

South Jersey Post Card Club

A revival - **Newsletter** - of a tradition!

Serving Post Card Collectors Since 1971

Wanamaker Camp Island Heights, New Jersey

by Don Pocher, SJGCC President

Island Heights was founded as a Methodist, Christian family resort July 1, 1878 to provide a place to hold camp meetings under the temperance influence.

In 1899, John Wanamaker purchased thirteen acres to be used as a campground for his youthful



John Wanamaker Commercial Institute Camp
Island Heights, N.J.

employees.

He would provide a two - week vacation for all of the boys and girls from his New York and Philadelphia stores. This would be the first time many of these young people would see the seashore and experience living away from a large city.



Entrance to Camp, Island Heights, N. J.
The John Wanamaker Commercial Institute

These young people were already members of the John Wanamaker Commercial Institute, so when they arrived at Barnegat Bay they marched through town to the camp. Arriving at camp, they settled into the camp's two hundred two-man tents.

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Post Card Found with Music and Lyrics of a Post Card Song.

Club vice president Judi Kearney recently discovered a post card with the music and lyrics to a song about a post card. The card is for sale by SJGCC member/dealer, Joe Engle.

Words by J. D. Dillenback Music by Joe Newman



The Song of the Post card

There is a song in my heart today.

Let this Post Card sing it to you.

I pray: "I'm thinking of you to-day; dear friend,

Thinking of you to-day . . .

Though long miles lie between us, dear friend,

I am thinking of you today.

© 1906, by J. D. Dillenback

It's a long time from 11 to 56 . . .

The first time I visited Mt Vernon was on a fifth grade trip with my most favorite teacher: Mr. Edward Mokrynski. He took our class to the Washington mansion on the Potomac at the end of a teaching unit he had just finished on the American Presidents. With a little help I can still name all the presidents . . . in proper order.



From my first visit at age 11 and my second visit 45 years later, a very strange thing happened to Mt. Vernon . . . the whole place got much smaller.

I'm sure everyone over 50 knows what I mean!

Lightships – A Brief History

Everyone knows lighthouses. Mention the word and an immediate image of a storm-swept coast with a lonely keeper struggling to keep the light burning comes into view. But what about lightships? I've found that many people have never heard of lightships. But like lighthouses, lightships are a disappearing part of our maritime heritage. And, although preservation efforts crop up now and then, very few lightships still exist.

The early Romans came up with the idea first. They built small boats, with an open basket atop the mast. The fire lasted as long as the oil supply held, or until the wind prevailed. Armed soldiers manned these little vessels to protect commerce from pirates, and to provide a beacon for the harbor. However, since sailing at night was extremely dangerous, the original idea never caught on.

In 1731, an Englishman, Robert Hamblin, received permission from the King to design and build the first modern lightship. The **Nore** resembled a small fishing sloop, with two ship's lanterns hung high above the deck. Even though the original concept was beset with problems, the shipping industry considered the idea a godsend, and similar vessels were put into use all over the globe.

The first US lightship was built in Virginia in 1820, and took up station off Norfolk. From 1820 to 1983, 116 lightship stations were established by the United States at one time or another. (This number includes stations renamed, moved and taken over by Canada.) The numbers declined slowly, as lighthouses were built, permanent buoys positioned, and positions became unnecessary. In 1983, the last active lightship, **Nantucket Shoals**, was replaced by a navigational buoy. And, on March 29, 1985, the lightship era came to an end as the **Nantucket I** was officially decommissioned.

Although the lightship era was relatively brief, US lightships evolved into highly sophisticated, efficient navigational aids. They could be anchored in shallow water, where lighthouses couldn't be built; they could easily move to deep water, marking a shipping channel or landfall. They not only served as beacons, they provided fog signals in bad weather, and carried round-the-clock transmitters for bearing and distance-finding.

The Crew

Life on a lightship was no picnic. Early crews served eight months of the year at sea, four months at a time, separated by a brief shore leave. Weather could wreak havoc with the anchor, and even the veteran sailors complained of seasickness. When diesel engines were installed on lightships for better control in bad weather, the constant heavy smell of diesel fuel was nauseating, and the newly-designed foghorns could cause pain and deafness. Eventually, crews were rotated on a 30-day schedule, small libraries were provided and the monotony of life at sea took on life in the forms of

Nantucket basket-making, scrimshaw designs, and sailor's valentines.

Collecting lightship post cards has been almost as difficult as the life on board the ship. Because of their obscurity and placement, lightships have never been the focus of photographers and artists. Artistically plain and unbecoming to the eye, lightships lack the stark beauty of a coastal lighthouse, standing alone against a raging sea. And, in the last message sent by the **Nantucket I** we realize, "An important part of Coast Guard history ended today . . . we must now look somewhere else to find the stuff that sea stories are made of."

Two examples of Lightship cards:



San Francisco Light-Vessel. – Moored in 108 feet of water, about 3/4 miles outside of bar off entrance to Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay. Light, White, Fixed and Eclipse, visible 13 miles. Vessel is equipped with Chime Whistle also Submarine Bell.



Judi A. Kearney

Is it Postcard or Post Card?

The debate has raged for years. I've seen at least a half-dozen articles about it in **Postcard Collector** and in **Barr's Post Card News**. There is some agreement among people who write for these publications, but as of now there is no firm or fast rule to follow.

Let's take a poll among our members: Is it **postcard** or **post card**?

Wanamaker (cont.)

Reveille sounded at 7AM to start the day. Sitting up exercises, clean up, breakfast, assembly, and quarter inspections followed. The rest of the day, the cadets participated in boating, hiking, fishing, crabbing, calisthenics, rifle practice, baseball, track and other games.



Inspection of Quarter, Girls Camp, Island Heights, N.J.
The John Wanamaker Commercial Institute

Different companies and regiments competed in intramural sports during their stay. During the evening, there were military drills, parades and concerts until taps sounded at 10:30 PM.



Wanamaker Commercial Club Girls
Island Heights, N.J.

On Sunday, there were religious services for all.

Wanamaker felt that his Island Heights camp would raise the moral and ethical standards of the participants, as well as encourage team spirit in the environment of fun and games.

If the reaction of Island Heights post card buyers is any indication, Wanamaker's camp was a huge success.

2001 SJPCCRoster Now Available

SJPCCR members who are unable to attend our monthly meeting may want to have their own copy of the 2001 Club Roster.

The newly published roster includes the names of all our members, with addresses, telephone numbers, birthday, e-mail and collecting interests.

If you want a copy mailed to you send \$1.50 to: Ray Hahn, 1111 E. Pine Street, Millville, NJ 08332.

My Start in Post Cards

by Emily DiVento

I love post cards and have been collecting them for twenty-one years. In 1979 I started collecting perfume bottles and small knick-knacks, but soon developed an interest in post cards through my sister, Paula Cocciolone. By 1980 I was visiting various flea markets, antique shops, and any place else where I could buy post cards for Paula and myself.

After a time, I realized that the nice little picture post card scenes were something I was beginning to like and that I could keep many for myself because they wouldn't take up much room.

I started my collection with novelty cards. Cards that had metal attached or were mechanical, or had something like embroidery. I then went to my home town (Philadelphia) views, and my favorite resort areas – Atlantic City and Wildwood, NJ.



A Morning Promenade. – Atlantic City.

Over the years, I've been in a feeding frenzy of post card subjects: advertising, lines, WWI, transportation, WWII, signed artists, or anything that catches my interest – especially cards with bright colors.

My sister Paula and I have now taken our other sister, Jane into our post card fold. Jane enjoys post card shows and shopping for her favorite cards – Santas in colored robes.

Things to Keep In Mind

- **New officers** are elected in December. Don Pocher has served two terms; he may want to turn his leadership position over to someone new. Think about how you could help the club by being an officer or trustee.
- This **Newsletter** revival will only be successful if you help write it. Go – right now - and find one of your favorite post cards. Write a story about it. Tell us when you bought it. Where. Why it is your favorite and then just add a little bit more. Send your stories to: Ray Hahn, 1111 E. Pine St. Millville, NJ 08332
- **PoCax 2002** is being planned for April. Keep watch for details.