

## Throwback Thursday- New Year's at Shagwong Tavern



*The lobster logo embroidered on their uniforms in this picture (“Nell, Frances, Kitty, Mary”) is a wonderfully evocative reminder of Montauk during the 1940s and 1950s*



*We don't know if the gathering in this photo took place on New Year's Eve, but one thing we're sure of is that Mary Williams Wood, the proprietress of the Shagwong Tavern, knew how to throw a good party. Kathleen Warren donated these two gems. She identified the celebratory group as "Nell (Wilson), Frances, Nicky (Andriani, the bartender), Janet (Bolton), and Mary (Wood)."*

For more than 22 years, Mary Williams Wood and her husband, Walter Wood, ran the Shagwong Tavern as proprietress and owner. (The liquor license was in Mary's name.) A year after Walter made the purchase in 1946, the couple threw their friends a thank-you party for supporting them in this new business venture. "It was a surprise party in the sense that few knew who were invited," reported the *EH Star* on March 27, 1947. "All they knew was that Mary and Walter had asked them to come down to a 'little dinner party' Thursday night." Over 50 attended, and at evening's end, the proprietress was asked to make a speech. Mary said "that she and Walter Wood thought that this would be a fine opportunity to get all their friends in Montauk together, to talk with them, spend a social evening, to have a good time." The *Star* chimed in with, a "better way of saying 'Hello, Neighbor!' just couldn't be."

As the years went by, it was impossible to extricate the staff from the tavern, as the waitresses and bartenders became part of the community. In fact, as reported by the *Star* on January 14, 1960, "Mrs. Mary Wood[s] and the girls of the Shagwong Tavern gave a surprise bridal shower for Miss Joan McLaughlin [Joan Lycke] at the tavern on Saturday evening... Approximately 80 attended. Refreshments and dancing were enjoyed "into the small hours of the morning."

The Woods' tenure of the tavern had been grand. However, everything changed in 1968. Walter became ill. Mary Wood sold her liquor license to Jimmy Hewitt in 1969. A new era for the historic Shagwong Tavern had begun.

As lovers of local history, we cherish "auld lang syne" (days gone by). May these two photographs put a smile on your face and lift your spirits as we move into 2021. Happy New Year from the Montauk Library!

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Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Joan Lycke](#), [Mary Williams Wood](#), [tbt](#), [throw](#), [throwback Thursday](#), [Walter Wood](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Christmas Card



*John Gordon was a “Student Pastor” when he came to Montauk in 1936. He appears to have held that designation for about a year, until sometime in 1937 when his name appeared in the “Churches” column of the East Hampton Star without the designation “Student.” The peaceful scene of cozy domesticity that emanates from this Christmas card belies Reverend Gordon’s call to guide his congregation through two of the most impactful incidents in Montauk history: the 1938 Hurricane and World War II.*

In spite of these calamitous events of the 1930s and 40s, there were also happy, productive ties with the community that affixed Gordon’s name to Montauk’s future. Reported in the *EH Star* on November 3, 1938, was the establishment of the Montauk Boy Scout troop: “The Montauk School Board has agreed to sponsor the troop; a local committee ... has been formed. George Hlvac has accepted the responsibility of being Scout Leader, with Principal Carleton E. Farrell and Rev. John M. Gordon as assistants... Montauk is an ideal locality for scouting and there are definite plans to set up a Sea Scout unit this summer.”

The devastation experienced by Montaukers during the hurricane two months earlier must have contributed to this decision. In fact, “putting the lives of others first” — the principles of the Sea Scouts — were not unlike the principles followed by a reverend.

By 1940, John Gordon had fully stepped into his role as pastor of the Montauk Community Church. On September 10th of that year the Long Island Presbytery met for an annual meeting in Montauk. “Over 80 present, including visiting officials,” represented most the Presbyterian churches of Suffolk County. Both John Gordon and Richard Webb, a formidable individual in the early years of the church’s development, were delegates. From the September 12, 1940 issue of the *Star* we also learn that the “The women of the local community church, headed by Mrs. E.V. Conway, served a delicious turkey luncheon.”

A position with a church in Saxtons River, Vermont, became his next calling. In January 1944 John Gordon delivered his last sermon to the congregation. His standing in the community can perhaps be measured by the fact that for years after he left Montauk, Gordon was mentioned in the *Star*, either visiting friends with his wife or officiating at weddings. The young members of his Montauk congregation who eventually came of marital age wanted Reverend Gordon’s blessing, a balm that for eight years had successfully guided Montaukers through some of its roughest storms.

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Tagged: [1938 hurricane](#), [boy scouts](#), [Christmas](#), [Christmas card](#), [John Gordon](#), [Montauk Community Church](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Viking Fleet







*A recent gift of Viking Fleet material to the archives at the Montauk Library felt like an early Christmas present bestowed by Santa himself. The donation includes important documents relating to the evolution of the fleet, such as a 1978 Certificate from the Department of State (N.Y.), stamped with the Great Seal of New York and declaring corporation status of Viking Starship, Inc. Ephemera is also part of the mix, like the 1950s round pinback proclaiming, "ALL THE FISH YOU CAN CATCH / VIKING STARLITE / MONTAUK, N.Y."*

The Viking fleet originated in Freeport, New York, where Carl Forsberg learned to fish and bought his first boat. In 1951, however, after too much stress and an ulcer operation, he moved the business to Montauk because, as he told his wife, at the Point the fish were a lot “closer.” He wouldn’t be gone so long. “My mother wasn’t exactly convinced that this was such a good idea, though. One thing I remember clearly is that she knew there wasn’t even a traffic light in Montauk.” (This and other entertaining anecdotes can be enjoyed in Captain Paul G. Forsberg’s 2013 book *The Forsberg Empire: 75+ Years and Still Going Strong*.)

Montauk Library’s archives contain terrific photographs of captains, boats, and crews that have loomed large in the history of our area, but up to this point, no business records of a commercial or Sportfishing Company, or of any retail fishing establishment for that matter, has been donated to the library. Business records constitute the nuts and bolts of history, allowing researchers to resurrect the past with more accuracy. We can learn how a company developed, the types of activities it engaged in, and the relationships it fostered with other businesses and individuals.

An unexpected surprise included in this Viking Fleet donation sparked serious delight: a wood and metal fishing pole dating from the 1940s or 1950s. Measuring about 7 feet long, and used by “sporties” who came to Montauk to fish, these poles were secured on the back of the Viking vessels, available as rentals.

In fact, this fishing pole appears in an early photograph of the Viking Fleet in Freeport, shared with the Montauk Library by Captain Steven D., Paul’s son. (We “split” the photograph in two. Carl Forsberg is standing on the right side in image one, and the fishing pole donated to the archives is being held by the standing gentleman on the left in the second image.) Steve pointed to the #5 on the Vintage Penn Company “Senator” fishing reel with red wooden knob, etched into the metal by his grandfather Carl. It’s a wonderfully intimate detail with a great provenance, incised by one workhorse onto another.

More information about the Viking Fleet Collection will be forthcoming.

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Tagged: [Carl Forsberg](#), [Freeport NY](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#), [Viking Fleet](#)

# Throwback Thursday- American Women's Voluntary Service



*Nellie Windsor is the woman standing underneath the pointing arrow, one of the women involved with the American Women's Voluntary Service in Montauk. It was important to AWVS members, like other female volunteers in organizations such as the Red Cross and the Office for Civil Defense, to participate in the war effort.*

Throughout World War II, writes Emily Yellin in her 2004 book *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II*, "more than 325,000 women volunteers were trained by and worked through the AWVS in such jobs as driving ambulances, operating mobile kitchens, selling war bonds, working in canteens," etc. In addition, in coastal communities it was often the women who served as air raid wardens, who scanned the sky and sea for suspicious aircraft and marine vessels.

In this particular photograph donated to the archives by Peg Winski, the Montauk AWVS members are packaging Christmas gifts for soldiers abroad. Identified from left to right are Lottie Pospisil and Mary Smith, both seated; Nydia Bruno and Jane Duryea standing behind Mary Smith; Nellie Windsor looking at the camera, and next to her, Lena Sears, Fran Parsons, and Dorothy Conway. The archives contains other photos of these same Montauk AWVS volunteers running stretchers, driving ambulances, and changing tires.

The AWVS was founded in 1940, inspired by the British organization with the same name whose goal was to prepare cities for attack. Sadly, the American AWVS was often ridiculed in the press for being an “alarmist” group of “frivolous” women, although that perception changed after Pearl Harbor. Ultimately, 350 branches were set up across the nation by women who answered an inner call to do their part for the boys overseas.

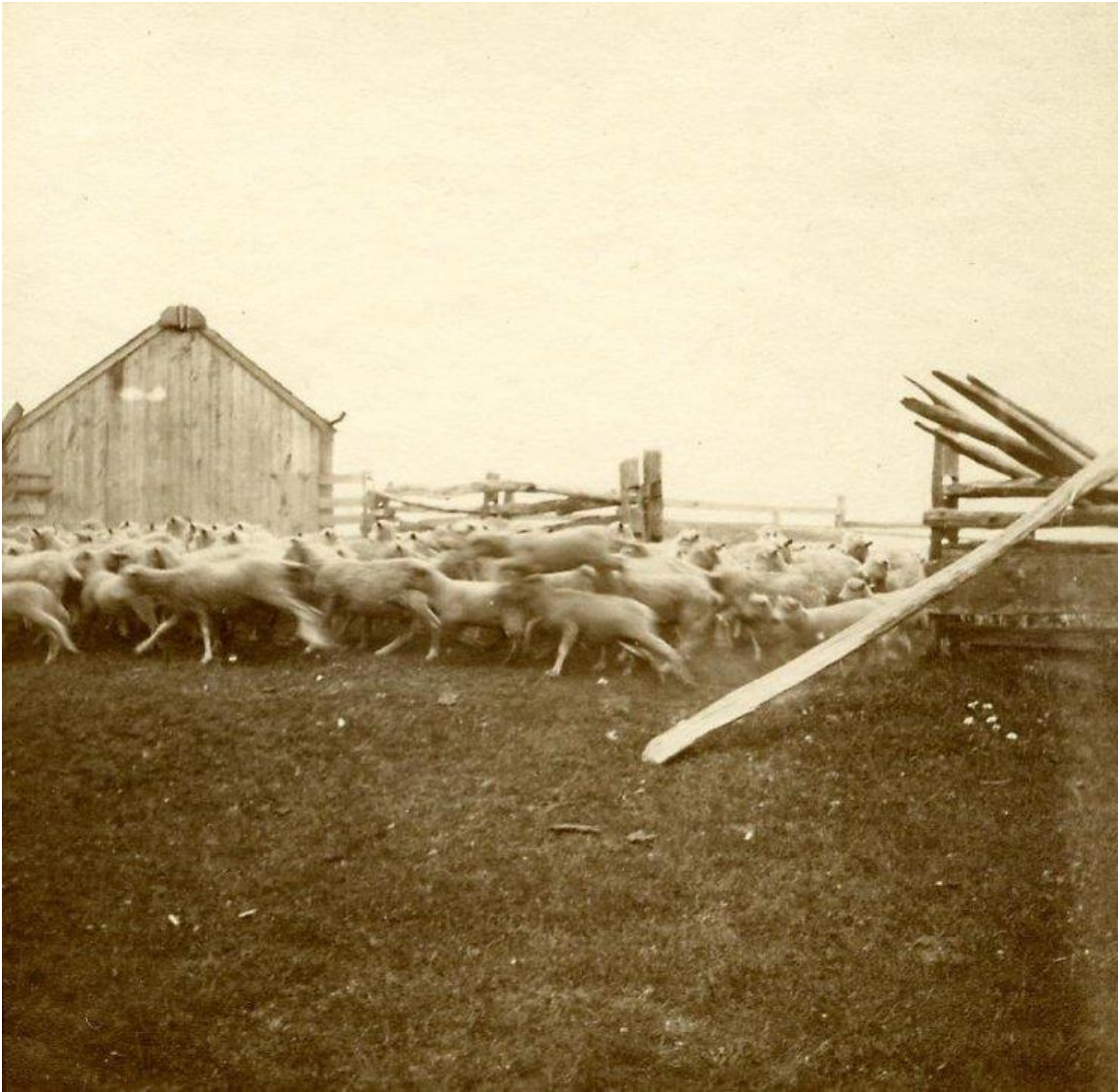
Hardly frivolous, and very serious, the AWVS is a proud part of Montauk’s military heritage.

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## Throwback Thursday- Second House



*Photograph of sheep at Second House, John Van Siclen collection, donated by James Schwartz.*

For more than two centuries, sheep and cattle were driven to and from Montauk during the months of March and December. The keepers who tended the livestock in Montauk lived in three houses, two of which still exist today, Second House and Third House. The sheep and cattle were owned by the proprietors of East Hampton, who had originally bought the land for pasturing from the Montaukett Indians in the mid-1600s. Keepers' responsibilities included recording the livestock entering and exiting the fenced-off grazing areas, fixing those fences, and riding out into the herds 2 1/2 days a week to make sure the animals were safe. Each keeper had his own special duties, which perpetuated the rhythmic flow of daily agrarian life in Montauk.

Second House keepers were in charge of managing the sheep, which were shepherded back to East Hampton in June to be washed and shorn, and then returned again to Montauk to graze. At season's end the sheep were driven back to East Hampton before the first big snow, always in late November or early December. Keepers were encouraged to pasture their own sheep, as well, and to keep poultry and grow crops. This was done not only for their own well-being, but also to feed those workers who came to Montauk to assist with the herding of the livestock, to repair fences, and build the Association Houses.

Second House had a bucolic charm. Known for delicious meals and cozy hospitality, its keepers provided visitors with a warm, homespun lodging experience. Sheep grazing on the hills was part of the pastoral setting. Robert Hefner, in his Second House Historic Structure Report prepared for the Town Board of East Hampton, cites an 1883 (July 21st) article from the *Southside Signal*, a Babylon, N.Y., publication, that includes this description of the sheep around Second House: "This part of the peninsula is devoted to sheep grazing, and twenty-two hundred of the innocents are about you as you walk, disposed in pretty groups on the hillside, standing in bas-relief on their summits, or scampering away in confused masses at your approach. Sheep and nothing else have grazed here for more than two hundred years..."

The sheep are now gone, but it is a credit to the ardent supporters of Montauk history that Second House remains. The structure is currently undergoing an important restoration based on Hefner's report. (This report is directly available from the Montauk Historical Society website: <https://www.montaukhistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/TheSecondHouseReport2016.pdf>.) It's hard to miss the newly spiffed-up exterior of the "little brown farmhouse" on the corner of Second House Road after descending the hill from Montauk State Parkway and continuing east. The current "keeper" of Second House, the Montauk Historical Society, has moved forward with a plan to ensure that even the sheep who used to live at this important location would be happy to call the "new and improved" Second House their home.

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Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Second House](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Montauk Manor Before and After



*A before-and-after duo are the highlight of this week's Throwback Thursday, in which we celebrate the newly restored tower of the Montauk Manor, its coppery roof glinting in the sun.*

Joseph Brensnan, Montauk resident and Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, shot that digital image. The Manor's Tower, he says, is one of its characteristic features. "The walls, windows, cornices and gutters have all been renewed, and the Copper Clad roof completely replaced with new copper, including a protective coating to maintain its handsome appearance and extend its service life."

"Why does the tower never appear green in old postcards, if it was aged copper?" Brensnan answered that in 1927 when Carl Fisher was building the Manor, the old roofing on The Tower was probably natural copper. However, "when it aged and began to leak, [it] may have been patched and painted." That answer makes sense when we look at this postcard from the Richard T. Gilmartin collection, published by the Manor in the 1940s, in which the Tower appears painted in a different color. "Copper does oxidize and "pin-hole" after years of exposure," Brensnan continued. In fact, "we suspect the original main roofing of The Manor was slate, which also can begin to leak after many years, and was replaced or covered by asphaltic shingles, as you see today."

We can thank the residents of the Manor, aka "The Castle on the Hill," for their commitment to this exterior maintenance and preservation program. This Tower, like the other one in the Circle, is part of the skyline of Montauk. The maintenance and preservation committee's "substantial financial investment to preserve the historic Tudor Style exterior of the structure" gives all of us bragging rights on a job well done.

The Manor is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and New York State Register of Historic Properties.

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Tagged: [Montauk Manor](#), [Richard T. Gilmartin](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Thanksgiving with the Girl Scouts



*This shot from Jane Leibell's collection of photographs donated to the Montauk Library in 2005 says everything about seasonal celebrations in November: the Girl Scouts are at the Firehouse, and have just cooked a delicious Thanksgiving turkey! (Although "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," as they say).*

We know that a Boy Scout troop was established in Montauk as early as the 1930s. In fact, the Montauk Library has photographs of the Boy Scouts in its archives dating from this early period. We know less about the presence of the Girl Scouts in Montauk. However this photograph, and a few others given to the Library by Jane Leibell, prove that at least one troop was thriving in Montauk in 1991.

We need help identifying the girls in this picture, and would appreciate, also, hearing from any girl or family member who was actually at the Firehouse on this day in November 29 years ago.

Juliette Low, who founded the Girl Scouts in 1912, was criticized for training girls in activities that were "only suitable for boys." Yes, Girl Scouts learned cooking and the fundamentals of First Aid, but also cared for livestock. Cartography was deemed important for a young girl's mind, as was military preparedness: Low's friends in the army taught the Girl Scouts drilling and signaling.

Juliette Low was an excellent marksman. A crack shot known for her prowess at hunting partridge, she would have landed this turkey and dressed it herself. That's why she'd be proud of the way this troop worked collaboratively to cook such a beautiful specimen. And since Juliette Low also believed that young girls should have fun, she would have loved this photograph of the Montauk Girl Scouts.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

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Tagged: [boy scouts](#), [girl scouts](#), [Jane Leibell](#), [tbt](#), [Thanksgiving](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Pat DeRosa



*By the time you read this, Montauk resident and WW II veteran Pat DeRosa will have been inducted into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame for the year 2021. A saxophonist extraordinaire whose comprehensive talent includes mastery of other musical instruments like the oboe and clarinet, Pat DeRosa embraces music of every style and era.*

In the 1940s he played swing with the Tommy Tucker Orchestra and other Big Bands. Fast-forward 60 years to NYC's Bitter End, where you'll find Pat wailing the blues with Billy Joel's saxophonist Richie Cannata in a duet that ignited intense applause from the audience. Pat was creating great music in Montauk, too, bringing his friends from the world of jazz to play on the East End. When the famous Toots Thielmans performed his legendary harmonica on a stage near Gosman's, he brought the house down.

Pat taught music to high schoolers by day and managed his own group, the Pat DeRosa Orchestra, by night and on weekends. Bringing musical joy to civic organizations, nursing homes, and hotels and restaurants celebrating weddings, etc., Pat also played music in his later years on cruise ships, winning over a brand-new listening audience. It was a wonderful way to travel and see the world with his beloved wife and biggest fan, Constance Dennis.

Several years ago the archives at the Montauk Library scanned photographs from Pat's early years, a few of which appear in frames behind Pat in this week's TBT photograph. Scenes of soldiers in the Army Air Force band hamming it up or jamming together to make music are filled with nostalgia. Other photos capture the inky, noir beauty of New York City nightclubs where Pat played, the grit and glitter of the Copacabana and the Paramount. Digital shots of Pat playing with Richie Cannata, or accompanying Mike DelGiudice and Big Shot on "Just the Way You Are," are equally compelling. In these images Pat DeRosa, already in his 90s, is sitting on stage and swaying with his sax, a singular stream of energy and inspiration. Music continues to be DeRosa's Fountain of Youth.

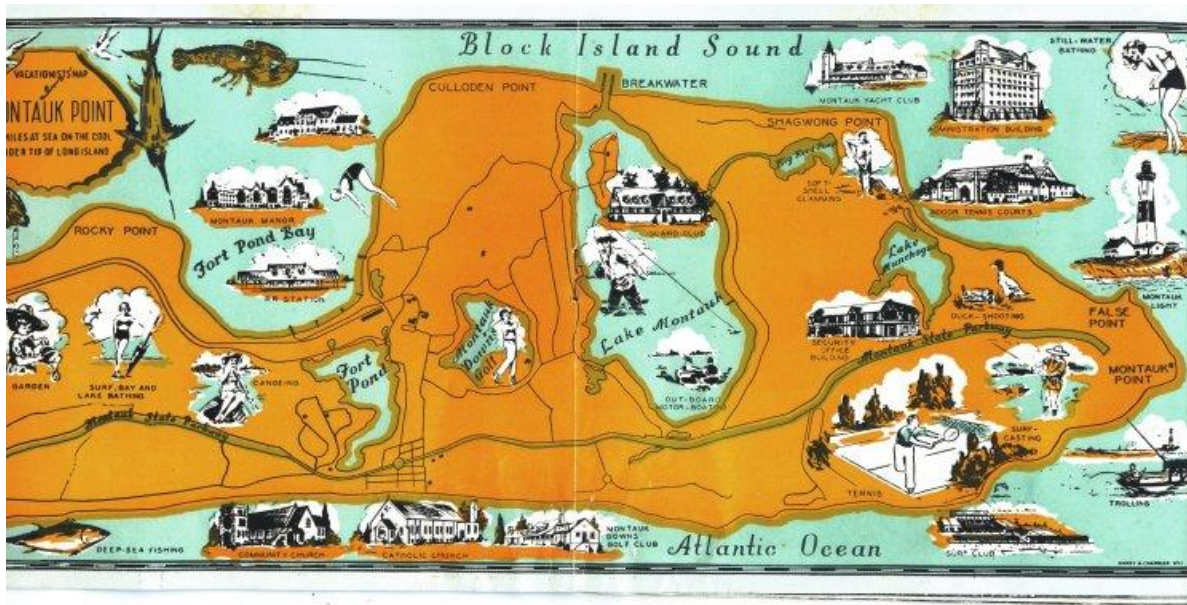
December 6, 2020 will mark Pat DeRosa's 99th birthday. Please join the Montauk Library in congratulating this iconic gentleman on an almost-centenarian life well-lived, and on his induction into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame. The induction, which fittingly took place on Veterans Day, November 11, 2020, is posted below. You can also watch Pat play sax with Big Shot while the crowd goes wild!

ORIGINALLY POSTED NOVEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [music](#), [Pat DeRosa](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Pictorial Maps



*Pictorial maps enjoyed great popularity from the 1930s to the 1950s, and partnered beautifully with tourism and the travel industry. This gem was designed by Harry A. Chandler, a popular creator of bird's eye views and pictorial maps whose ads could be found in NYC papers during the early part of the 20th century. This map appeared in an early brochure published by the Montauk Chamber of Commerce.*

The Montauk Chamber was born in June 1930. From the July 11, 1930 issue of the *East Hampton Star* we know that a large dinner dance with 100 East End attendees celebrated the founding of this organization. The front-page headline proclaimed: “Montauk Chamber of Commerce holds banquet at Montauk Manor. Perry Duryea, Toastmaster, President of Newly Organized Chamber, says Purpose is to “Tell the World about the Charms of Montauk.” “Will Boost and Back Betterment Movements.”

Duryea stated the aims of the Chamber as “working for the civic betterment of Montauk and to call attention to the attractions of Montauk as a summer resort through all mediums of advertising.” In his recently published book on pictorial maps, *Picturing America, The Golden Age of Pictorial Maps*, author Stephen J. Hornsby explains that this particular type of mapmaking owes at least some of its success to the principles of advertising.

“American pictorial maps captured the innermost character of a country by highlighting history, landscape, architecture, and human attributes such as attachment, nostalgia, and memory. Pictorial maps ... enthusiastically sold places, states, regions, industries, transportation, products, and services of all kinds. The finest pictorial maps spun together maps, pictures, and text to create a visual story or representation that instantly summarized a sense of place, delighting the eye and stimulating the viewer’s imagination. Although ignored in most histories of cartography, pictorial maps were arguably the most creative and dynamic part of American cartography in the middle decades of the twentieth century.”

In 2020 we celebrate 90 years of existence for the Montauk Chamber of Commerce, but the official incorporation of the Montauk Chamber took place 67 years ago this week: on November 6, 1953. Happy Birthday, Montauk Chamber of Commerce!

ORIGINALLY POSTED NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Montauk Chamber of Commerce](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Spirit Photography



*And now for little bit of Halloween fun ... with spirit photography!*

This interior shot of the Shagwong Tavern from the Al Holden collection features a very happy threesome, one of whom is identified on the back of the photo as former Shagwong owner, Jimmy Hewitt. However, people who believe in ghost photography would claim that a fourth entity also resides in this picture: the almost 3-dimensional-looking “light tube” that splits the image down to the middle of the table.

Spirit photography has a long history, beginning in the 1860s when professional photographer William H. Mumler discovered that a double exposure could also double as a ghost. He capitalized on this falsehood and the field of spirit photography was born. Grieving victims believed that dearly departed loved ones were staring back at them from Mumler’s photographs. Thanks to Photoshop, it is now easier than ever to “insert” a spirit into a picture.

In Lily Dale Assembly, a Spiritualist community located in upstate New York, the belief in spirits has been going strong since the 19th century. This special site abounds with ghosts and

present-day psychic mediums. Every summer thousands descend upon Lily Dale, hoping to get a psychic reading with a beloved departed. A thick catalogue offered by the Assembly reveals a multitude of classes and experiences: table-tipping, spoon bending, and attendance at a trumpet séance. In spirit photography classes one learns about wisps, light tubes, and orbs. A true orb has a ridge around its exterior, with faces of those who have crossed over sometimes revealing themselves in the orb's circular center. The best time to capture a spirit photograph is during the rain or fog.

In 2005, Gary Schwartz and Katherine Creath debunked orb photography in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* (vol. 19, no. 3; pp. 343-358): “Anomalous Orbic ‘Spirit’ Photographs? A Conventional Optical Explanation,” which certainly took the romance out of spirit photography! No matter. Point your camera phone into the Montauk mist and believe. Believing is seeing, some mystics say. And when a trumpet is free-flying over your head or you just bent three spoons into curlicues after only two seconds, seeing is believing, as well.

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Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [photography](#), [spirit photography](#), [tbt](#), [throw](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Elizabeth Job



*Joan Lycke conducted an oral history in 1995 with Elizabeth Job, a Montauker who, along with her husband, became a caretaker for the Carl Fisher estate after the war.*

Job spoke of Fisher's brilliant mind, overflowing with ideas to bring wealthy vacationers to Montauk. The carriage with white horses that strode down to the Montauk train station to pick up Montauk Manor guests in the 1930s made a big impression on young Elizabeth. She relates how Louis McDonald, the first Custodian of the Montauk Firehouse, would bring visitors' luggage from the railroad to the firehouse to sort and organize, and then deliver to the Manor and respective residences in Montauk where guests were staying. (Elizabeth Job also mentions that Louis's brother, Leonard McDonald, was a fantastic dancer. During wartime village get-togethers, all the girls wanted to dance with Leonard, "even if he was old enough to be your father.")

Elizabeth's Job's memory of Carl Fisher's second wife, Margaret Collier Fisher, was that she was an elegant, considerate employer. Margaret returned to Montauk for rest and relaxation, and to make repairs on the house, which she still owned but would eventually sell. Elizabeth states that Margaret had promised Carl that none of his personal belongings would be sold for profit or gain, or to satisfy a debt. When Margaret Fisher finally sold the house, it was an empty shell. Everything of Carl's left with her.

Carl Fisher's first wife Jane was not a big fan of Montauk – nor was she a fan of Fisher's second wife. In an oral history (now digitized) recorded by the University of Florida in 1967, Jane Fisher revealed a distaste for Montauk. I was “never in sympathy with it,” she says about Carl's decision to develop his “Miami of the North.” In her opinion, Montauk was foggy and cold. “The season was so short there. The wind blew all the time, and I have always hated the wind.”

Jane went on about Montauk: “You see, Montauk Point was the cause of Mr. Fisher's losing his money, his fortune, because in 1926, was the hurricane, *the* [Florida] hurricane. So Carl shut down Montauk Point. Of course, all the people who had invested poured in like flies swarming around a piece of cake. He lost the golf course, he lost the polo fields...” Jane said that if she hadn't divorced him, Carl's story may have had a happier ending. Margaret Collier Fisher would probably disagree. In the meantime, however, here is a wonderful time capsule from 1929 – happy days at the Montauk Manor – photographed right before Black Friday, the Stock Market Crash of October 29, 1929.

<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00025926/00001/1j>

ORIGINALLY POSTED OCTOBER 22<sup>ND</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Carl Fisher](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Ira M. Lewis



Margaret Ann Lewis - daughter of Ira Lewis



Social Life at the lighthouse. The Lewises with friends ( some of the local folks).  
Left to right: Libby Lane, Margaret Ann Lewis, BMC Ira Lewis, Maggie Lewis, Philip Lewis, Beverly Paon, Doris Paon, (Friend of Doris Paon - name unknown)

Ira M. Lewis was a Coast Guard chief who was in charge of the Montauk Lighthouse from February 1957 to August 1959. Chief Boatswain's Mate (BMC) Lewis, who grew up in a "waterman" family on the east coast of North Carolina, was an accomplished swimmer and boatman, who became a Surfman at the age of 18.

A Coast Guard term deriving originally from the American Life-Saving Service, "Surfmen ... [are] qualified to operate rescue boats in the unforgivably treacherous, almost unnavigable areas where ocean surf is starting to break on shore" ([www.uniforms-4u.com](http://www.uniforms-4u.com)). During the 1938 Hurricane, Lewis braved his boat into the wild surf to save a struggling pair of mariners off the Bellport coastline where he was stationed. In fact, Ira Lewis's oral history for the "Saltwater South: Harkers Island [NC]" project revealed that in his opinion, life's greatest satisfaction was "saving somebody's life." ([CarolineCoastOnline.com](http://CarolineCoastOnline.com), January 31, 2020).

Another Coast Guardsman who happened to hail from North Carolina was Winfred Lane. Married to Libby Lane, he and Libby and their circle made fast friends with Lewis and his family. This group shot was donated to the Montauk Library Archives by Margaret Ann Lewis, Ira's daughter, who is pictured in the image above.

Ira Lewis loved his job, says Margaret Ann. He and his crew built the scaffolding used to raise and lower workers as they scraped and repainted the Lighthouse. That homemade engineering appears elsewhere in this photo collection, as do depictions of off-duty Coast Guardsmen going boating, fishing, and preparing to scuba dive. It is these intimate observations of family life taking place inside the living quarters, however, that may be the rarest. For all the images the public shares of the Lighthouse's exterior, casual photos of everyday life captured within its walls are hard to come by. We are grateful to be able to share this "insider's view." Ira M. Lewis died in January 2020 at the age of 101.

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Tagged: [1938 hurricane](#), [Coast Guard](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Kevin McCann



This week's Throwback Thursday gets much explanation from the description that also appears in the image, information that was supplied by Gert Murphy, who donated the photograph and who also, unknowingly, donated the clothes to her sister, Peggy Murphy Connery.

Kevin McCann, a photographer who grew up in Montauk, is currently doing research on the windmill houses of Montauk. He remembers passing this statue as a youngster, bicycling along the cliff paths. One of those paths is visible in the inset photograph. A second Native American statue appeared on the other side of this estate.

Kevin lost a large body of his photographic work, as other artists did, to the fire that tragically took down Peter Beard's house and barn (the barn was used to store photographic negatives, etc.). This fire is explained in the handwritten caption that appears in the framed photograph.

Reconstructing the history of the Sandpiper Hill (Rheinstein/Beard) residence is allowing McCann to resurrect a missing portion of his past. And although Peggy Murphy Connery is no longer with us, her sister Gert is very much alive. She recently donated a great piece of ephemera to the archives: her work contract with White's Drugstore from the 1950s.

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Tagged: [Kevin McCann](#), [photography](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Fred Trump



*Some of his happiest days were spent in Montauk, Mary L. Trump relates in her recent book, Too Much is Never Enough, about her father, Fred Trump, and his family.*

Fred C. Trump, the first-born son of Fred Trump, Sr., was expected to take over the family business, but flying was his passion. After guiding his plane into the Montauk Airport and boarding a sport-fishing vessel captained by Harry Clemenz, Fred Trump, Jr., was in his element, as this 417-pound broadbill swordfish photograph attests.

Fred Trump, Jr., had graduated from Lehigh University with a degree in business, but it was flying, not banking, that compelled his heart. He was hired by TWA as a pilot, but felt guilty about not participating in the family business. He was forced to sell his plane; his weekly flights to Montauk stopped. An early death in 1981 at age 42 was attributed to alcoholism. Brother Donald has since expressed regret that his older brother was not allowed to live an authentic life.

Fred Trump Jr. was not cut out for a career in property management. His real estate was the sky, his boardroom the open water. In this photograph that comes from the Harry Clemenz collection, Fred radiates happiness. We sense his feeling of accomplishment. He was 29 years old.

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Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Fred Trump Jr.](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Montauk School Hats



*This photograph, which probably dates from the early 1960s, was taken by Margaret (Peg) Joyce, a teacher at the Montauk School. The fabulous headgear designed by her students utilized paper cups, cardboard, and other paper throwaways. The extremes of these innovative headpieces distantly recall traditional or “folk” headwear, discoverable on historic-costume sites that make us open our eyes in amazement. For example, Conehead-style lace caps balanced on the crowns of women in Brittany are distant cousins of these Montauk creations. So, too, is the horizontal headgear with sides that fold out, known as “cornettes,” popular with Parisian women in the year 1800.*

Ann Joyce donated a large collection of material related to her mother’s career to the archives at the Montauk Library. Ann says, “A version of the picture you have was taken by my mom and was actually published in a kid’s newspaper that many classrooms used (like *Weekly Reader*). I think I have a few copies of the newspaper. My mom continually had kids making things from what others might regard as junk, before recycling was fashionable. I believe the headgear was meant to be [used by] space travel-astronauts.”

Space flight was still in its infancy in 1960, but it was an exciting time, filled with possibility. In 1961, as NASA’s website relates, “Alan Shepard became the first American to fly into space. On Feb. 20, 1962, John Glenn’s historic flight made him the first American to orbit Earth.” Glenn instantly became an American hero and household name after circling the earth three times. His success instilled a fascination with outer space that continues to spark our collective imagination today.

Peg Joyce's students designed ingenious space-travel hats, but could they really help an astronaut fly? It is well-known that the Flying Nun (Actor Sally Field, starring in the 1960s series of the same name) achieved airborne status thanks to her creative headgear (a starched cornette). So, do we have liftoff?

ORIGINALLY POSTED SEPTEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [headwear](#), [montauk public school](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Rough Riders at Camp Wikoff



On September 15, 1898, Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders were officially disbanded, or "mustered out." Many had recuperated from the ills of the Spanish-American war at Camp Wikoff in Montauk, or were still recovering there when the news came through. No doubt this unit's trek away from Camp Wikoff was filled with emotion.

The Rough Riders are compelling because they represented such an interesting mix of character and background. Expert marksmen from the American West had bull's-eye aim from a galloping horse. They fought alongside prep school Easterners with moneyed backgrounds, men who possessed superb horsemanship and rifle skills. As Patrick McSherry writes on his excellent website [spanamwar.com](http://spanamwar.com), "The unit included miners, cowboys, preachers, tradesmen, writers, professors, athletes, and clergymen. Remarkably, there were men from each of the forty-five states then in existence, the four territories and from fourteen countries! There were even sixty Native Americans on the roster. The unique combination reflected the interesting contrasts ...of one of the driving forces behind the unit -Theodore Roosevelt."

This stereograph titled *Inspection - "Rough Riders" - Camp Wikoff, Montauk Point, N.Y.* is a gem in the Montauk Library's archival collection. Looking at stereo cards through a stereoscope, or handheld viewer, was a popular pastime during the second half of the 19th century. The craze took off in 1851 when Queen Victoria and her husband Albert, huge fans of photography, discovered stereoscopic equipment at the Crystal Palace exhibit in London. The stereo card - two duplicate photographic images affixed side-by-side on a rectangular surface - would be placed into the stereoscope. The apparatus was brought close to the eyes, and the two images on the stereo card would magically transform into a single 3-D photo. (The ViewMaster

slides much beloved by children transform in the same way, using depth-of-field manipulation. In fact, the New York Public Library's online "Stereogramimator" is a fun tool that allows anyone to create a stereo card. Check out [stereo.nypl.org/stereogramimator](http://stereo.nypl.org/stereogramimator).)

The popularity of stereo cards would wane after 1898 but then peak with one last gasp during World War I. Alas, their entertainment value dissolved quickly as silent films became the rage. Unlike stereo photography, however, the Rough Riders have steadily gained in popularity. As Patrick McSherry maintains, they were only in existence for 133 days, but "the unit won its place in history, and has since passed into legend."

ORIGINALLY POSTED SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Camp Wikoff](#), [Rough Riders](#), [stereo card](#), [stereograph](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- The Manor in Autumn



*The Ford Times was a publication produced between 1943 and 1993 by the Ford Motor Company of Dearborn, Michigan. An entertaining potpourri of travel articles, automotive tips, and gadget news (plus recipes from America's great inns on the road), the Ford Times was also noteworthy for its illustrations. Artwork commissioned by art director Arthur Lougee appeared alongside the 5 or 6 feature articles contained in every issue.*

A lead story about Montauk, N.Y., in the July issue of 1958, was enhanced by illustrations painted by Frank Zimmer, who also wrote the copy. Zimmer's watercolors are sassy and dynamic, capturing with great verve the very essence of wind and water that are synonymous with The End. The familiar Montauk hotspots are depicted by Zimmer's brush: the Lighthouse, the Tower building perched against hills with Second House Road in the distance. The artist's use of color is inspired; the Montauk Manor in autumn is particularly beautiful with its hues of tan, pink, and gold.

Zimmer was in town during 1958, when the Tower, "a lonely skyscraper," was vacant. He considered the Manor and other Carl Fisher buildings "relics from the past." However, he could see that Montauk was experiencing a renaissance. Even though Montauk didn't develop into Carl Fisher's vision as a resort for the well-heeled traveler, the place was developing on a scale that would make it accessible to "a lot of average people" he wrote on page 25.

Zimmer recognized “a new spirit in Montauk. There are modest houses going up on hills near the fishing and the breeze. Surf clubs, motels, restaurants, and shops have sprung up to take care of the summer crowds, especially the weekend tide of fishermen. The new Montauk is a long way from the fancy Fisher plan but it has become a fishing capital just as Fisher hoped it would.”

ORIGINALLY POSTED SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [artist](#), [Frank Zimmer](#), [Montauk Manor](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- 1947 Sportsman's Show



Sportsman's Shows were attended by Montauk fishermen on a regular basis throughout the heyday period of trophy fishing, from the 1930s to the 1960s. These trade shows took place in New York City, often in the armory in the Bronx. In this image from 1947 we see Frank Tuma (1899-1961) in the Montauk booth, and to his left, another fisherman, unidentified. Swelling with huge crowds, these shows were an opportunity to promote Montauk as a fishing capital of the world, thus boosting the economy of the tiny village on the East End.

We don't know who painted these murals (possibly Frank Borth?), but it's clear that a concerted effort was put into decorating the booth in a way that would draw fishermen and wannabes to Montauk. We do know that groups of Montauk boat captains dedicated themselves to these shows because their business was directly impacted by the arrival of fishing "sporties" from New York. In fact, from the East Hampton Star dated February 23, 1956, we learn that "Capt. Fred [Gus] Pitts who is in New York City attending the Sportsman's Show at the Bronx armory, left

on last Thursday to set up the Montauk Booth and was assisted by Capt. Walter Drobecker, Capt. Frank Mundus and also Jerry Ruschmeyer of the Lake View Hotel, all of whom are staying for the entire week of the show.” In 1956 one of the displays was a prize-winning striped bass caught from the Marie II, Gus Pitt’s boat.

The burgeoning Montauk resort industry that would explode in the 1950s and 60s was a big beneficiary of these Sportsman’s shows. Montaukers manning the booth distributed brochures and other material promoting Montauk as a resort paradise. Jerry Ruschmeyer, who took over the Lake View Inn during the mid-1950s, expanded the property into a hotel /motel, adding a restaurant that won a coveted Duncan Hines award in 1961.

Long before he became synonymous with cake mixes, Duncan Hines published an annual restaurant guide, Adventures in Good Eating (1935), to the best eateries in America. A traveling salesman who kept meticulous notes, Hines was hounded by friends and fellow businessmen to share his research, eventually succumbing to requests to publish. A mention in Adventures ... represented a huge thumbs-up from Hines, America’s “pioneer food critic.” No doubt, the fresh fish caught off the Montauk shoreline had something to do with Ruschmeyer’s recognition.

ORIGINALLY POSTED SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [fishing](#), [local history](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

## Throwback Thursday- Perry B.



Chip Duryea's compiled writings have recently been published in a book entitled Full Circle. Perry III is the official name, but Chip, as he is called, was instrumental in bringing the Lobster Deck restaurant into successful fruition alongside his father, Perry II. "He was the visionary and I was the implementer," Chip explains. It was Perry II who in 1990 was inspired to build a deck on the outside of the lobster house where people could enjoy delicious food and sunsets; Chip is the one whose inspired words describe the challenges and rewards of running a restaurant where lobster was the main fare.

Restaurants are notoriously difficult to keep in operation; in one chapter called "Ten Days in the Desert," Chip relates a harrowing week-and-a-half dedicated to restoring power to the Duryea buildings. Coolers and freezer doors were kept closed to prevent ice from melting. Silence replaced the "hum of the lobster tanks"; only the click-clicking sound lobsters make when they are out of water could be detected. One generator after another went bust, even as the Deck managed to serve record crowds during a very hot July. When the power was finally restored with a brand-new service, the lobsters – and the Lobster Deck – were still alive.

Red tail disease and too-cold water can wipe out these beautiful crustaceans. Therefore, a must-have passion for the lobster business and the right boat and equipment underscore its success. “I have vivid memories of waiting in my grandparents’ house on Fort Pond Bay for the Perry B. to come in with a load of lobsters...The Perry B. could hold 13 to 20,000 pounds per trip, some in lobster crates, and more in huge portable water tanks with seawater circulating throughout. You could see the boat round Culloden Point and head for the dock, with the lights of Connecticut twinkling in the distance... I would run down the hill, filled with excitement, and even a little afraid as the Perry B., all 120 feet of her, loomed up out of the darkness, running lights blazing and diesel engines thundering. My father would appear to confer with the captain as to the nature of the trip, and then he would take the winch as the first of the lobsters came out of the hold...”

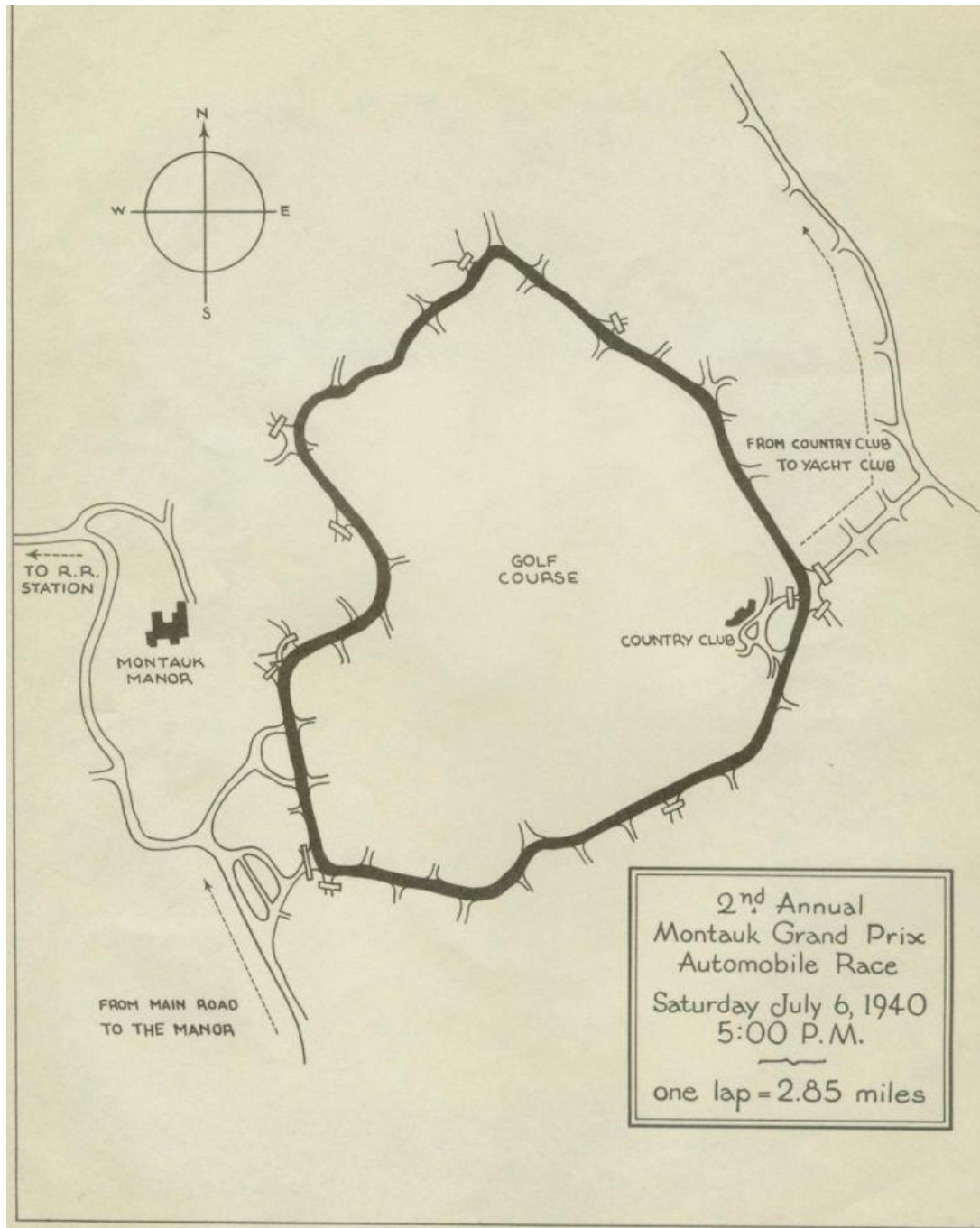
In 2015 Chip Duryea put the lobster business and the Lobster Deck behind him. The decision to sell made sense for him and his family, but the salt air and woody smell of wet lobster crates will forever be sweet nostalgia for him. “As long as lobsters are bought and sold, there will always be a summer tourist demanding, in a hoarse voice, ‘You got any lobsters?’ The response, invariably, is ‘we might have a few.’”

ORIGINALLY POSTED AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [local history](#), [Montauk](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Montauk Grand Prix



*There has been a resurgence of interest in the two auto races that took place in Montauk during the summers of 1939 and 1940. Sponsored by the American Road Racing Club, this event filled Montauk with excited spectators who set up chairs at strategic positions to experience the action firsthand.*

This week's Throwback Thursday reveals a map showing the route that would be taken by the drivers. A description of this race comes from the Hampton Chronicle, dated July 5, 1940. (Thanks go to Henry Osmer, Montauk Lighthouse Curator, for sharing this research): "The second annual Montauk Grand Prix automobile road race will take place Saturday with a field of 18 amateur drivers facing the starter for the 63-mile race over a winding course set amid the dunes ... [They will complete] 22 circuits of the 2 3/4 mile course lying between Lake Montauk and the Montauk Downs golf course." The defending champion Lemuel Ladd, a Boston mechanic, won the race in 1939 at an average speed of 56 mph.

Last year Tim Gilmartin donated American Road Racing: the Automobile Racing Club of America in the 1930's to the archives at the Montauk library. Written in 1963 by John C. Rueter, the author gave a good historical account of the Montauk races and published photos that represent the goldmine content of this book. However, if you'd like to see the armchair racecar drivers who participated at Montauk Downs in 1940, click on this link in Montauk Library's page in New York Heritage:

<https://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15281coll78/id/816/rec/110>

Harry Bruno, maverick of aviation advertising and an aerial daredevil himself, was an early supporter of Kodachrome and no doubt, a huge fan of the Montauk Grand Prix automobile road race.

Finally, watch this early film footage of a Montauk road race, shared as a youtube link with the Montauk Library by Dan Rattiner. It's fun!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyUYgRqK6F8>

ORIGINALLY POSTED AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [local history](#), [maps](#), [Montauk Grand Prix](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- 8th Grade Graduation



From the collection of Celina McDonald Seitz we get this picture taken right after her 8th-grade graduation from the Montauk School, standing alongside her schoolmates Maria Grimes Short and Joyce Miller Talley. It's an important day. The girls are dressed up, holding their diplomas tied with ribbons.

When an archives receives a photograph with the identities of its “sitters” revealed, it’s a bonus day for record-keeping. Celina identified the people in every image she donated to the Montauk Library. Additionally, by writing out the year and event, Celina gave us the “who, what, where, when, and why” of this moment stopped in time.

There are clues used by archivists and curators to place an image in its appropriate time period if nothing is known about it. Background scenery (is that building still standing? Was it there in 1945?), cars (which make and year?), and of course, clothing, are a huge help in dating photographs. The “ruffles” on Celina’s dress were a fashion trend in 1945, borrowed by clothing designers from aprons that were also popular at the time.

Celina McDonald Seitz died in 2017. At her funeral, her granddaughter reminisced about Celina giving her a ride home from school every day in a car sporting an enormous, outrageously ridiculous flower attached to the antenna. Celina put it there “so that you can always find me,” she told her granddaughter. Her friends made fun, but as she exited the school building each afternoon, that flower was the first thing she’d see. Her grandmother always showed up. Every day. And that is worth a second diploma, indeed.

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Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Celina McDonald Seitz collection](#), [local history](#), [montauk public school](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Greenery Scenery Benefit Card



*A thank-you card sent to volunteers in 1972 who had made the Montauk Village Association's Greenery Scenery event so memorable was designed by local artist Frank Borth. It was donated to the Montauk Library by Phyllis Clemenz, onetime MVA President, whose daughter Annie, shaking her head and smiling, said, "Oh, the stories my mother used to tell about those Greenery Scenery parties!" Celebrity bartenders Lauren Bacall, Al Pacino, Eli Wallach, and Cheryl Tiegs were among those who pitched in for a good cause. As many as 1,000 tickets were sold, also to celebrities: musician Billy Squier and Queen Drummer Roger Taylor showed up in 1988.*

This year, however, the August 7, 2020 Greenery Scenery Benefit for the MVA was cancelled due to COVID. (Social non-distancing is at the heart of Greenery Scenery success!) A major fundraiser that has gone off without a hitch for 55 consecutive years, the event has consistently fueled the beautifying and "betterment efforts" of Montauk's oldest nonprofit organization. Infrastructure was improved in the 1960s through sidewalk curbs and underground telephone and electric wires; dispensing scholarships to East Hampton High School graduates who are Montauk residents has become a priority. In fact, says MVA Treasurer Marge Harvey, the Board was determined this year to allocate scholarship money in

spite of COVID-related budgetary restraints. Members did the planting work around the Village themselves so that \$4,700 could go to deserving high school graduates showing leadership qualities in community service.

MVA President Theresa Eurell emphasizes that volunteer members work tirelessly. "It's not just the planting of the flowers. It's studying the surrounding tress and looking at catalogues ahead of time, examining what will work best for Montauk's soil and climate during that particular year." (A guide published by the MVA in 1967, *The Salty Thumb*, is still a go-to for serious Montauk gardeners.) This season the organization chose hardy, sun-loving tropical plants for hangers and boxes. Teak benches, compliments of the MVA, were placed around Montauk, and memorial trees were planted for donors wishing to commemorate loved ones who have passed. So ... thank you for keeping Montauk beautiful, MVA. Here's a hopeful toast to being able to express our gratitude in person at the 2021 Greenery Scenery Benefit.

ORIGINALLY POSTED AUGUST 06<sup>TH</sup>2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Greenery Scenery Benefit](#), [local history](#), [Montauk Village Association](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Nor'easter Aftermath



It has always been assumed that the motel structure in this photograph taken by Dave Edwardes was the victim of a hurricane. However, we learned recently that the damage was actually wrought by a Nor'easter on November 6, 1953. Although we aren't sure of this motel's identity, we can take a guess, thanks to an East Hampton Star article that appeared on November 11, 1953.

Mrs. Elsa M. George, who was writing the "Montauk" column for the Star at the time, spoke with authority about the "surprise Nor'East storm." Ship captains slept in their craft overnight to "tighten, loosen, or replace ropes as the moment demanded, thereby saving serious damage." As Mrs. George also reported, "many buildings lost roofs part or whole, with shingles scattered far and wide across this end of Long Island." For example, the Sandy Acres Motel, located on West Lake Drive and Soundview, "lost its entire roof. Seems to have been lifted right off. And ... Montauk Lake Motel suffered roof damage and water damage to furnishings from the torrential rains that came pouring in."

In a full-page ad taken out by the Montauk Motel-Hotel Association seven years later, on May 26, 1960, the name of the Sandy Acres Motel was published along with many others. But the Montauk Lake Motel

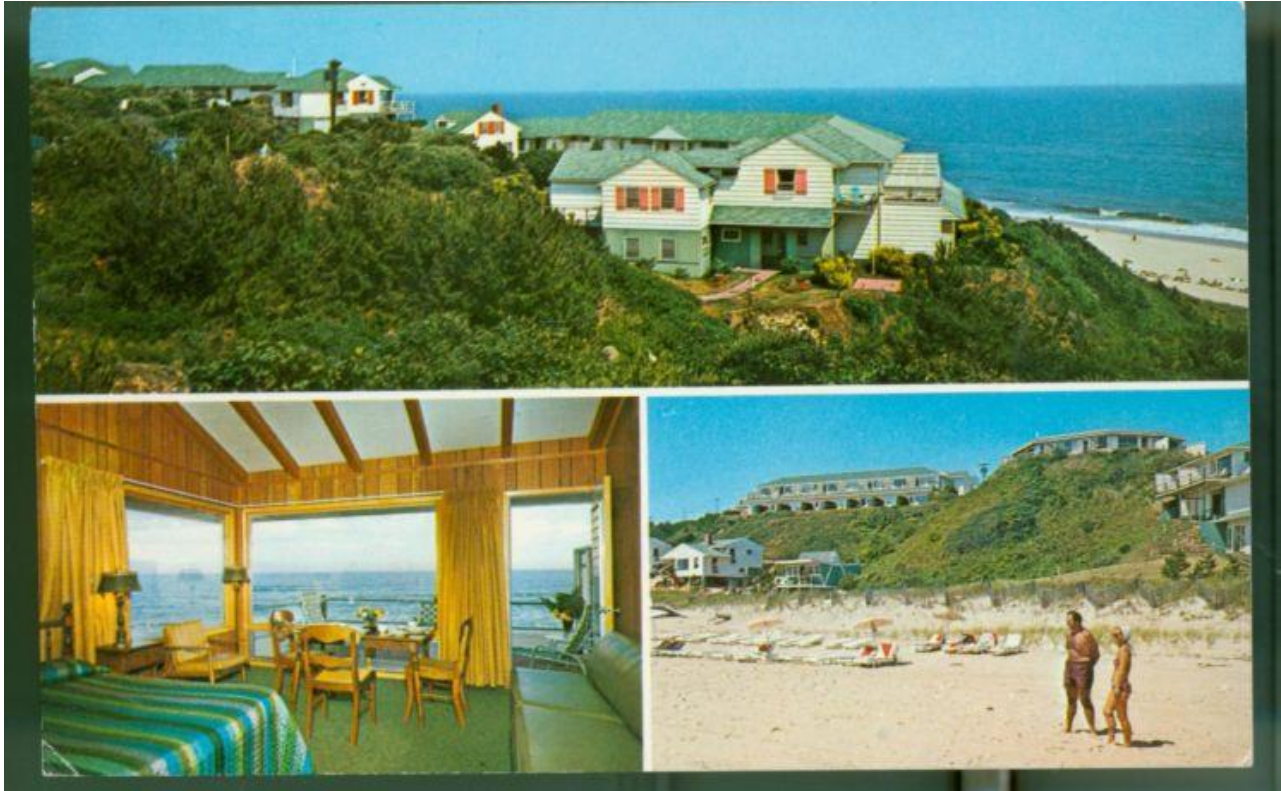
did not appear on that list. Is the architectural skeleton depicted in this photo all that remained of the Montauk Lake Motel? Perhaps it was renovated, only to succumb a year later to Hurricane Carol.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JULY 30<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [local history](#), [storms](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Panoramic View Postcard



*Postcard of The Panoramic View, Inc., Old Montauk Highway*

The archives at the Montauk Library holds a rich collection of postcards, many of which represent now-defunct Montauk motels from days gone by. It makes sense that motel owners would have created their own postcards; it was a cheap but ingenious form of advertising. Placed on racks near check-in / check-out desks, postcards were free for the taking. Subsequently mailed to friends and family members, often with a description of the glorious vacation being enjoyed by motel lodgers, postcards had a way of bringing in future guests.

The Montauk Library owns two examples of this Panoramic View postcard. One contains a 1987 handwritten message to friends in New Jersey. A couple named Alice and Bob had just said good-bye to company and driven 3 1/4 hours to Montauk to get a well-deserved break. "Hi, Dot. We have a beautiful view of beach and ocean. I expect to soak up 'rest & relaxation' to make up for my busy last month." Alice indicated on the front of the postcard where they were staying: "I put an X where we are!" "Where they are" was a room with a spectacular view at the highest point on the bluff, looking directly down on the ocean.

The Panoramic View in Montauk had 1,000 feet of private oceanfront beach and was notable for providing an ocean view from private terraces belonging to every room or unit. It had been the brainchild of actress Kate Roemer French and her husband, Earl Raymond French, according to Kate's

East Hampton Star obituary (5/24/84). The Frenches had bought a house on Old Montauk Highway in 1947 and fallen so in love with the area that they built the Panoramic View 10 years later. Earl died in 1967, but Kate ran the resort right up to the end of her life. She passed away in May 1984 at the age of 85, hopefully getting a last-breath panoramic view from the same perch described so enthusiastically by Alice a few years later.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JULY 23<sup>RD</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [local history](#), [Panoramic View](#), [postcards](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- The Dock



*This great shot from the Montauk Library's Al Holden Collection was taken in 1988. The fish tank over the bar has been replaced by a boxing print, and the name has changed to The Dock Bar and Grill, but other than that the Dock Rest doesn't look that different from the way it appeared 32 years ago. George Watson, who has helmed the iconic watering hole and restaurant since 1973, agrees.*

George and his son Chris Watson, who works alongside his father at The Dock, tentatively identified the gentleman with the beard in the center of this photograph as Jack O'Day, a fisherman who could also be found at Gosman's Fish Market. Still unsure of his identity, George and Chris mentioned the Fagans, as well, believing the unidentified man might be a member of that family.

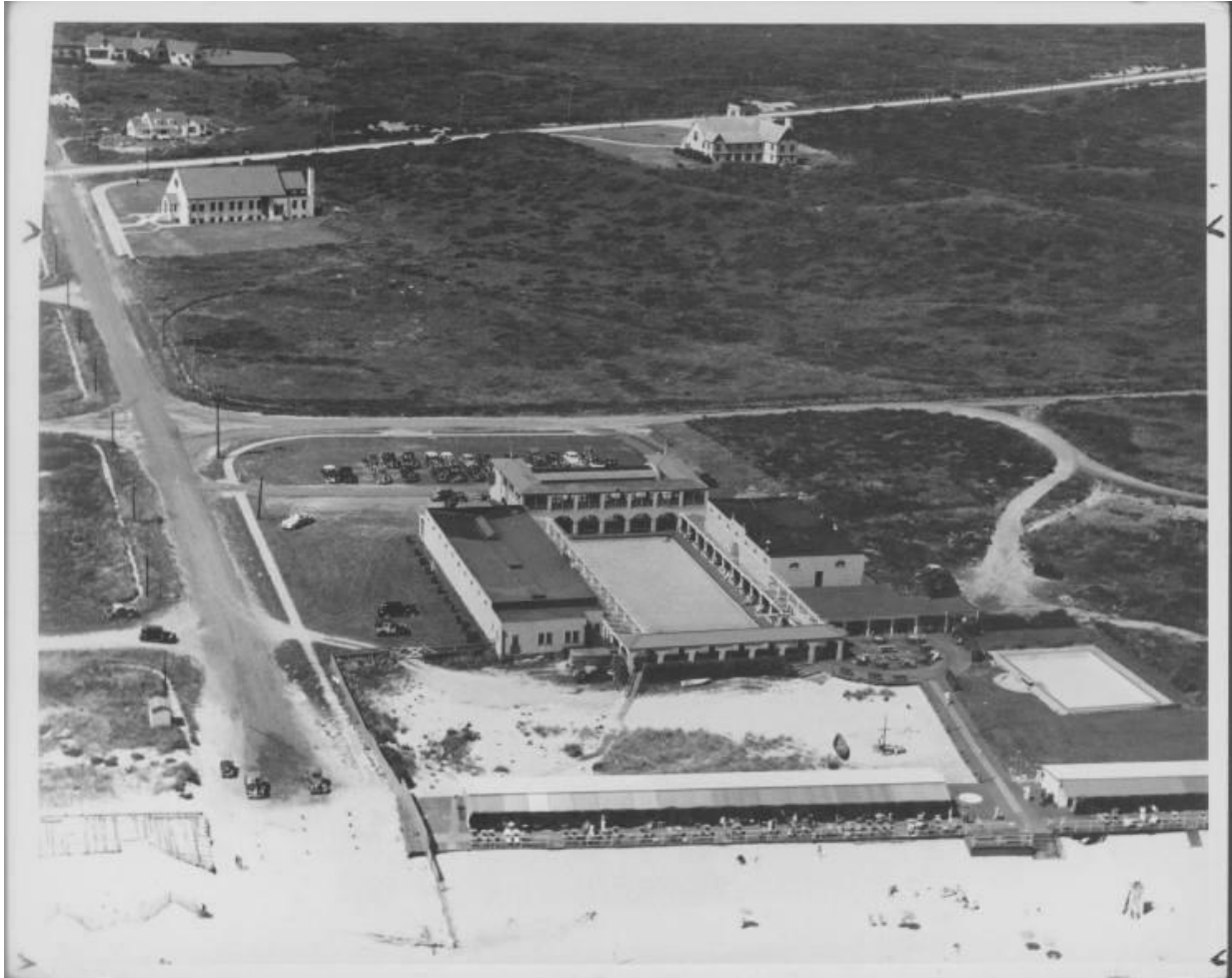
Although it has the immediacy of a snapshot, this photograph's composition points to a trained, professional eye. A beautiful balance exists between light and dark, movement and stasis. Chris mentioned that his father has two brothers, Tom and Paul, who are passionate about photography. One, Tom Watson, is a professional fashion photographer. Unfortunately, we don't know the creator of this image. But it has a heartbeat, a rhythm of life that hasn't stopped in 32 years. We are waiting to be seated, and in a few minutes, we can sit at a table. When the corona virus has totally dissipated, we will.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JULY 16<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Al Holdren collection](#), [local history](#), [tbt](#), [The Dock Bar and Grill](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Carl Fisher's Surf Club Aerial View



Ken Weldon worked from 1963 through the 1980s at the Montauk Beach Company selling real estate. The 1960s were high times for sales in Montauk housing developments like Culloden Shores.

Some of the maps and paper records used by Ken were donated to the Montauk Library by Ken and Loretta Weldon, as was a group of older photographs of Montauk dating to the 1930s, such as this aerial image focusing on Carl Fisher's Surf Club. Further back in the picture plane sit the St. Therese of Lisieux Church and, to the east (to the right), the Montauk Community Church.

If the photographer had taken this picture 70 years later, the Montauk Library would have been included in its visual landscape. The library building is located across the road from the Community Church, an empty lot that was covered with trees in the 1930s. As we prepare in 2020 for construction on Montauk Library's renovation, this photograph makes us stop and pause. It elicits reflection. We are poignantly reminded of how Montauk, and the Montauk Library, have evolved.

Ken Weldon had been living in the Westhampton Care Center when he died in April 2020 of the corona virus. Eulogized as a softball pitcher with a legendary arm and eagle eye, that eye can also take credit for recognizing the beauty and significance of aerial views like this one.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JULY 9<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [aerial photography](#), [local history](#), [surf club](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Flag Ceremony



This photograph from the 1970s shows Dick White and Phyllis Clemenz holding a flag that appears to be moments away from hoisting. We think the image is from the 1970s; the Bicentennial Year of 1976, more precisely. However, Phyllis Clemenz is wearing a winter coat and gloves. When asked about the flag, Dick White said he was quite sure it had been donated to commemorate our country's 200th anniversary, even though the flag design of 13 stars representing the 13 colonies doesn't look like the flag we associate with the one agreed on by Betsy Ross and George Washington.

In fact, George Washington preferred a flag design that included stars that were 6-pointed, not 5-pointed, but beyond that, the history of our country's original flag design is hazy. Indications seem to point to Betsy Ross not having created America's first flag at all. The story lingers on, however, because it has a wonderful romance to it and also, perhaps, because Betsy Ross's house is on the Tourist Trail in Philadelphia.

When asked if she remembered anything about her mother's involvement with this particular flag ceremony, Annie Clemenz did not. However, Phyllis Clemenz, who died in 2018, was a member of many of Montauk's civic organizations. She taught her daughters that it was a responsibility to give back to the community: "the only way bad can exist is for good people to do nothing." Born and bred in New York City, Phyllis Clemenz was engaged to a doctor and on vacation in Montauk during July 4th weekend, when Harry Clemenz approached her in a restaurant that is now the Sloppy Tuna. She fell in love with Harry and with Montauk, and three months later they were married.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JULY 2<sup>ND</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [local history](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Fishermen's Special



In this photograph sporties, or businessmen from New York City who took the “Fishermen’s Special” from Penn Station that arrived in Montauk at the crack of dawn, stand in quiet anticipation aboard charter boats about to embark from Union News Dock. They will try their luck in Montauk’s notorious fishing grounds, fervently hoping to return home later that evening with a large bag of fish packed in ice.

Ralph George donated this image, which is scanned. We aren’t sure where it came from, but it appears to have been published or reproduced from another picture. It’s too bad we don’t know who shot this scene, because this photograph is a mini masterpiece, reminiscent of Alfred Stieglitz’s *The Steerage*. In “How The Steerage Happened” (taken from *Steerage* Wikipedia reference: Twice a Year [8–9]: 175–178), Stieglitz describes “the white drawbridge with its railing made of circular chains – white suspenders crossing on the back of a man in the steerage below, round shapes of iron machinery, a mast cutting into the sky, making a triangular shape...I saw shapes related to each other. I was inspired by a picture of shapes and underlying that the feeling I had about life.”

One sees the same kind of composition and could paraphrase in *Union News Dock, Fishing Fleet*: “On the *Rex I* saw a man focused on assembling his fishing pole, and in the boat in front a woman in a flowered skirt and plaid coat was sitting, centering the image. In the rear, a ramp stretched white from

ship to pier, connecting customers to the Mary Edwards.” After The Steerage, it became accepted that some documentary photographs could also embody artistic qualities. Union News Dock, Fishing Fleet belongs in that category.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [fishing](#), [local history](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Napeague Fish Factory



The decade of the 1920s is filled with ingenuity and invention in the field of aviation. Visionaries like Sherman Fairchild pushed aviation science forward, intertwining aesthetics and engineering. Fairchild (1896-1971) was fascinated by “photogrammetry,” the science of gleaning map measurements from photographs.

When he was 21 years old Fairchild designed an aerial camera for the military, but he wanted to develop cameras and planes for aerial surveying and map-making. Frustrated by the lack of maneuverable airplanes that could fly in conditions supporting survey photography, the young entrepreneur formed the Fairchild Aviation Corporation in 1925. Fairchild produced the FC-1, an “aerial mapping aircraft” that could capture images at low altitudes.

This photograph of Napeague, Fish Factory from the Richard T. Gilmartin collection isn’t dated, but it “feels” early, like the other Fairchild aerial surveys in the archives printed during the late 1920s. It could date from a later decade, but at the same time, it makes sense that Carl Fisher would have paid for aerial surveys like this one, since he brought exceptional ground surveyors with him to Montauk. And

here's an interesting side note: Aero Services, Inc., which bought the Fairchild Aerial Surveys company in 1965, threw out the all the early photographs. Fortunately, at the 11th hour, a panicked former Fairchild employee learned of the impending disaster and interceded. The surveys now reside in the Special Collections libraries of two universities in California.

Click on this link to see Fairchild surveys from the 1940s in the New York State archives:

<http://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Search/objects?search=fairchild+surveys>

ORIGINALLY POSTED JUNE 18<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [aerial photography](#), [Napeague](#), [Richard T. Gilmartin](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Swans of Montauk



A tweet that surfaced in March about swans reappearing in Venetian canals made hearts rejoice worldwide. Temporarily displacing stories of corona gloom and doom, the original post credited clearer water to fewer tourists. Mother Nature was cleaning up the canals! The post went viral. However, Natasha Daly from [nationalgeographic.com](https://www.nationalgeographic.com) took issue with the tweet, reporting that swans have always glided along the waterways of Burano, the island near Venice known for lace-making. She took the original tweeter to task in “Fake animal news abounds on social media as corona virus upends life: Bogus stories of wild animals flourishing in quarantined cities gives false hope— and viral fame.”

This beautiful photograph by Montauk photographer Ray Smith (1905-2004) makes it easy to believe that a tweet about swans could go viral. In the 1970s, the byline “Ray Smith” routinely appeared in the East Hampton Star under pictures documenting Montauk Chamber of Commerce events, church suppers, and Greenery Scenery committee meetings. Although Smith’s career had been launched at glamorous fashion shoots in New York City, he embraced the chronicling of a simpler life for East End papers when he moved to Montauk.

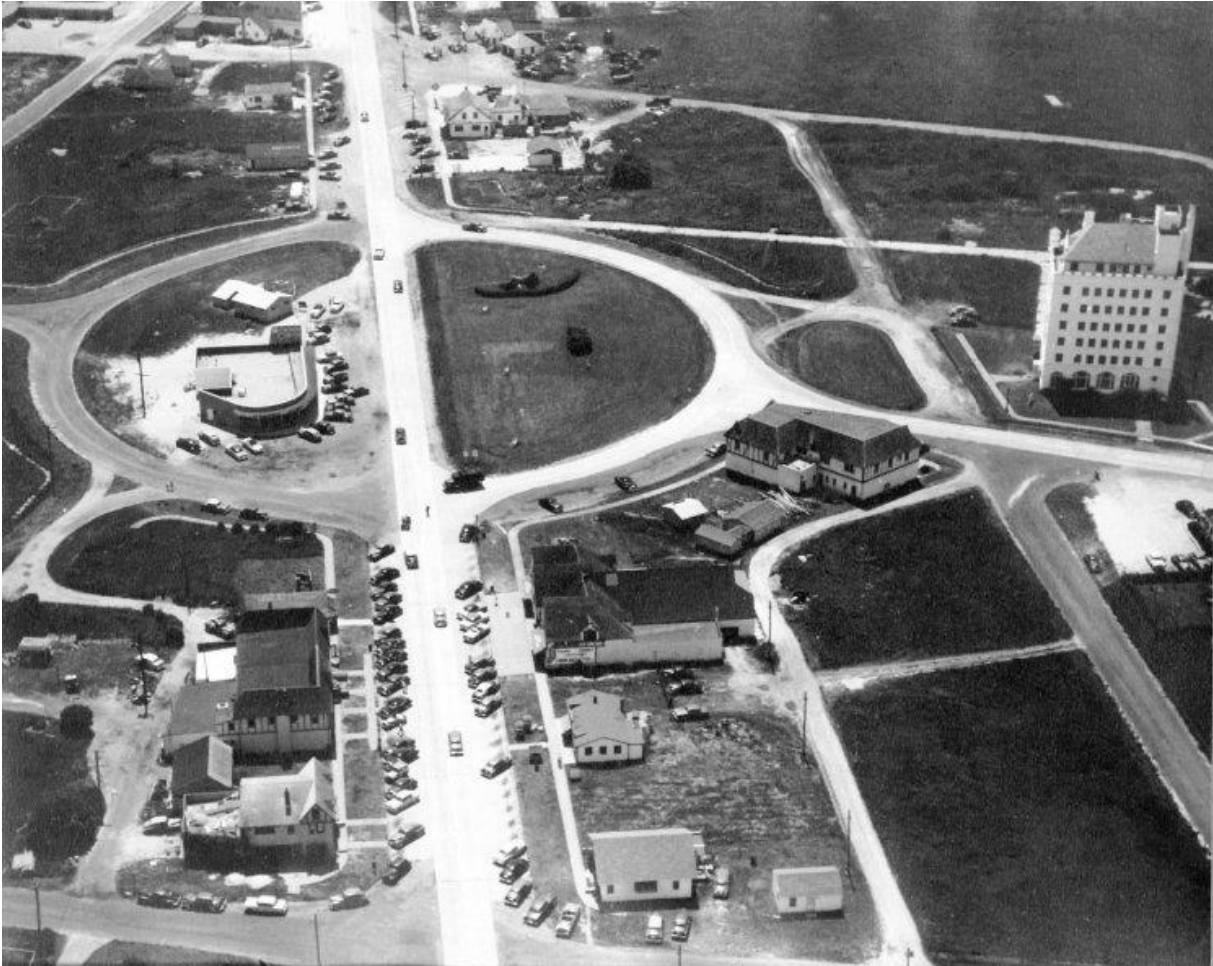
The tonal pictorialism of Swan Family underscores Ray Smith’s belief that his best work was done in the category of nature photography. His camera captured the essence of these elegant, graceful creatures, known for fiercely protecting their young. The tweeter refused to delete her post, saying her message served the greater good.

ORIGINALLY POSTED JUNE 11<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Ray Smith](#), [swans](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Montauk Village in the 50s/60s



This aerial view donated by the Windsor family to the Montauk Library Archives shows the center of Montauk Village from the late 1950s or early 1960s. A photographic foray into recent history, it reveals a number of easily recognizable buildings. In addition, gaps in the aerial landscape, i.e., those stores and businesses that hadn't yet been built, are easy to identify, as well.

The Montauk Beach Company was pumping millions of dollars into real estate development during this era. The simple lines of their buildings illustrated the new architectural style called modernism, an aesthetic that produced Leisurama and other popular housing whose point of view was minimalistic. In fact, the curvilinear lines of the Montauk Center, visible in this photograph, were quite daring for the time.

A cutting-edge architectural drawing of the "future" Montauk Shopping Center drawn by architect Robert Fitch Smith, a Miami-based architect hired by the Montauk Beach Company, appeared in the East Hampton Star on April 17, 1952. The new Center would "rise along the south side of the traffic circle on

Montauk Highway (Route 27)” and “house a large supermarket and ten smaller stores in its semi-circular shape.” With its own “parking area and full glass fronts for window display space,” the new shopping center would be the very first store to rise in Montauk since 1929.

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Tagged: [aerial photography](#), [local history](#), [Montauk Village](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

Throwback Thursday- Phillis Ridgeway's  
Blue Marlin



When Phillis Ridgeway jumped into the fighting chair of her husband Jack Rounick's sport fishing boat, she thought she was about to tangle with a swordfish. Its radiant blue sheen made it clear, however, that what she had sighted was a very rare blue marlin.

In his "FISHING" column for The Daily News, sportswriter Jerry Kenney interviewed Phillis Ridgeway 25 years after her historic catch: "All hell broke loose," said Phyllis. "The fish crashed on that bait and I hung on while it peeled out line. An instant later it exploded through the surface and tail-walked over those waves like a helicopter." After fighting for 90 minutes, "her sword was mightier," said Kenney. The 328-pound marlin was mounted, hung in the Deep Sea Club, and then took pride of place at Salivar's. Last year a woman came into the Montauk Library describing a record-setting fish caught by her mother that was hanging in her basement. Could it be the same fish?

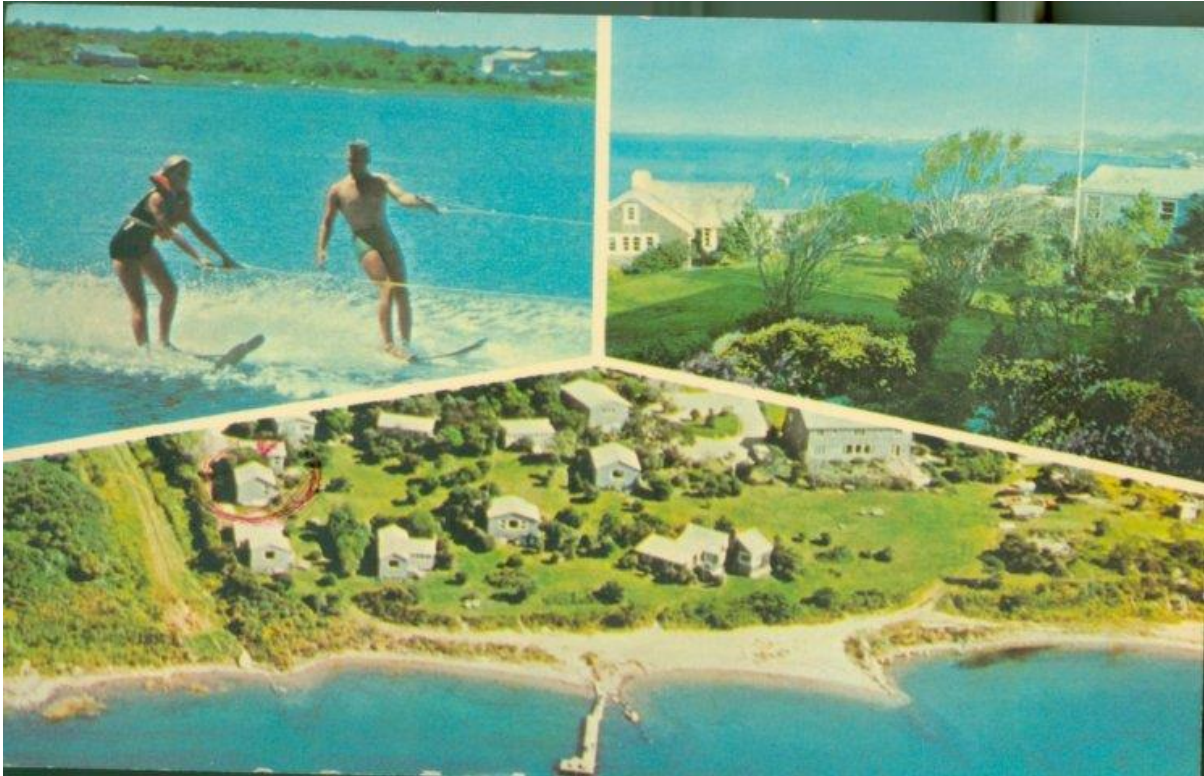
In an obituary that appeared on the Outdoor Writers Association of America website, Jerry Kenny's son remembered a favorite quote of his father's: "Lots of little fish just make you tired, but one big fish gives you cause to celebrate and provides stories for a lifetime." This photograph and the newspaper column written by Kenney were donated to the Archives by Victoria Rudolph.

ORIGINALLY POSTED MAY 28<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [fishing](#), [local history](#), [Phillis Ridgeway](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Bridgeford Cottage Colony Postcard



This aerial postcard of the Bridgeford Cottage Colony on East Lake Drive came into the Archives with the one cottage already circled, a message from a guest to the addressee, “this is where we stayed!” Edwin Bridgeford owned this cozy group of cottages, advertised as “Your Country Estate at the Sea Shore.” The Bridgefords lived in Montauk and were active in the East End area; family members appeared regularly in East Hampton Star articles starting in the 1950s.

Edwin, Jr. advertised his water skiing classes in the Star on July 11, 1963, in a small business card-sized ad with a fancy, fine-line border: WATER SKIING. Expert Instruction or Tow, Standard and Trick Skiing. All ages from 6 to 60. If you can walk you can learn to ski. Taught by Edwin W. Bridgeford, Jr., located at Bridgeford Cottage Colony, 1 to 5 rooms, East Lake Drive.” The blonde man in the photograph at the top left could be Edwin, Jr. His stance conveys the ease of an instructor teaching a new student — the young woman to his right, for example — in this beautiful, watery classroom known as Lake Montauk.

ORIGINALLY POSTED MAY 21<sup>ST</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [East Lake Drive](#), [local history](#), [postcards](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Throwback Thursday- Ann Ostrander Beach Photos 1990



This week's Throwback Thursday comes from the Ann Ostrander collection of beach scenes dated 1990. Some of the photographs from the Ostrander collection are single, stand-alone images. Others, such as this page from Ann's dismantled photo album, contain multiple shots.

Photo albums and scrapbooks allow the owner to play with creativity, as this page suggests. Upon closer examination of each photograph, it becomes evident that Ostrander artfully arranged the images to experiment with perspective and time. The people in the top left and right photographs appear connected, easily walking back and forth between the two images. The same thing can be said for the two ocean views below.

Even if these individual photographs were taken on different days at different times, Ostrander has positioned them so cohesively so that our eye unifies the action, making us believe at first glance that the four are part of a large, grander whole. Today we look at them with nostalgia, longing for the carefree recreation enjoyed by these beachgoers in the summer of 1990.

ORIGINALLY POSTED MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [Ann Ostrander](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)

# Fallback Friday- Montauk Public School Construction

Photographic Record of Progress:

CONSTRUCTION Montauk Public School OWNER .....

CONTRACTOR Pearson Const. Co. ARCHITECT .....



Series No. 1......

Record No. 1......

ASPECT From the North-west. DATE TAKEN April 18th 1928.



Series No. 2......

Record No. 2......

ASPECT From the East-north-east. DATE TAKEN April 18th 1928.

(Supplied by THE PICTORIAL RECORD SERVICE, of Montauk, Long Island)

The Photographic Records of Progress maintained by Fisher's Montauk Beach Development Corporation document the construction of the Manor, Surf Club, and Shepherd's Neck homes. These meticulously maintained architectural records — donated to the Archives by Frank Tuma — reveal how the local community was transformed by the Montauk Beach Development Company's ambitious construction program and town planning.

We have 6 pages (12 photographs) of these Photographic Records of Progress that relate to the Montauk School. The Pearson Construction Company was the contractor. The workers built this, Montauk's third school, on the "Great Hill," as it was called. (Montauk's first school, the "Little Red Schoolhouse," opened in 1899 in Hither Plain village and served children from Fort Pond Bay and the life-saving stations of Hither Plain and Ditch Plain. The second school, built in 1919, was erected below the Montauk Inn and eventually became the Montauk Firehouse.)

For this week's Throwback Thursday, we are sharing the very first Photographic Record of Progress for the Montauk School, dated April 18, 1928. The building had only recently leapt from blueprint page to 3-D structure. A basement foundation and pile of lumber were all that existed. However, bricks, stone, and stucco were the stuff that Fisher's dreams were made of, and soon the town could boast a brand-new school with an auditorium that seated 450 people.

The school was considered an architectural achievement. Pearson Construction was a local company that had delivered a world-class center for learning. Everybody in town wanted a tour. This article appeared in the East Hampton Star on November 23, 1928: *Montauk School to Be Dedicated Tomorrow Evening*.

"Attractive posters placed conspicuously about Montauk proclaim the official opening of the Montauk Public School to the public, at exercises to be held in the school auditorium this Saturday evening. True, the school has been open and used ever since September, but on this occasion the exercises in connection with turning the school over to the community will be observed." The program included speakers, dancing and music, and in a wonderfully egalitarian gesture, "an opportunity for all present to inspect the new school building in every detail."

ORIGINALLY POSTED MAY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2020

Filed under: [Local History](#)

Tagged: [construction](#), [fallback friday](#), [montauk public school](#), [tbt](#), [throwback Thursday](#)