



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,

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Summer 2017



Strike Up the Bands!



Wildwood was called the Las Vegas of the East Coast for its vibrant night life in the 1960s. Top performers appeared at over fifty venues trying to energize the crowds. SHOUT was the summer entertainment guide with all the 'who, where & when'. Music enthusiasts, dressed up in their evening finery, jammed into lively unairconditioned clubs. New music became a cultural mainstay as patrons danced the night away to noisy rock and roll hits. Do you remember any of these fun hangouts?

overflowed with crowds.



Rainbow Club 3819 Pacific Avenue

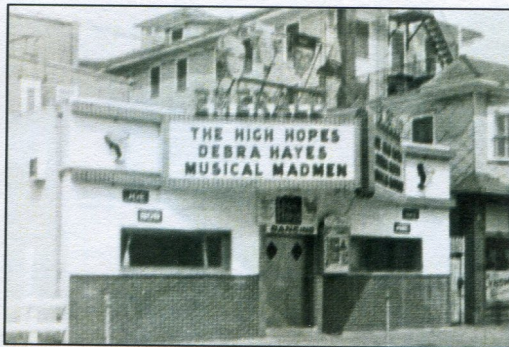
An amazing line-up of acts graced the Rainbow Club each summer. Headliners included Count Basie & his 20 piece orchestra, Ruby & the Romantics & the Chiffons. In the 1960s rhythm & blues artist Bill Doggett trilled "Honky Tonk", the soul vocal group, The Vibrations belted out "The Watusi" and Joey Dee & the Starlites wowed the crowd with "Mashed Potatoes", "Shout" & the "Peppermint Twist". Len Barry, lead vocalist of The Dovells, swept everyone off their feet with his renditions of "Bristol Stomp", "Wildwood Days" & the "Hully Gully Dance Craze". Numerous songs evoked dance crazes, featured by the mesmerizing "Go-Go Girls", who also introduced dances created at the Rainbow Club. Chubby Checker received his first great boost with the "Twist" here.

swallowing. Themes were highlighted weekly. Hawaiian week inspired a cast of hula dancers, palm trees and leis. For their Mexican Fiesta, servers were señoritas, and the Mexican Hat Dance, El Toro & toredors made appearances. The Roaring 20's party celebrated flappers, The Charleston & the Keystone Cops. At the New Year's Eve gala out strutted Mummer Music, Father Time, party hats & Auld Lang Syne.



Fairview @ Pacific & Lincoln Avenues

Fairview's Sal Masi emceed the self proclaimed "Rock City" club's house bands- the Untouchables & the Dimensions. Tuesday night was Party Night, where everything was deliberately wacky. Costumes were de rigueur for the club crewmembers with the zanier or raunchier the outfits, the better. Bartenders, in costumes of course, would invariably join the humorous antics unfolding on stage. Regular sing-a-longs, would take on a karaoke atmosphere as fans sang along with the Untouchables, following flashing lyrics broadcasted by a slide projector. Energetic dancing, to the beat of The Dimensions, continued through the night on the stage, behind the bars, and in the aisles, as the dance floor always



Emerald Room @ 233 E.Schellenger

High Hopes & the Magnetic Magnatones were two house bands that played at the Emerald Room in the Blackstone Hotel late 1950s & 1960s. Wednesday was Party Night which may have intrigued or amused spectators with live goldfish



Red Garter @ 310 New Jersey Avenue

The Red Garter Club, formerly the Mo-cambo, opened in June 1967. It was styled after and managed by the Philadelphia club of the same name. Featuring a gay nineties atmosphere the cabaret was furbished with frosted glass windows, Tiffany-style lamps and latticework on the walls. Hinting at the six-piece banjo band performing within, an 18 foot tall exact replica of a Vegas banjo was perched above the red door corner entrance. The nimble, quick fingering of expert musician, Frank Wilson, was sometimes accompanied by the thunderous voice of Angesea's own "Red Hot Mamma", Ann Brown. Shows also included sing-a-longs, old time movies, peanuts and a souvenir Red Garter.

Clubbing in Wildwood was the way to unwind, listen to the hottest bands & musicians and to refine your latest dance moves. Your only dilemma was deciding which of the multitude of night spots to start at.

-Kathy Skouras



Keep Posted On Fun - Read Shout Weekly

The Wildwood Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization that operates on donations and memberships.

Where have the cool vintage *neon* signs of the Wildwoods ended up?.....not in Wildwood!

Collections of vintage Wildwood neon signage can be found at the DooWop Experience building fronting Fox Park, some store fronts along Pacific Ave. and there are rumored stashes of them in boarded up places around town. (I can attest that this is somewhat accurate).

But the bulk of Wildwood's cool neon memories are scattered all over the U.S., particularly motel remnants. The big Bonanza letters are in four different states. Thunderbird neons are in Vermont, Maryland & Delaware. A La Vita is in Minnesota, a big Rio sign is in Golden Beach, FL and the Sand Dollar is in Palm Beach. The bent arrow from Jay's office neon made it to Portland while sections of the Cavalier, Earle, & Sandy Court went to Manhattan artists. A Casba Club neon is in Burbank and a Terminal Bakery neon found its way to Doylestown. A Playpen neon resides in Virginia. The Packard office sign went back to Detroit. The funky Sea Rose Motel is displayed in a Philly kitchen. The old Montacello Motel decorates a Pottstown pizza shop. The Hitching Post sign traveled to Jacksonville.

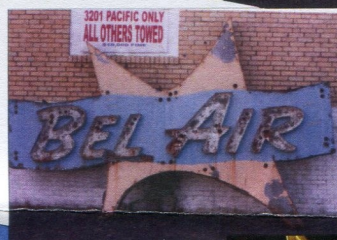
Then there are those who want significant chunks of the area's past. A Lancaster, PA Wildwood aficionado started off with the 20' long Sans Souci Motel sign and soon followed with the Uncle Lou's pancake sign, Rio

Coffee Shop, Martinique & Lucky nightclubs, Blue Jay Motel and the City of Wildwood neons.

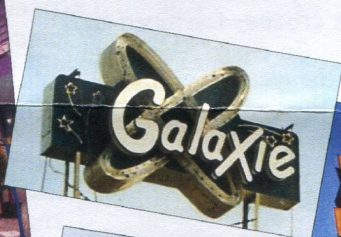
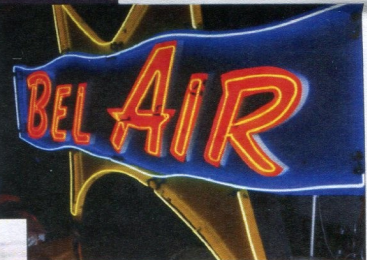
Another driven neon enthusiast had the foresight to obtain and have me restore the high-profile big Bel Air Motel sign and has since added among others the Kona Kai, Frontier, Eden Roc & Apollo motels, as well as the flame tip from the Flame Inn.

But, the largest collection of Wildwood's neon past is owned by someone who has never been here...and resides some 1750 miles away in the far reaches of Minot, ND. The "National Save the Sign" effort, at last count, has rescued some 700 unique signs from across the U.S. Here, representing the Wildwoods, can be found the animated Galaxie, Sea Star and BelAire Motel signs (animated multi-element signs are highly collectible) as well as the Ocean East, Dilido/Dunes & Tempo; Woody's Café, Apollo & Duffinetti's restaurants; the Mir-a-Mar, Mermaid and Maple Leaf Apts., the Cork N' Bottle and Garden State Liquor Stores, Surf Club, the Bolero, Matador neon and the original Lollipop Motel sign.

So be kind to your old neon. When properly maintained, it will last another 50 years. -Fedeles Musso



Before & After



Katharine Pontius, Frances Whitaker & Mary Howard Baker

J. Thompson, Latimer & Philip Baker, three brothers who were instrumental in founding Wildwood, NJ, was only one trio of adventurous Baker siblings. J. Thompson & Margaret Elizabeth Baker raised three daughters who became deeply involved in WWI as well as supporting the women's suffrage movement.

Katharine and Mary graduated from Bucknell University, their father's alma mater, in 1895. Both further their education at Goucher College in Baltimore. Katharine earned a law degree and was the first female admitted to the bar in Union County, PA. She went on to practice law with her father in Lewisburg, PA. and was a teacher in Wildwood in the early 1900s. Mary Howard attended Goucher College in 1898-1900.

Frances Whitaker began her altruistic work in the French Foreign Legion in 1916, as part of an alliance. Katharine Pontius joined her younger sister about 6 months later. Originally French army nurses, they transferred to the American Red Cross caring for both American & French soldiers, after the US became embroiled in the Great War.

Based on her Wildwood experiences, Katharine penned stories about strong women in support of the suffrage cause. They were published in *Collier's*, *Harper's Weekly* and *Hampton* magazines. Supposedly, she used some of this income to provide treats for the military in her care.

Katharine became skilled in suturing blood vessels and sterilizing wounds which reduced amputations. As head night nurse, she was the first woman to attain the rank of corporal in the French army. She was awarded the Fourragere and the Croix de Guerre.

While ministering at the war front, Katharine possibly contracted tuberculosis. On Feb 7, 1919 she sailed on the *Espagne* on her journey to her Wildwood home. She went to Saranac Lake, NY to convalesce but died a few months later. The "Katherine Baker Memorial French War Orphanage" near Paris was dedicated to Katharine's service. In 1929 The Women's Overseas Service Convention proclaimed Katharine Baker one of four "outstanding heroines" of the Great War.

Frances remained in Paris after the Armistice, heading the American Red Cross canteen for soldiers on the Avenue Victor Emanuel. She coordinated a much needed facelift of the facility and organized activities such as Sunday afternoon parties. Luxuries, such as hot water bottles and spending money, sent to her from Wildwood friends, were shared with the American soldiers. She rallied for the 19th Amendment, a woman's right to vote, and continued to be a political activist to the 1930s.

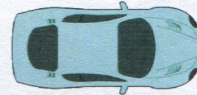
Margaret Stuart Crane, a fourth sister, who had married S. Heber Crane, died 3 weeks after giving birth to their second son, S. Heber Crane, Jr. A few years later when S. Heber, Sr. died, Mary adopted her nephew and renamed him John Baker Crane. At the age of 18, John

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Museum Hours
April 7-29 Thu-Sat 9am to 2pm
May 4-27 Thu-Sat 9am to 2pm
June 1-Sept 30
Mon-Sat 9am to 2pm
Oct 5-Oct 28
Thu-Sat 9am to 2pm

Oh Yes! it's
FREE

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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.

unexpectedly decided to leave Harvard to join the French Foreign Legion in 1939. Mary, wrote to a friend that she planned to follow him to join the French nurses "in order to keep from going crazy".

As sole heiress, Mary sold the J. Thompson Baker's house at 3008 Atlantic Avenue, Wildwood, NJ to the Wildwood Civic Club in 1935. Their mother, Margaret Elizabeth, organized the club in 1912. Local women focused on various causes and used the home as a campaign headquarters for the suffrage movement. Anna Howard Shaw, a president of the National Woman's Suffrage Organization, lectured there. It is remarkable that these women, born into a privileged family, spent much of their lives volunteering to make a difference in others' lives.

-Kathy Skouras



Katharine

(1876-1919)



Frances 1916

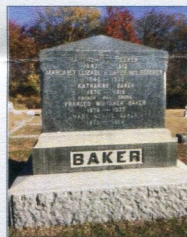
(1878-1933)



Mary 1923

(1879-1968)

Passport photos

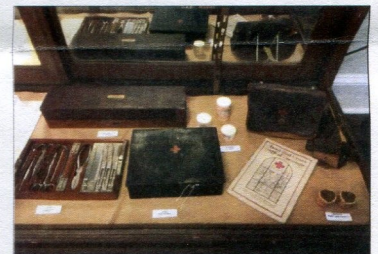


Cold Spring
Presbyterian
Cemetery

Wildwood Historical Museum



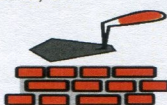
Katharine Baker's
French Cross



Red Cross display at Cape May
County Museum June 2017

Thank you to our recent Brick Donors:

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James Karcher, Jr.



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 three lines with a maximum of 18 characters per line for \$100.00.
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