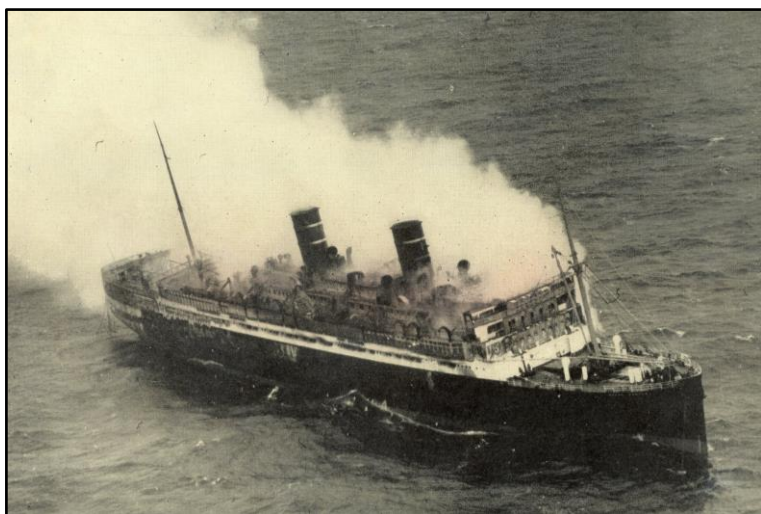


Our September 2022 meeting will be held on **Monday, September 12, 2022** starting at **7:30 PM**. Monmouth County Historian Rick Geffen will present "Maritime History of Ocean and Monmouth Counties." Meeting location: Woman's Club of Point Pleasant Building, 513 St. Louis Avenue, Point Pleasant Beach. Face coverings are optional and your decision to mask or not mask will be respected by all.

## Looking Back: The Morro Castle Tragedy

On September 8, 1934, while traveling from Havana, Cuba to New York, a fire broke out on the ocean liner off Long Beach Island. As passengers and crew tried to escape the burning hull, chaos ensued with 30-knot winds and rough seas further compounding the situation. Despite rescue efforts from both citizens on shore and other vessels, including 72 rescued by John and James Bogan from Bogan's Basin, 135 out of the 549 people onboard the Morro

Castle lost their lives



*The Morro Castle burns at sea.  
Image courtesy of the New Jersey Maritime Museum.*

Many of the deceased were unintentionally killed by the very devices that were supposed to save them. Some were knocked unconscious by their life preservers when they hit the water then subsequently drowned, while others were killed instantly when their necks broke from the impact of the preservers hitting the water.

The burnt and empty hull drifted north and beached itself directly parallel to Convention Hall in Asbury Park. It became somewhat of a tourist attraction until it was dismantled and salvaged the following March.

In 2009, the Asbury Park Historical Society dedicated a monument on the south side of the iconic Convention Hall to remember both the victims from the disaster and to honor "the many courageous Jersey Shore residents who risked their own lives or provided assistance to rescue Morro Castle survivors from rough seas and recover the victims who washed ashore or who were pulled from the sea." The New Jersey Maritime Museum has an entire room dedicated to artifacts from the Morro Castle, and two lifejackets recovered from the ocean liner are a part of the Point Pleasant Historical Museum's collection.



*The Morro Castle Monument outside Convention Hall/Paramount Theatre in Asbury Park near the boardwalk. Photo by Jill Ocone.*



*Lifejackets from the Morro Castle at the Point Pleasant Historical Museum. Photo by Jill Ocone.*

## Celebrate Ocean County History Day on September 17

The Second Annual Ocean County History Day will take place on Saturday, September 17 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Ocean County Historical Society, 26 Hadley Avenue, Toms River, with a rain date scheduled for Sunday, September 18. Stop by for free tours of their Victorian style mansion and museum. Enjoy entertainment, a miniature train display, interesting exhibits by many County historical societies and museums, historical reenactors, a used book sale, and much more! Meet Revolutionary War hero Captain Reuben Randolph as portrayed by Tim Hart at 11:00 AM. Meet Revolutionary War hero Captain Joshua Huddy as portrayed by Dr. Jeff Schenker at 11:30 AM. The band *Jersey Gold* will be performing oldies from 12:00 PM until 1:30 PM. This fun-for-the-entire-family event is free to attend. For additional information, please contact Jeff at (609) 339-9134.





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Point Pleasant Historical Society  
 PO Box 1273  
 Point Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742

## Point Pleasant Historical Society

### *Serving Point Pleasant and Point Pleasant Beach*

Each month of this "school year" of our seven news letters, September through June, we will feature one decade of historical events. Example: September will cover the years of the 1930's, October the 1940's, etc. June will conclude with the 1990's. Most information will be culled from the book, 350 YEARS of NEW JERSEY HISTORY, by Joseph G. Bilby, James M. Madden, and Harry Ziegler. (2014) Besides statewide events, efforts will be made to interject local and shore area history.

— Compiled by Len Ludovico

**1930**—The census reported New Jersey's population as 4,041,334.

- Construction began on an elevated roadway between Newark & Jersey City: the Pulaski Skyway.

**1931**—The Manasquan Inlet was reopened. Rock jetties were installed.

- Thomas Alva Edison died in West Orange.
- The George Washington Bridge opened for traffic.

**1932**—Twenty-month-old Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr., was kidnapped from his home in Hopewell, NJ.

- Franklin D. Roosevelt made Sea Girt's National Guard Camp his 1<sup>st</sup> rally stop after receiving the Democrats' presidential nomination. 100,000 people had been assembled by Frank Hague, Jersey City's mayor and political boss.
- James "Jimmy Buff" Racioppi introduced the "Italian hot dog," (he credited his grandmother with the invention) in his store on Fourteenth Avenue & So. Ninth Street in Newark.

**1933**—Monmouth University 1<sup>st</sup> opened as a junior college. In 1956 it became a four-year college. It became a university in 1995.

- Prohibition is repealed with the passage of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution. The only NJ breweries ready to go were Krueger's in Newark, and Hauck's in Harrison.
- The first drive-in theater in America is opened at the Airport Circle in Pennsauken. NJ would eventually have 57 drive-ins. The closest to our area were the Laurelton Drive-in in Brick (off Rt. 88), and the Brielle Motor-Vue (off the Brielle Circle).

**1934**—On September 8, the SS MORRO CASTLE, a cruise ship bound from Havana to New York, caught fire off Sea Girt. The controls burned out. As the ship drifted to Asbury Park, chaos ensued and people jumped into the ocean. Point Pleasant Beach became a rescue center at Ken's Landing 135 people died.

- Sept. 19: Bruno Richard Hauptmann was arrested in NY for the kidnapping and murder of the Lindburgh baby.

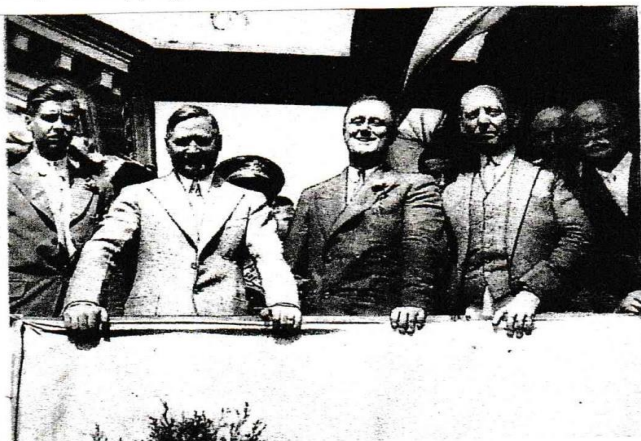


Opening ceremonies for the Lincoln Tunnel in 1937. *Joseph G. Bilby.*

**1935**—Amelia Earhart made the first public parachute jump at the Switlik Parachute Company in Jackson Township.

- George H. Gallup founded the American Institute of Public Opinion, in Princeton.

**1936**—Bruno Hauptmann was executed for the Lindbergh baby's kidnapping and murder.



Franklin D. Roosevelt at Sea Girt with Governor A. Harry Moore and Jersey City mayor Frank Hague in 1932. *Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.*

**1937**—May 6. The German airship HINDENBURG exploded and burst into flames over Lakehurst. Thirty-six of the 97 passengers and crew died.

- The Coast Guard station building is completed in Point Pleasant Beach.
- \* The Lincoln Tunnel, under the Hudson River, between New York and New Jersey is completed.

**1938**—A September hurricane (hurricanes were not yet named) washes away 3,800 ft. of the Point Pleasant Beach boardwalk. The southern end of the boardwalk is never rebuilt.

**1939**—The Arnold Theater (Arnold Avenue at Woodland) has showings of the movie classics "Gone With the Wind" and "The Wizard of Oz."

### *Museum Open for Visitors*

The Point Pleasant Historical Museum is open on Thursdays between 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM and by appointment. Please email your appointment request and include as much information as possible about what you are interested in researching or seeing to pphbhistoricalsociety@gmail.com and someone will get back to you. Our website at pphsm.org is always open!