



THE POINT PLEASANT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Welcome to the May 2026 Newsletter of the Point Pleasant Historical Society!

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome

Each month our newsletters are organized around a theme that highlights a significant aspect of our history.

This month, PPHS member Fred Potter presents insightful information regarding the development of strategic infrastructure—in particular bridges, roads, and railways—as essential components in the development and advancement of the greater Point Pleasant area.



A view of the former "Squan Bridge" which was one of the first bridges to cross of the Manasquan River. The bridge was built c1887 over a narrow section of the Manasquan River at Lakewood Allenwood Road.

"History Term Paper"

Point Beach and Point Borough - Developing our Communities through Infrastructure

by Fred Potter

On September 2, 1609, Henry Hudson and the crew of his ship the "Half Moon", discovered what would become the Borough of Point Pleasant Beach and the Borough of Point Pleasant. However, it was not until around 1665 that the first European colonists came to the area, surviving by relying on local resources and the plentiful marine life in the surrounding waters.

Over time there were more and more new settlers which led to the establishment of towns all along the Jersey shore. However during the colonial days and into the 20th century, other New Jersey communities grew more quickly as the land along the coast was not considered valuable. The coast was subject to storms and was largely unsuitable for major farming. The fertile soil and abundant natural resources of the inland river valleys made them highly appealing, and they were significantly easier to access. Convenient transport of goods and ease of movement to, from, and within the region played a crucial role for early settlers.

The Point Pleasant area is mostly surrounded by water which made it difficult to access. Travel by boat was also challenging because the inlet was shallow, narrow and subject to silting; thus creating an unreliable harbor for boats. There was no canal until 1925 and therefore no passage from Barnegat Bay to the Manasquan River. Traveling over land from the west was easier because the waters of the bays, rivers, estuaries and inlets created formidable challenges for travelers coming from the north and south. The most common method of travel was by horse and wagon or on foot.

The roads to what is now Point Pleasant were basic and undeveloped; primarily consisting of Indian trails turned into dirt tracks for horses and carts. Bridges were non-existent. Around 1840 there were some stagecoach routes established; in fact the current Shore House was originally a stagecoach hotel named the West Point Hotel.

We often overlook the convenience of paved roads and bridges, but for early settlers and later developers, these were significant challenges. Tourism began in the early 19th century and initially the shore was visited for the perceived health benefits of sea air and bathing. Our early fathers of tourism and land development knew that transportation infrastructure was the key to their business success.

Better roads were needed and bridges were necessary to cross rivers and creeks. Lakewood Road (now Route 88) was the major route from the west and it was not until 1903 that Lakewood Road became "paved" or hard graveled. In fact it was the first "paved" or hard gravel road built in Ocean County.

We have not found any record of when the first bridge was constructed over the Beaver Dam Creek on Route 88 (Point Pleasant/Brick border). It is most likely that travelers just forged this narrow, shallow creek or laid down wooden planks before a bridge was constructed. The current Bridge (named Burnt Bridge) was constructed in 1923 and is now 123 years old it is scheduled for replacement.

When we number the bridges as 1st, 2nd and 3rd to cross the Manasquan River it refers to the original location on the Manasquan River of the bridge crossing; noting that at each location there were many structure updates and/or replacements over the years. Early bridges were narrow and typically made of wood. Due to changes in transportation, weather conditions, insects and other factors, they frequently needed to be repaired or replaced. Even the early metal bridges wore out or needed to be rehabilitated or replaced over the years

The bridge at the first location to cross the Manasquan River was constructed in the 1760's and is agreed by most to be the Lakewood Allenwood Road Bridge. This bridge connected what is present day Wall Township and Brick. The bridge was rebuilt in 1887 with "King Tube" trusses taken from older structures, then relocated to its present site and named the Squan Bridge. In 1992, after requiring repairs, the King Tube truss bridge was replaced.

The bridge at the second location to cross the Manasquan River was the Allen Osborn Wagon Bridge, connecting present day Brick and Manasquan. The Allen Osborn Bridge was located near the pre-Revolutionary farm house of Samuel

Osborn which later became the Roberts Inn and later the Red Ranch and now Harpoon Willy's. The bridge was likely constructed circa 1850, and as with all early timber piling bridges required constant repair and maintenance. The last modification to this bridge was done in 1912, when a new "draw span" was installed by Ocean County at a cost of \$2960. The Allen Osborn Wagon Bridge was replaced in 1937 and its new location was on Route 70 connecting Brielle to Brick/Point Pleasant. This 1937 Bridge was again replaced in 2008 and officially renamed The September 11 Memorial Bridge and is still in use today.

The bridge at the third location to cross the Manasquan River was the Richmond Avenue Bridge (Designated Route 35 in 1929); and it connected Brielle and Point Pleasant. In 1875, Captain John Arnold, a prominent figure in the development of Point Pleasant, played a key role in constructing this bridge over the Manasquan River to help establish what he referred to as Arnold City. That bridge was replaced around 1905 with an "iron truss, wood plank deck" bridge. In 1920 the iron truss bridge was replaced with a concrete deck, four-lane bridge that partially collapsed in 1946. In 1952 the current Highway 35 bridge Manasquan River bridge was constructed and designated the "Veterans of All Wars Memorial Bridge". And between 2006 and 2009 \$33 million was spent to rehabilitate the span. The "Veterans of All Wars Memorial Bridge" designation was made permanent in 2014 via state legislation.

The arrival of the Railroad in Point Pleasant was once again thanks to Captain John Arnold, who convinced the Central Jersey Railroad to expand its route to Point Pleasant Beach by offering a right-of-way, land for a depot, and approximately \$6,000 in cash. On July 3, 1880, after a railroad bridge was built across the Manasquan, the first passenger train reached Point Pleasant Beach. That bridge was replaced in 1911, and it remains in use today.

Other Point Pleasant Bridges were needed and in 1933 a wooden bridge connecting Beaver Dam Road with Princeton Avenue was replaced with a metal swing type bridge. It was replaced again in 2000 with the current Bridge.

The Richard E. Lane Bridge, named for a former Ocean County Engineer, is the third bridge to span the Cooks Creek location and was constructed in 1981. It took the place of the well-known "White Bridge", which had crossed Cooks Creek at Broadway. The Lane Bridge was built at the identical location and utilized 35 of the original 56 pilings from the "White Bridge". The "White Bridge" was constructed during the early to mid-1900s, coinciding with the development of the Inlet Area. Before it was built, a wagon bridge built in the 1800s, occupied the same spot. That wagon bridge formed part of a diagonal road through the Cook Farm, and provided public access to the inlet area.

With the construction of the Canal in 1925 two bridges were constructed. The first bridge was on Route 88 was a bascule style lift bridge and was constructed while the canal was still dry in 1924. It was replaced in 1986 with a lift bridge and named the Veterans Memorial Bridge. The 1929 swing style Lovelandtown Bridge on Bridge Avenue partially collapsed in 1962 and In 1972 it was replaced with a lift bridge similar to the Route 88 Canal Bridge.

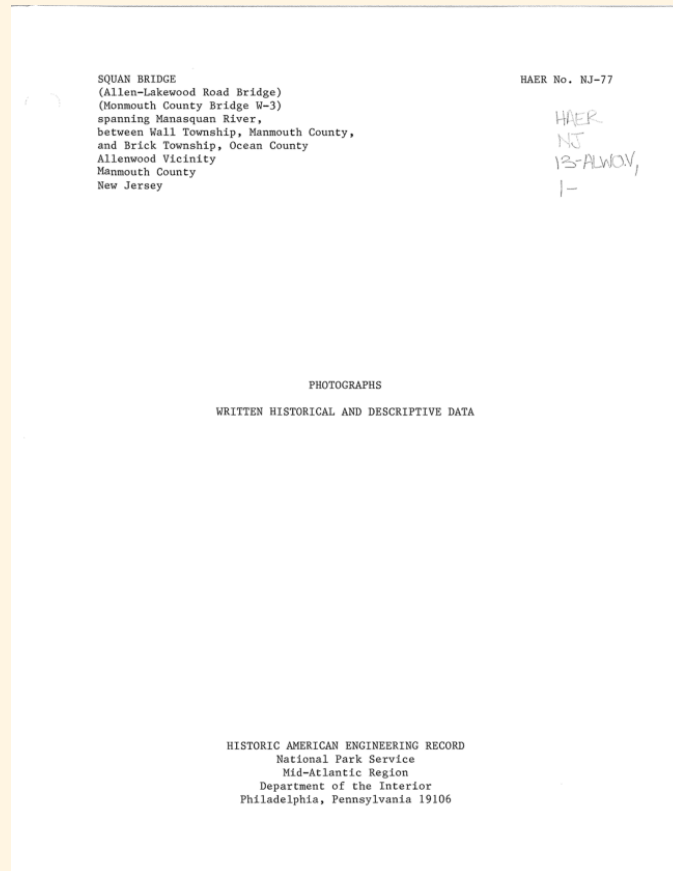
Over the years travel by horse and wagon and by train changed. Automobiles were invented and were made affordable to the masses with Henry Ford's Model T starting in 1908. The New Jersey Garden State Parkway construction began in 1946 and in 1954 the first exit in Brick was completed.

Today, we often give little thought to the improvements in transportation and the roads and bridges we ride on every day, or for the people who made this possible. I do not think early settlers could have imagined our modern roads and the ease of crossing our rivers and creeks. This year as we celebrate the 250

Year Anniversary of our Nation, let's also give a special thanks to those who came before us and "Bridged" our communities making living here possible.

And for the history buffs who may enjoy detailed information on the 1887 "SQUAN BRIDGE" we attach a 1977 study completed by the National Park Service of this historic structure.

(please click anywhere on the image and it will open to a full size document)



MAY 4th PUBLIC MEETING

***OUR MEETING START TIME HAS
CHANGED to 7:00PM!***

***PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS WILL
BEGIN AT 7:00 PM THIS YEAR.***

The regularly scheduled May public meeting will be held on **Monday, May 4th, 2026**, starting at **7:00 PM**.

Meeting location: Point Pleasant Borough Municipal Building, 2233 Bridge Ave., Point Pleasant Borough. Retired **Chief Larry Williams**, of the Point Pleasant Police Department, and retired **Lieutenant Chip DiCorcia**, of Point Pleasant Beach Department will discuss the history and development of their respective Police Departments.

Please don't forget that our Museum is open weekly, every Thursday, from 1:00 to 3:00 pm; please feel free to come in and browse.

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH "BRIDGES OF THE MANASQUAN RIVER"

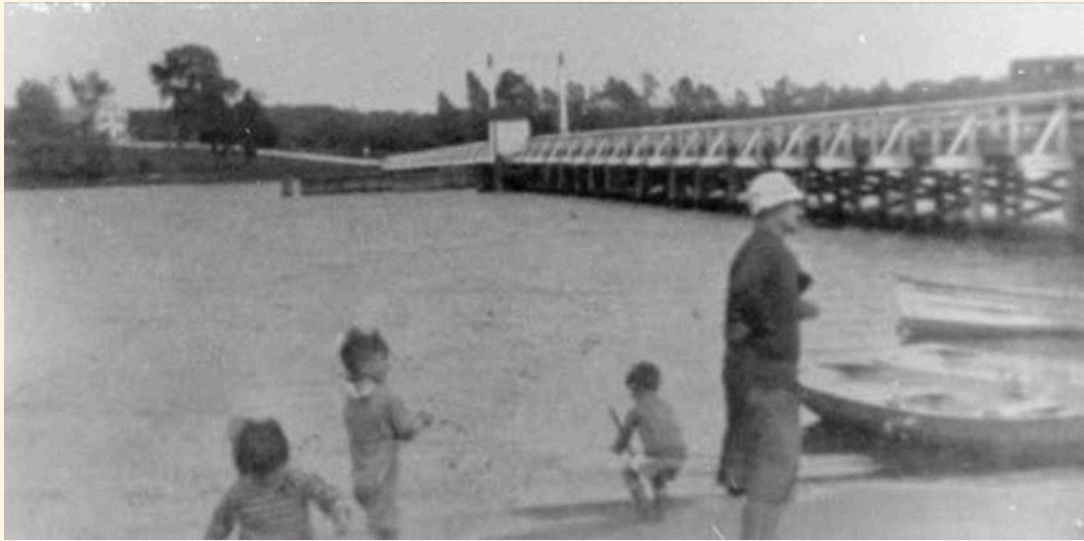
**THE BRIDGES OF THE "FIRST" MANASQUAN RIVER
CROSSING LOCATION (below)**



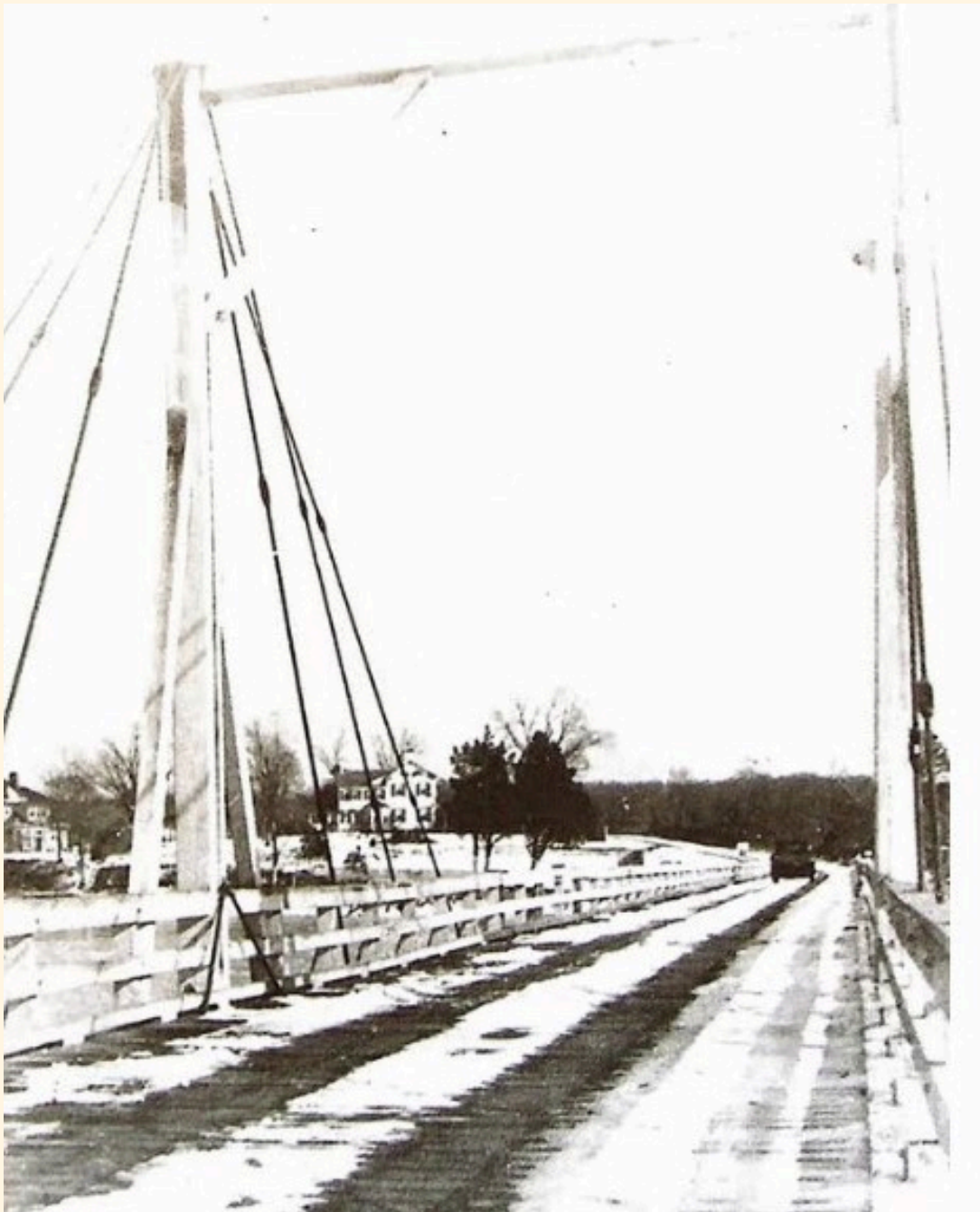
(above) The Squan Bridge, also known as the the Allenwood Lakewood Bridge, was constructed in 1887 at this location. It replaced an earlier bridge that was built in this general location in the 1700's. The bowstring

trusses of the bridge were fabricated by the King Iron Bridge and Manufacturing Company of Ohio and were a state of the art design that influenced future iron truss bridge construction.

THE BRIDGES OF THE "SECOND" MANASQUAN RIVER CROSSING LOCATION (below)

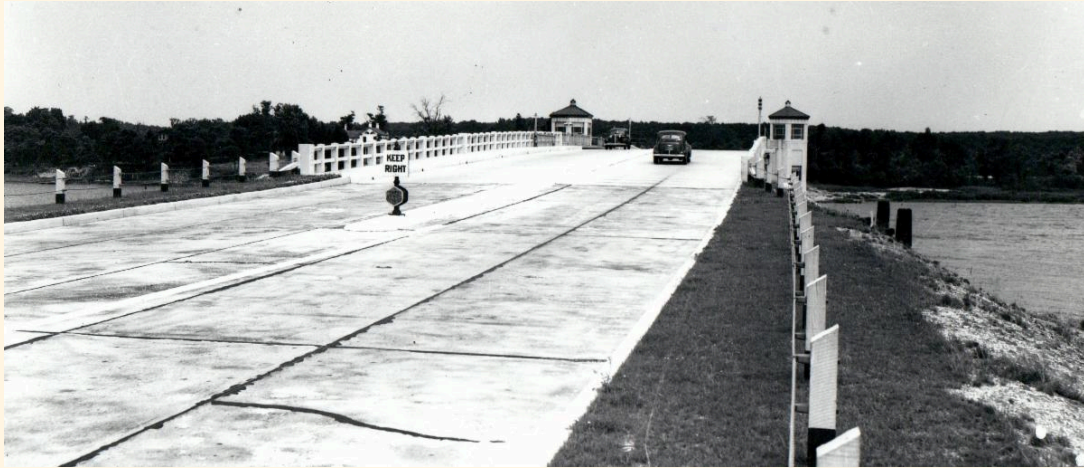


(above) The c1850 Allen Osborn bridge as shown in the sales brochure of the Riviera Beach Development Company in the early 1900's. The Riviera Beach Development Company developed the land adjacent to the river off Herbertsville in the section not surprisingly called Riviera Beach. This picture was taken from where the River Rock Bar is located today.



(above) A closeup view of the Allen Osborn Bridge "Draw Span", the section that was opened to allow boat traffic to pass. This draw was added to the bridge in 1913. In the background can be seen the home of Colonel

Samuel Osborn, which today still stands as Harpoon Willy's Bar and Restaurant.



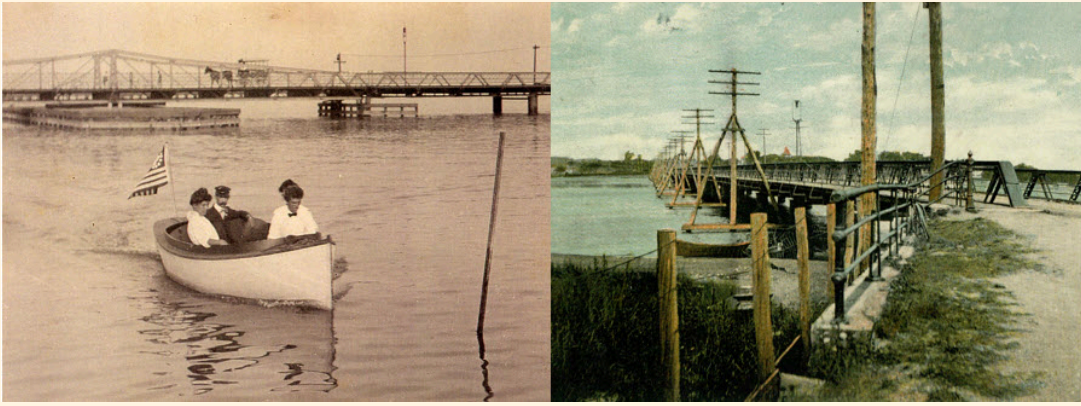
(above) Two views of the "Highway 70" concrete and steel lift bridge constructed and opened in 1938. It replaced the rickety Allen Osborn Bridge and remained in service until 2008 when it was replaced with the new fixed span structure that is in use today.

THE BRIDGES OF THE "THIRD" MANASQUAN RIVER CROSSING LOCATION (below)



(above) In 1875 John Arnold led the construction of the first wagon bridge between Point Pleasant and Brielle. If you click on the picture and expand it

you can see the advertisement for Point Pleasant Hardware on the left side of the bridge on the railing.



(above) Cast Iron Truss Bridge that replaced John Arnold bridge along with a scenic view of center swing draw span.



(above) A 1940's aerial view of the Highway 35 Bridge taken from above Bogan's Basin in Brielle looking toward Point Pleasant. Across the river in the left upper corner is the undeveloped Cook farm, likely being used at that time as a golf course. (photo credit to the Bogan family)



(above) Span failure of the Highway 35 bridge in 1946



(above) New Highway 35 Bridge Foundations being constructed as viewed from the Point Pleasant side of the river.



(above) The current Highway 35 Bridge nearing completion in 1952. The view is from Bogan's Basin in Brielle looking toward Point Pleasant.

BEAVER DAM CREEK STEEL CENTER SWING BRIDGE

(below)

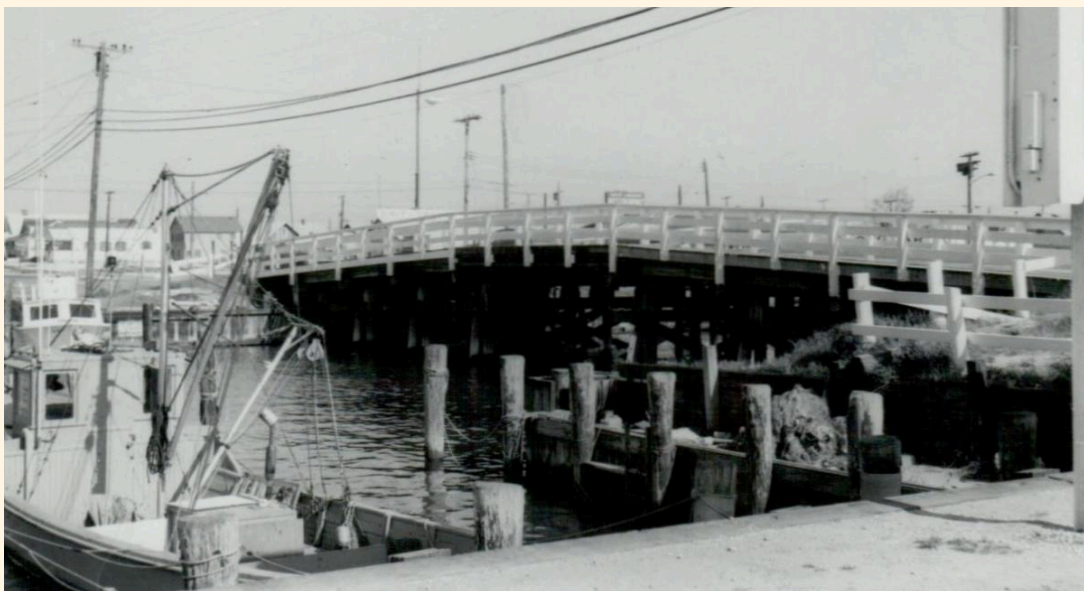


(above) A 1998 view of the Beaver Dam Bridge with a steel, swing center span. This bridge was replaced in 2000 with a lift bridge still in use today.

COOKS CREEK BRIDGES *(below)*



(above) The original "wagon bridge" provided access over Cooks Creek to the inlet area via Cooks Road, a diagonal route through the Cook Estate acquired by the County for pedestrian and vehicular access to the inlet..



(above) Together with the development of the Manasquan Inlet area and the construction of Broadway, the Cooks Creek wagon bridge was replaced by a wooden piling bridge that many remember as the "White Bridge" The "White Bridge" was replaced in 2000 by the current concrete and steel structure and named after Ocean County Engineer, Richard E. Lane.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR OLD PHOTOS AND MEMORIES!
We can scan and return your originals if requested.

If you have any photos, historical documents, memories or other artifacts that you would like to submit for publication or preservation by the PPHS, please email a copy or contact us at the email address below:

PPBHISTORICALSOCIETY@GMAIL.COM

If you need a membership application, or if you know someone who wishes to join, please click the link below for a printable application form.

[PPHS Membership Application](#)

We thank you in advance!



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