Worcester County Historical Society



Fall General Meeting 2026

November 7, 2026
American Legion Synepuxent Post 166
2308 Philadelphia Avenue
Ocean City, MD
1 PM Social with Lunch at 2 PM
Members: $35.00
Non-Members: $40.00

Menu:
Shrimp Salad
Ham, Turkey, and Pulled Pork Sliders
Cheese Tray
Apple and Pumpkin Pie
Water, Coffee, Tea, and Lemonade

Please make cash or check payments to
Worcester County Historical Society
PO Box 111, Snow Hill, MD 21863

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: OCTOBER 30TH

Board of Directors

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President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

As we look back on another meaningful season of preservation, education, and community engagement, I am reminded of how fortunate we are to belong to a Society that values the stories, places, and people that shaped our shared history. Every artifact we protect, every photograph we identify, and every memory we record helps ensure that future generations will understand the roots of our community.

The May Spring General 2026 meeting of the Society met at the Pocomoke City fire hall. The auxiliary provided a delicious dinner. At that meeting, we welcomed Anna Dolle Bushnell as our speaker. Anna is a Maryland entrepreneur, community leader, published author, a fourth-generation confectioner, and co-owner with her brother Andrew of Dolle's Candyland on the Ocean City boardwalk. She shared pictures, heirloom items as well as stories of the local culture. She also provided those present with "goodies" from Dollie's Candyland.

During the meeting, the 2026 Bob and Kathy Fisher Award was presented to Nancy Howard, a Berlin native. Nancy continues to be a tireless volunteer worker for historical preservation for at least three historical properties in Ocean City: the restoration of the Henry Hotel on S. Division St. and Baltimore Ave., effectively securing grants for structural improvements to the 1891 Ocean City Life Saving Station Museum, and the restoration of the Bank of Ocean City Building on Dorchester St. The Society congratulates Nancy Howard on her outstanding commitment to community preservation.

The May newsletter also included pictorial representations of eight 2025 biannual mini-grant recipients who collectively received $12,300.00 to support local history. They include Calvin B. Taylor House and Rackliffe House in Berlin; Costen House Museum and the Delmarva Discovery Center in Pocomoke City; Furnace Town in Snow Hill; the Henry Hotel and the Museum of Ocean City in Ocean City; and Saint Martin's Church in Snow Hill, Maryland. The 2025 recipients represented a diverse range of projects dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and sharing the rich history of Worcester County. This would not have been possible except for membership contributions and donations from our community partners. So, the Society is once again very thankful for what you have done and for what you have allowed us to do. A silent auction held that evening was very well received. Special thanks to all who donated items.

This year, our historical society has continued its work through active community participation in the Blessing of the Combines in Snow Hill, which celebrates our agricultural cultural heritage, and the Juneteenth Celebration sponsored by the Sturgis Museum in Pocomoke City that commemorates the end of slavery in America, provided financial assistance to the Purnell African American Cemetery, and outreach efforts made possible by dedicated volunteers and generous supporters. Whether you helped organize an event, welcomed visitors, contributed family history, donated materials, or simply renewed your membership, your participation strengthens our mission.

President's Message

Looking ahead to 2027, we are excited to build on this momentum. We hope to expand opportunities for members and non-members of all ages to connect with local history, share personal stories, and discover the many ways the past continues to inform the present. In that regard, the Society looks forward to working with Worcester County Public School System. We hope to implement a scholarship essay-writing program for high school graduates who will be enrolled in a 4-year college, a community college, or a business school. The essay must be written on a person, place, family, object, or an event unique to the County. More information will be sent to high school counselors in the communities. The Society is also looking for a logo to represent us. To achieve that goal, we are planning to sponsor a logo contest with age-appropriate prizes as we select one finalist from each division: elementary, middle school, and high school to represent our Society. We will then have the Society vote on the final selection at the fall dinner in 2027. We are also in the process of restructuring our membership status. And now for more exciting news, we are in the beginning stages of planning a gala for next year's fundraiser! More news to follow on our website: www.historicalworcester.org.

We warmly invite you to join us at our upcoming programs, bring a friend, family member, Neighbor, or student as we continue to discover the rich heritage of our area. We also welcome photographs, documents, artifacts, and personal recollections connected to local history. Every contribution adds a meaningful piece to the story we preserve together.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support, enthusiasm, and commitment to preserving our heritage. We look forward to seeing you at a Society program or event and sharing another rewarding season of connection, discovery, and community. Please invite a neighbor, friend, student, or family member to visit, attend a program, or support our work. Together, we keep history alive.

Blessings,
Rev. Dr. Doretha Sutton-Whittington
President, Worcester County Historical Society

Fall Lunch Speaker: Nancy Gaither



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2308 Philadelphia Avenue
Ocean City, MD

Nancy E. Gaither is the President of the Assateague Island Alliance (AIA), a non-profit organization partnering with the Assateague Island National Seashore (AINS) to promote awareness, education, and provide stewardship of the island's wildlife and natural resources for the enjoyment of current and future generations.
Her business experience has included stopovers at Apple Computer (10+ years), UnitedHealthcare (10+ years), Booz Allen Hamilton, and as a Maryland 4-H Faculty Member. She has served in positions such as Vice President or Director of Learning & Development, Organizational Effectiveness Executive at UnitedHealthcare. Executive Coach at Johns Hopkins University and has consulted with top executives on change initiatives, talent management, people and team development, and conflict resolution.

Nancy holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree from the University of Maryland. Currently, Nancy is a tour guide for Harrison Hotels in Ocean City, introducing and teaching travelers about the Assateague Island National Seashore, Ocean City, Berlin, and more. She is also a museum aide with the Life-Saving Museum in Ocean City. Those who have worked with Nancy have stated that she has an "ability to communicate in a way that inspires others" and encourages them to change or look at things in a different way, all the while having fun! In her "spare time," Nancy sings with the PineTones Chorus in Ocean Pines and the Southern Delaware Chorale.

Margolies in OCMD

Allison Blakeman

Member of the Board of Directors

While studying for my Master of Library and Information Science and my Certificate in Archival Studies at Louisiana State University, I had the opportunity to curate a digital exhibition as part of a course. The following article outlines my project.

In 1985, John Margolies, a vernacular architecture enthusiast, writer, and photographer, cruised Coastal Highway and walked Ocean City, Maryland's famous boardwalk as part of his mission to document kitschy architecture, signage, and sculptures across the country before they vanished. Forty years later, many of the places Margolies observed during his trip to the well-known beach town still exist and remain beloved by locals and tourists alike. Margolies' collection of images, part of the John Margolies Roadside America photograph archive (1972-2008), shows these locations in their grandeur, while images I photographed exactly 40 years later, in 2025, illustrate how paint jobs, remodels, and business cycles can transform a town. Nevertheless, much of the community's character endures.

For ten years, Margolies' 11,710 digitized 35mm film slides, spanning 1969 to 2008, have been available online. In June 2025, the LoC created a StoryMap showcasing the wide range of places the photographer visited and documented. The 103 images from Ocean City, Maryland, are featured on this map, all plotted to a single point. Although not part of the LoC's project, this effort aims to build on previous work by plotting as many photographs as possible to their exact 1985 locations. It also documents how these places look today, forty years after Margolies visited the resort town. What has changed? What has stayed the same? One thing that remains is the support from locals and tourists for some of Ocean City's iconic businesses and entities, some of which existed long before Margolies' photographs and others that had emerged only recently but still exist decades later.

This work features 11 of the 103 photographs Margolies took documenting Ocean City's design and architecture, drawn from the John Margolies Roadside America photograph archive (1972-2008). The collection is wholly owned by the Library of Congress (LoC) and is not subject to copyright restrictions. These photographs are often used by the community for nostalgic reasons—whether to reminisce about a business or ride that has closed or to illustrate the changes a location has undergone over the past 40 years.

My ten photographs for this project were taken with my iPhone on a cold, windy day at the end of November 2025 to document changes at the locations shown in the photos I selected from the John Margolies Roadside America photograph archive (1972-2008). I became acquainted with Margolies' work in 2019 after seeing a Facebook post featuring one of his photos. Commenters were mourning the closure of a ride that had been a staple of Trimper's Rides for decades and that I had ridden many times as a child. However, I was especially captivated by the photo and did a Google search to learn about the photographer. I easily found Margolies and his collection of nostalgic images, now owned and digitized by the LoC. I immediately purchased almost every book he had written and have been waiting for the day I could work on a project based on his vibrant, nostalgic slides.

This project began as a final assignment for LIS 7505 Introduction to Digital Curation at Louisiana State University Online, but I hope to continue it and invite community participation to plot as many of the 103 old Ocean City images as possible. The full StoryMap for "Margolies in OCMD" is available at **margoliesinoc.omeka.net**. Some selections from the project are included below.



Margolies, John. "Life Saving Station Museum, wide angle, Ocean City, Maryland." Photograph. Washington, D.C., 1985. From Library of Congress: *John Margolies Roadside America photograph archive (1972-2008)*. https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017712403/.

The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum is pictured early in the morning on its perch at the end of the boardwalk.

OCEAN CITY LIFE-SAVING STATION MUSEUM

This 1891 Coast Guard building was moved by the Ocean City Museum Society to its current location about half a mile south in 1978 to save it from demolition. After relocating closer to the inlet, the building was restored, and the Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum was established with two floors of exhibits, an aquarium, and a gift shop. The museum now has a sister museum, the Museum of Ocean City, and both work to preserve and teach the town's history.



Blakeman, Allison. "Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum, 2025." Photograph. Ocean City, MD, 2025. From *Allison Blakeman Ocean City Images*.

The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum is closed for off-season hours in November 2025.

OCEAN CITY LIFE-SAVING STATION MUSEUM, 2025

The Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum is shown in November 2025. Forty years after John Margolies photographed the museum, it remains mostly unchanged except for the new placement of the giant anchor. The museum still welcomes both visitors and locals, offering insights into Ocean City and Coast Guard history.



Margolies, John. "Ocean Gallery World sign, Ocean City, Maryland." Photograph. Washington, D.C., 1985. From Library of Congress: *John Margolies Roadside America photograph archive (1972-2008).* https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2017712389/.

Ocean Gallery's well-known funky signage advertises its posters and home and condo decor in 1985.

OCEAN GALLERY

Ocean Gallery, as shown in this photograph and recognized by vacationers as an iconic Ocean City mainstay, opened its doors in 1972. However, eccentric founder Joe Kro-Art started out selling art from a hotel, which he later used as the basis for his store after the hotel was scheduled for demolition. Ocean Gallery has remained primarily unchanged since John Margolies took this photo forty years ago.



Blakeman, Allison. "Ocean Gallery, 2025." Photograph. Ocean City, MD, November 28, 2025. From *Allison Blakeman Ocean City Images.*

The iconic Ocean Gallery stands out on the boardwalk for its eclectic decorations, especially when many other buildings are plainer and follow today's modern stylistic norms.

OCEAN GALLERY, 2025

Ocean Gallery's descriptor may have shifted from "amazing" to "astounding" since John Margolies took his photo, but the building's marquee remains instantly recognizable to everyone who has visited the boardwalk in the past fifty years. The roof now features more decorations, including a handmade Spiderman cutout, but it is still just as flashy and funky.

If you are interested in helping plot the locations of photographs taken in Ocean City in 1985, like the one below, please contact me at allisonsblakeman@gmail.com. Thank you!



Upcoming Museum Events

Furnace Town

Fiber Festival | November 7th

Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum

Locals Week | October 19-25th, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

During this seven-day celebration, Delmarva locals enjoy free admission to both the Ocean City Life-Saving Station Museum and the Museum of Ocean City

Where History Comes Alive Through Magic & Storytelling | October 23rd, 5:00 - 6:00 PM

Join historian, storyteller, and magician David Dellman for an unforgettable evening where the fascinating history of Ocean City comes to life through incredible magic, captivating storytelling, and mind-bending illusions. **Tickets:** $40.00

Young Magicians Workshop | November 14th, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM | **Tickets:** $20.00

Unleash your inner magician in this fun and accessible magic class! Learn the secrets behind some of the classics of magic, including card, rope, and mind-reading magic. Develop stage presence, presentation skills, and confidence. No experience is required. For kids aged 11 to 17. Only 15 spots available!

Taylor House Museum

Children's Tours | December 14th, Tours begin at 5:00 and 5:30 PM

Bring in the wonder of the season with Storytime in the parlor and a special children's tour by candlelight.







2027 Opportunities

Mini-Grants

The Worcester County Historical Society is proud to support local history through its mini-grant program. Spring 2027 is our next mini-grant cycle, so keep an eye out for forthcoming information in the new year about the application process and deadline. Our 2025 recipients represent a diverse range of projects dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and sharing the rich heritage of Worcester County. We look forward to the lasting impact of past and future mini-grant awardees' work in our community.

Bob and Kathy Fisher Award

Each year, the Worcester County Historical Society seeks nominees for the Bob and Kathy Fisher Award for a living person who has worked to preserve Worcester County. The nominee form is always available on WCHS' website, and the winner is announced at the Society's Spring Meeting. If you know of anyone deserving of this award thanks to their preservation work in our county, please submit an application!





Worcester County Historical Society members promote the Society at the 2026 Blessing of the Combines in Snow Hill, Maryland.

historicalworcester.org

MUSEUMS OF WORCESTER COUNTY

Calvin B. Taylor House Museum

Costen House Museum

Delmarva Discovery Center

Furnace Town Historic Site

Girdletree Barnes Bank

Henry Hotel

Julia A. Purnell Museum

Museum of Ocean City

Ocean City Lifesaving Station Museum

Queponco Railway Station

Rackliffe House

St. Martin’s Church Museum

Sturgis One Room School Museum

OTHER HISTORIC SITES

Germantown School Community Heritage Center

Marva Theatre Performing Arts Center

PLEASE VISIT THE MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITES IN OUR COUNTY!

Worcester County Historical Society Membership

Thank you for choosing to be a member of the Worcester County Historical Society. Your membership will help support our efforts in Worcester County.

Name:

Mailing Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Please Circle

Individual $10.00/year

Family $15.00/year

Business/Patron $25/year OR $100/5 years

Lifetime $150 (one time)

Renewal_____

New Member_____

Please make your check payable to the Worcester County Historical Society (WCHS) and mail to:

Treasurer, WCHS, PO Box 111, Snow Hill, MD 21863

MISSION STATEMENT

The Worcester County Historical Society is a 501-C3 non-profit organization dedicated to discovering, preserving, and disseminating the rich natural and cultural history of Worcester County and the State of Maryland.

Worcester County Historical Society

PO Box 111

Snow Hill, MD 21863