



This month's public meeting will be held Monday, October 5, 2026, at 7:00 PM. Harry Chadwick, native son and member of the Point Pleasant Historical Society, will deliver a presentation focused on his experiences growing up in Point Pleasant. As descendants of some of the area's earliest settlers, the Chadwick family has connections to many founding families. The presentation will cover aspects of Chadwick family history, including decoy making, fishing, boat building, and other topics. Meeting location: Point Pleasant Borough Municipal Building, 2233 Bridge Avenue Point Pleasant, NJ. The meetings are free and open to the public and you need not be a member to attend.

The First Landowners of Point Pleasant

The Manasquan Beach Company of 1685

On July 9, 1685, 76 years after Robert Juet recorded Henry Hudson's passage past a "Pleasant Land to see," the Governor and Lords Proprietors of East New Jersey at Elizabethtown issued a license granting a group from "Navesink" the right to negotiate and purchase up to 2,500 acres of land along the Manasquan River from the local Unami Lenape Tribe. It was one of the first, if not the first, documented uses of the Native American word "Manasquan."

Over three consecutive days in late July and one day in November, Surveyor General George Keith walked the waterfront areas of Manasquan, Brielle, Point Pleasant Beach and Bay Head and surveyed lots for eleven men who were among the first wave of Monmouth County settlers. Their places of origin were diverse; they came from Long Island, New York, Massachusetts Bay Colony, Massachusetts Plymouth Colony, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, England and France. Eleven men, seven places of origin

Their names were Ephraim Allen, Judah Allen, John Hance, Tobias Hannson, Richard Hartshorne, Edmond Lafetra, William Lawrence, Remembrance Lippincott, Joseph West, John Williams, and William Woolley.

All but two of them were from Shrewsbury, having purchased their salt meadow, farm and home lots from Rumson to Long Branch in the 1660s and 1670s. Hartshorne and Lawrence were from Middletown. They acquired almost half the land in the deal, 1,000 of the 2,100 total acres claimed.

For the nine men from Shrewsbury, this was a family endeavor. Through blood or marriage, each of them was related to another.

And with the exception of Lafetra, documented as a French Huguenot, and possibly Hannson, they were part of the Quaker community, a disparaged group at the time. Some were persecuted for their religion in Europe and the American Colonies alike, causing them to flee their homes. Richard Hartshorne left England. Remembrance Lippincott fled twice: from the Massachusetts colony to England as a boy, and then from England, after imprisonment, to Rhode Island and on to Monmouth.

They were in search of a better life, the right to worship and raise their families as they saw fit and were part of the Quaker tradition of religious liberty that helped shape the broader American tradition of freedom of conscience. When the time came to locate their Manasquan land, the Quakers acted together. On July 28th and 29th, eight of them measured out their plots and divided the land.

Keith's surveys included three lot types, all defined by their position relative to the Manasquan River: oceanfront lots, south shore river lots, and north shore river lots. The north lots on the Manasquan and Brielle side were farming lots and stretched west from the ocean, past what is now the Route 70 Bridge. Fifteen lots ranged from 30 to 180 acres (for reference, the Antrim School grounds are about 20 acres).

The lots along the south shore of the Manasquan River were one- to five-acre salt meadows. Ten lots, 330 feet deep, lined the riverfront and were essential for grazing livestock over the harsh winter months. They were surveyed at the western edge of the oceanfront lots, starting around St. Louis Avenue, and wrapped continuously along the riverfront to around Cedar Avenue, with the modern Route 35 Bridge in the middle.

South of the Manasquan River, the northernmost lot on the oceanfront was described as a triangle; the rest were parallelograms containing from 19.5 to 78 acres. These lots were a uniform depth of 50 "chains," running "west-northwest from the sea." A chain was just that — a 66-foot-long chain used for surveying. Eighty chains equal one mile. The eighteen oceanfront lots varied in beachfront width but extended from the Manasquan River to the head of Barnegat Bay. These were the first lines marked in the sand along this shore. (over)

28th of 8th mo., 1687, [in the margin of the record the date is 29 of 1st mo., 1681], Ephraim Allen, of Shrews., md. to Margaret Wardell, of Shrews., at the house of Eliakim Wardell:

Wits:	
Eliakim Wardell	Eliakim Wardell
William Lawrence	Sarah Perkins
Judah Allen	Elizabeth Williams
Joseph West	Mary Allen
John Williams	Mary Cooper
Simon Cooper	Remembrance Lippincott
Remembrance Lippincott	Elizabeth Gifford
John Slocum	Sarah Reape
George Curles	Frances Bucher, [?]
Frances Borden	Jane Borden
John Woodson	Meribah Shum
Hannah Gifford	Remembrance Lippincott
William Woolley	Elizabeth Cole
John Sterkey	Margaret Parker
Eliakim —, [?]	
William Lawrence, Jr.	
John Lawrence	

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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/seeing to ppbhistoricalsociety@gmail.com and someone will get back to you.



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Point Pleasant Beach, NJ 08742

Point Pleasant Historical Society
Serving Point Pleasant and Point Pleasant Beach

Fast-forward 200 years. Point Pleasant Beach and Bay Head were approaching incorporation, and a major development was underway. This is best illustrated by the 1880s maps drawn for The Point Pleasant Land Company and The Bay Head Land Company. The old lots had largely been consolidated and re-gridded to assist the development. The reorganization was vast; however, they seemed to have missed a spot. The land straddling the old Ocean Road, from Elizabeth Avenue to Osborne Avenue, appears untouched.

A walk down one of these roads puts you on a bearing that was established nearly 350 years ago. This is where Clayton Field and The Ocean House had stood, sectioned off from the surrounding development by age-old metes and bounds until the need to partition won out. All is not lost. Today fields of flowers, albeit riddled with roads, grow wild where Clayton Field once sprawled.



Through marriage, inheritance, sale, or some other device, the Point Pleasant Beach lots surveyed in 1685 descended through the generations to familiar family names like Arnold, Forman, Borden, Johnson, Clayton, Potter and Morris. And of course, there were the Cooks, an enduring Quaker family, who opened their farmhouse doors to visitors and kept the old tradition alive into the new. In the story of Old Monmouth and Ocean Counties, this was another chapter of the same book. Their families too can be found in the earliest records, settling in Middletown or Shrewsbury in the 1600s among their “Point Pleasant Predecessors,” in search of a better life and hoping to start something new. By every measure they succeeded, and the proof is not in a record book. It is under your feet the next time you walk to the beach.



(above) The eighteen oceanfront lots of July 1685 laid down on modern aerial imagery, with the title panel from the same sheet. East Jersey Proprietors, July 9th, 1685, Land Purchases, Shrewsbury, Monmouth County: Point Pleasant Beach & Bay Head, New Jersey, plotted by the author, 21 March 2021. Read from the Manasquan River south, the labels reproduce exactly the chain of adjoiners recited in George Keith’s returns — the northernmost strip is the Williams and Woolley “gushett,” the southernmost John Hance’s, bounded on the south by “a River and Land unsurveyed” at the head of Barnegat Bay. Richard Hartshorne holds four strips, William Lawrence three, Judah Allen and Joseph West two each; John Williams and William Woolley held theirs in partnership.