mechanical skills were highly valued. The sign holder on our back door, designed to withstand our windy location, bears witness to his skills.

Weather permitting, he would often put the rest of us to shame by walking along the bike path from his home in Northfield, through Linwood to our Somers Point location. After rewarding himself with a donut he had purchased along the way for burning up all those calories, he would begin work with his wife, Dale. Often, they would compile information for an exhibit at the Atlantic County Courthouse, which they changed every four months. Or they might continue with their on-going project of transcribing our Civil War letters for eventual publication.

Born in Camden, George was a graduate of Atlantic City High School (1958) and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY (1962). He worked for many years with his father-in-law, Jack Giberson, at Giberson Fuel in Atlantic City, and later at McAllister’s in Somers Point, until his retirement. He was a long-time director of the Cape Atlantic Bowling Association and a devoted volunteer of the NJ Master Gardeners program.

In addition to his wife of 50 years, George is survived by his two children with whom he was very close: daughter, Karen, and son, David; his daughter-in-law, Valerie; and his two grandchildren, the lights of his life: Andrew and Julia. He is also survived by his brother, Robert (Georgia) of Massachusetts; sister-in-law, Linda Giberson of North Carolina, and two nephews: Scott of Rhode Island and Kevin of Massachusetts. Also, we would be remiss if we forgot to mention his golden retriever and best friend, Bella.

George has been described as a simple man because he was able to appreciate the ordinary things that we often take for granted. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. And to honor his memory as a master gardener, a long-time friend has asked that we all grow tomatoes this summer……..
A Review of

“The Domestic Life of the Jersey Devil: Or, BeBop’s Miscellany”

Late last year, a young man walked into our library and asked if we would like to buy his new book. Not knowing any more about it than what he told us……….it was about the Jersey Devil……….he’d done some of the research in our library………we figured, why not? We are mentioned in it! If he agreed to donate one, we’d buy three. We soon ordered 10 more.

It turns out that author Bill Sprouse, who grew up in Atlantic City and Egg Harbor Twp., has written a witty, tongue-in-cheek type of book filled with keen observations. His first person narrative immediately draws in the reader as he relates how his grandmother (Be-Bop) told him at the tender age of 9 that he was related to the Jersey Devil, aka the Leeds Devil. One senses his closeness to this grandmother from the start.

Sprouse readily admits that he promptly forgot her revelation for the next 10 years, until he moved out of the South Jersey area. Suddenly, the family connection to the Leeds Devil took on a significance which caused him to return to his roots and embark on many adventures, including a trek out into the woods of Leeds Point with the Devil Hunters ……… a visit to Boo Pergament’s former “Booseum” in Margate …….and to question total strangers in Wawas throughout the region about what they knew of the Jersey Devil.

There is much more to this book, however, for interwoven among the author’s personal insights is a deep history of Quakerism in West Jersey, and the story of the controversy which caused Daniel Leeds of Almanac fame to move from Burlington to the wilds of Leeds Point. The author backs up his story with many printed, often obscure sources. Described by Sprouse as a “self-published work of nonfiction”, the 243 page book contains 176 footnotes.

There are a few slight criticisms. An index would have been helpful when trying to find specific details buried in the text. A table of contents was also missed, for many chapter titles convey the tone of the book, such as the opening Disclaimer which is signed, “Sprouse, Mexico City, October 2013.” It is called “On being related (distantly) to the Jersey Devil, and why this whole thing was probably a mistake.”

The author concludes the book with a similar sentiment. The question, “Who was the Jersey Devil?” can’t be answered with certainty and may have been a naïve quest. But it was a fun and educational read just the same.

Reviews by other readers:

“The book was obviously written from the author’s personal family vantage point and did a nice job of debunking the antiquity and the historicity of the Jersey Devil myth. His historical research into the early Leeds family was the best I’ve seen to date, using sources about which most authors do not seem to know exist. I thought, however, that the author’s use of unnecessary, non-contextually required profanity both did nothing for his story line, nor did it add to its depth - the author was simply emoting. To a degree, it spoiled an otherwise charming book from being one that could be universally recommended. Like any book, one must "eat the fish" and "spit out the bones;" but there aren’t many bones in this book to spit out - it was almost all good fish. I recommend it.”

Norman Goos, ACHS trustee/Chaplain

“Not just another Jersey Devil book. I snickered several times by the time I reached page eighteen. The history is fascinating - the wit and humor make it enjoyable reading.”

Freda Heintz, ACHS trustee

The book is currently for sale in our library for $15.
Our Mission:

➢ To collect and preserve historical materials exemplifying the events, places, and lifestyles of the people of Atlantic County and southern New Jersey.

➢ To encourage the study of history and genealogy.

➢ To provide historical and genealogical information to our membership and the general public.