



# WILDWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

George F. Boyer Museum



Our mission is to gather, preserve & present the history & memories of The Wildwoods.

609.523.0277 WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com 3907 Pacific Avenue Wildwood, NJ 08260

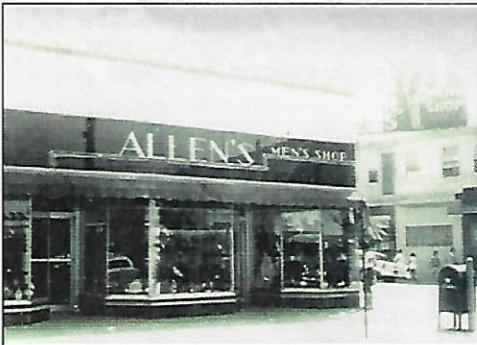
Issue #44  
Winter 2019

## Haberdashery

Years ago, there were many family-run clothing stores along Pacific Avenue in downtown Wildwood. Owners built up their clientele and trade, probably expecting to pass the shop down to their children. Little did they know that chain department stores would swallow up their livelihoods. Independent shops would close their doors for good and be forgotten. Here is a glimpse into some of those neighborhood vendors.

Jolenda later became a boutique called Narcissus run by Dale Gershman and husband, Chris Alex in the 70s. They featured high end hippie-disco style hotpants, bell-bottomed jeans and mini-skirts. The store's shoe department carried an array of colorful platform shoes. Local teens were in vogue in their Narcissus wardrobe walking the halls in high school or having fun at the nightclubs teeming with people.

family beachwear. Varsity jackets were posted in the display window and student gym suits were found inside. When Sol died, Edward paired up with another son, Izzy, and Oliver branched off on his own...



**Allen's Men Shop** at 3315-3317 Pacific Avenue carried men's wearing apparel and supplies. Their shelves were stacked with crisply starched dress shirts and sweaters. Attentive salespeople offered a handsome collection of knit shirts, outerwear, corduroy outfits, slacks and smart business suits.



The Fox family had been Wildwood tailors for decades. In 1912, David Wainer & his brother-in-law EZ Fox began **Wainer & Fox** at the NE corner of Davis & Pacific. The business flourished and they relocated a few times. The 1917 Pacific & Montgomery Avenues store's interior was well appointed as a bright, comfortable parlor where shoppers viewed large metropolitan wardrobes in a small seaside town. EZ was foremost a tailor, who fashioned men's wardrobes of the finest materials available. They encouraged customers to "Buy at home", support local businesses and to be wary of the fake advertising of 'some mail order houses'. Charitable groups, like the Fraternal Order of Eagles, and the police and fire dept proudly marched in parades wearing uniforms personally fitted by EZ.



**Oliver Fox** operated from 1948 to 1969 at 3501 Pacific Avenue. Many celebrities, performing at Wildwood's clubs, were dressed to impress in Oliver Fox's finest Italian knits or Botany 500. Wildwood High varsity jackets and gym suits were ordered as well as local department parade uniforms. Oliver was very civic minded and loved the town and people of Wildwood. He was instrumental in getting the band shell/concerts on the boardwalk and tailoring uniforms for a community band for which he was a trombonist. **Mary Sachs Specialty Shop**, up the street, at 3805 Pacific Avenue was owned and operated by Oliver Fox's mother-in-law. She suited up women and girls in fashionable beachwear.



At the **Baby Shop & Youth Center**, Walter and Anne Colberg provided everything for babies at 4017 and 4019 Pacific Ave. The floor room was a jumble of cribs and juvenile furniture, adorable baby and children's clothes, toys and novelties. There were two apartments upstairs. The Colbergs resided in one and the Gershmans lived in the other. Phylis and Max Gershman bought the store from the Colbergs. They built the **Jolenda Shop** next door at 4011 Pacific selling teen fashions. The name 'Jolenda' is a smash up of their children's first names- Joel, Lenny and Dale.



**Fox Brothers** was the next venture. Brothers Edward & Sol and their son/nephew, Oliver Fox opened doors at Montgomery & Pacific. They carried quality manufacturers which they custom fitted and altered. Racks held men's dress & casual wear and



For upscale, one-of-a-kind outfits you went to **Kranich's Shoppe** at 3405 Pacific Avenue. Owner Mary Beth Schiff catered to "gals on the way up" the corporate ladder with "coordinates to get you there". The millinery designers created perfectly matched hats for Easter or any special event. A "Name the Photo" contest, in 1981, awarded clothing gift certificates to winners that identified the most exact photo shoot locations featured in their ads.



Ronald Corson was the proprietor of **Corson's Men Shop** at 3400 Pacific Ave. The men's line sold attire for every occasion including Arrow dress shirts and Stetson hats. Not only for gentlemen, Corson's shop marketed children's and ladies' merchandise. Around 1957, the front window displayed a sultry one-piece black Lace Illusion swimsuit. The nude color lining provided modesty in the appropriate areas leaving the rest of the Jantzen bathing suit sheer. One local

young woman saved up money from her weekly paycheck to cover the \$20 price tag. That summer she sunbathed and waded in the surf wearing the hottest style.

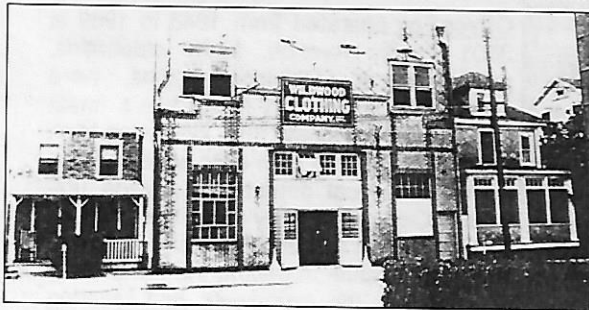


**Silen's** opened in 1919 to provide gear to fishermen on the island. In 1923 it was John E Silen's Shoe Store. His newspaper ad read "Every patron of this Shoe Store is a walking advertisement for us, and what Silen says, is so". It was family owned and managed at 5000 Pacific Avenue for 97 years. As you en-

tered, a wall of shoes, sandals and sneakers stood ready for picking. Various niches were crammed with swimsuits, cover-ups and summer apparel. Vacationers who forgot something would surely find the perfect item. Locals discovered Silen's best bargains during the end of the summer sales. Many students did their back to school shopping here. Silen's was instrumental in predicting upcoming trends in swimwear for clothing companies. Each August, the next year's resort wear was given a trial in the shop. With 5000 bathing suits sold in a summer, the ones most in demand were discovered. Happy customers returned year after year, generation after generation to friendly service and great buys. Fourth generation Barry Rasmussen and his wife, Pat, retired after the 2016 season.

-Kathy Skouras

There are more photos of clothing stores in the museum files but hardly any information about them. What do you remember about these?



14-0084 Wildwood Clothing Factory  
114 E. Schellenger Ave



Martha Shop & Tot Town  
3405 & 3407 Pacific Ave



15-0066 Ruth Feld  
3307 Pacific Ave



The Rosella Shop  
3100 Pacific Ave



15-0065 Wellmont Shoppe  
3207 Pacific Ave



15-0069 Saner's  
3300 Pacific Ave



Meech & Co  
4600 Pacific Ave



Moderne Sportswear  
108-110 Oak Ave



Sol's Dresses  
3906 Pacific Ave



15-0038-1 Mennies Dept Store  
Pine & Pacific

Samuel Cauffman, Jr



This pen & ink drawing was chosen for an early Wildwood Historical Commission logo. It focuses on a silhouetted fisherman rowing over choppy waves while a seagull flies overhead eyeing the day's catch. The sketch, drawn by Sam Cauffman, Jr. invokes a feeling of determination against the weather. Mr. Cauffman was a 40 year newspaper man, working as a columnist, at the copy desk and as managing editor of The Delaware Morning News. In the early 1960s to 1967, he relocated to North Wildwood, NJ where he drew editorial cartoons for the News-Journal papers. His cartoons were often critical and attacked politicians in Delaware. During an interview he remarked, "I knew some politicians didn't like the cartoons, but I felt sure they wouldn't drive 90 miles (to Wildwood) to punch me in the nose." There is no documentation about how Sam Cauffman's illustration became part of historical commission logo, but sometimes when a museum reference book is opened, the engaging sketch is found on the bookplate.

-Kathy Skouras

### Louisa Booth

One hundred years ago, prohibition began in 1920 with the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment which banned the sale and import of alcoholic drinks.

Wildwood did not let the 'inconvenience' of Prohibition stop entrepreneurs from providing drinks to thirsty visitors, and rum running became a lucrative pastime. Small skiffs could transport liquor with easy access to Delaware Bay and Ottens Harbor. Nooks and crannies in the coves and back bays offered concealment from the US Coast Guard and police.

Nightclubs and watering holes found ways to oblige summer guests in search of libations. Although some establishments were blatantly open in advertising to the public that beer was served, they were often raided by police. Some spots were more discrete, yet vacationers discovered the locations to quench their desires.

One enterprising North Wildwood businesswoman, Louisa Booth, converted the Otten Mansion at the corner of 18<sup>th</sup> & Surf Avenues into the impressive Chateau Monterey. She introduced countless up-and-coming entertainers at her night club and restaurant. During Prohibition, legend has it, that she bargained with the illegal smugglers to keep her bar well stocked. Fearing they would not do business transactions with a female proprietor though, she shortened her name to Lou. The Chateau Monterey was destroyed by fire in 1938.

-Kathy Skouras



Lou Booth, (1896-1992) 1984 photo, courtesy of darkin-the-park.com



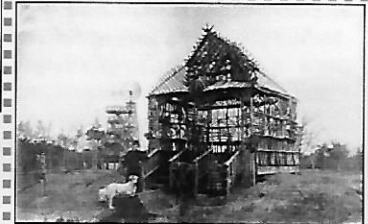
### Wildwood Water Works

The first Wildwood Water Works, constructed in 1893, is truly open-air 'stickwork'. The architectural Stick style of the late 19th century was meant to mimic exposed half-timbered framing over outside walls. An artisan well digger descended 590 feet to bring up "excellent water". The old cedar well was built on the island at Oak & Holly Beach Avenues and broken down in 1896. The wood was salvaged for use by the fire department. Currently Wildwood Water, located in Middle Township, has 16 wells and provides water to all The Wildwoods.

The Wildwood Water Works Pumping Station has served customers of the Wildwood Water Utility since 1910. The 109-year-old building is the sole pumping station for the utility and serves customers in Middle and Lower Townships as well as Wildwood, Wildwood Crest, West Wildwood and North Wildwood

The Wildwood Water & Sewer Utility oversees the operation of the water supply network. Their operations building has relocated to a new facility at 3416 Park Boulevard this year. The architectural design is drastically different - a modern brick and glass structure.

-Kathy Skouras



### 2020 Museum Hours

April 16-May 30  
Thu-Sat 9am to 2pm  
June 1-Sept 26  
Mon-Sat 9am to 2pm  
Oct 1-Oct 31  
Thu-Sat 9am to 2pm

Oh Yes! It's FREE

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### Give a Gift and Help the Museum



The Wildwood Historical Society and the George F. Boyer Museum

are supported by memberships and donations. We are an independent non-profit and receive no financial help from the City of Wildwood.

Our Buy A Brick Program provides an opportunity to have a brick engraved in honor of a loved one and/ or to commemorate fond Wildwoods memories.

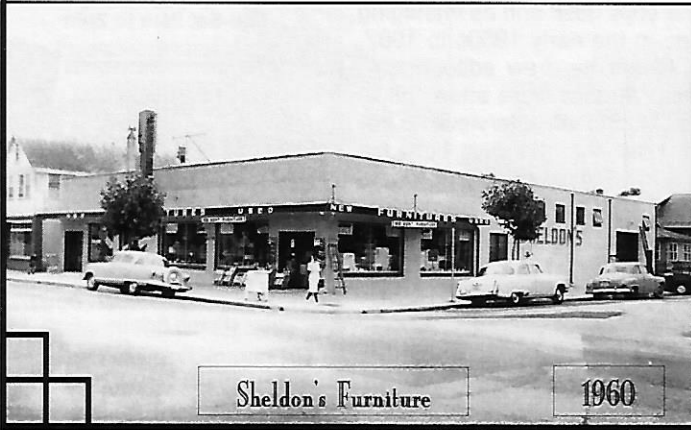
Visitors can view your etched message at the Museum entrance. It is priceless. Please remember the Museum when thinking of a gift for the person who has everything.

4" X 8" Bricks may contain 3 lines with a maximum of 18 characters per line for \$100.00.  
8" x 8" Bricks may contain 6 lines with a maximum of 18 characters per line for \$250.00.

Paver order forms can be downloaded

@ WildwoodHistoricalMuseum.com or call 609-523-0277

# Then & Now



Sheldon's Furniture

1960



Photo by Kathy Skouras

4200 Park Boulevard, Wildwood


2019

Walgreen's Pharmacy

We are always looking for new active Board Members and Volunteers.



The Wildwood Historical Society, Inc. received an operating support grant administered by the Cape May County Culture & Heritage Commission, from funds granted by the New Jersey Historical Commission.

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If you have already done so, thank you. Donations are welcome, too! Membership donations help cover the costs of newsletters & mailings.



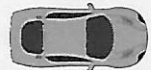
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The Wildwood Historical Society, Inc. & The George F. Boyer Museum are made possible through the contributions of many individuals. The gifts you make today help preserve the memories of the past. Please consider the Historical Society in your will.

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