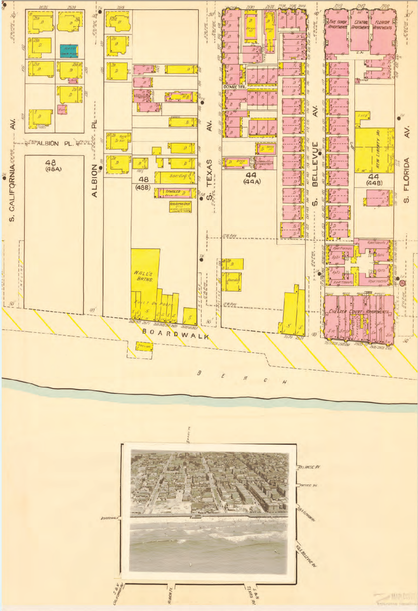
HISTORIC DUCKTOWN
EXPLORE DUCKTOWN, ATLANTIC CITY



SOURCE: SANBORN MAP COMPANY, "INSURANCE MAPS OF ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY (SHEET 7) - DIGITAL MAPS AND GEOSPATIAL DATA," PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, THE TRUSTEES OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, MAPS.PRINCETON.EDU/CATALOG/PRINCETON-FQ977W202.

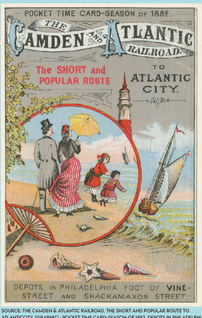
DUCKTOWN, KNOWN AS ATLANTIC CITY'S "LITTLE ITALY," IS A NEIGHBORHOOD IN ATLANTIC CITY THAT IS HOME TO A ROBUST VARIETY OF CULTURE, COMMERCE, AND HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS. THE DUCKTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES STRETCH FROM MISSOURI TO TEXAS AVENUES. ATLANTIC AVENUE WAS FEATURED IN THE LAUNCH OF MONOPOLY IN 1935, CEMENTING THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S NOTORIETY IN THE CITY'S LANDSCAPE.

THE STORY OF DUCKTOWN BEGINS WITH THE SETTLEMENT OF THE UNALACHTIGO TRIBE, TRANSITIONING THROUGH THE VARIOUS PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT. THE NAME, "DUCKTOWN" COMES FROM THE DUCK HUNTING ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS THAT CAME IN THE EARLY 1900S, AND THE MANY DUCK FARMS IN THE AREA. DUCKTOWN IS EVER CHANGING AND IS CURRENTLY HOME TO A DIVERSE MIXTURE OF ETHNIC POPULATIONS INCLUDING AFRICAN AMERICAN, ITALIAN, MEXICAN, CARIBBEAN, PAKISTANI, VIETNAMESE, CHINESE AND THAI.

THIS CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS STOOD THE TEST OF TIME THROUGH THE RISES AND FALLS OF COMMERCE DURING THE REVITALIZATION OF VARIOUS FORMS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IN ATLANTIC CITY. "HISTORIC DUCKTOWN" DETAILS THIS COMPLEX HISTORY, COVERING THE HISTORY, SIGNIFICANT LANDMARKS OF YESTERYEARS, CURRENT LANDMARKS, AND A CELEBRATION OF THE TOWN'S DIVERSITY.

THE RAILROADS OF DUCKTOWN
THE IMPACT OF RAILROADS ON ATLANTIC CITY

BEFORE IT WAS ESTABLISHED AS ATLANTIC CITY, ABSECON ISLAND WAS INCREDIBLY CHALLENGING TO ACCESS AND HAD SPARSE FULL-TIME RESIDENTS. THE CONCEPT OF LIVING AND VACATIONING IN THIS LOCATION ONLY CAME TO FRUITION UPON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CAMDEN AND ATLANTIC RAILOAD IN 1854. BEFORE THE RAILROAD WAS BUILT, BUSINESSES BETWEEN ABSECON AND CAMDEN WERE HANDLED BY A DAILY TWO-HORSE STAGE AND OYSTER WAGONS.



SOURCE: THE CAMDEN & ATLANTIC RAILROAD. THE SHORT AND POPULAR ROUTE TO ATLANTICCITY. [GRAPHIC] : POCKET TIME CARD-SEASON OF 1882. DEPOTS IN PHILADELPHIA FOOT OF VINE-STREET AND SHACKAMAXON STREET. 1882, PHILLIPS, EMILY.

DR. JONATHAN PITNEY, "THE FATHER OF ATLANTIC CITY," REALIZED THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF A CONVENIENT FORM OF TRANSPORTATION TO THE BEAUTY OF THE SHORE AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A DEVELOPED RESORT CITY. AT ITS LAUNCH, THE TRAIN HAD FILLED ITS MAXIMUM CAPACITY OF 600 RIDERS FOR A FOUR-HOUR ROUTE. THE ROUTE BEGAN IN CAMDEN AND BROUGHT PASSENGERS TO ABSECON, WHERE A FERRY TOOK THEM ACROSS THE ABSECON BAY TO THEIR FINAL DESTINATION, ATLANTIC CITY.

SOURCE: THE CAMDEN & ATLANTIC RAILROAD. THE SHORT AND POPULAR ROUTE TO ATLANTICCITY. [GRAPHIC] : POCKET TIME CARD-SEASON OF 1882. DEPOTS IN PHILADELPHIA FOOT OF VINE-STREET AND SHACKAMAXON STREET. 1882, PHILLIPS, EMILY.

SOURCE: "CAMDEN ATLANTIC RAILROAD," ABSECON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, WWW.ABSECONHISTORY.COM/CAMDEN-ATLANTIC-RAILROAD.HTML.

PITNEY'S PITCH OF THE BENEFITS OF THE SEA AIR HELPED MOLD A METROPOLIS. AMUSEMENT PIERS, JAZZ LOUNGES, FLOOR SHOWS, AND BEAUTY PAGEANTS DREW VISITORS TO ATLANTIC CITY. WHAT CAUGHT PEOPLE'S ATTTENTION MOST, HOWEVER, WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BOARDWALK. THE BOARDWALK'S EVOLUTION HAS COME TO BE AN ICONIC SYMBOL AND ANNUAL ATTRACTION.

THE ROOTS OF ATLANTIC CITY
THE CHANGE OF DUCKTOWN, ATLANTIC CITY

THE UNALACHTIGO TRIBE

THE UNALACHTIGO TRIBE IS A BRANCH OF THE LENNI LENAPE WHO INHABITED NEW JERSEY WHEN EUROPEANS ARRIVED. LENNI LENAPE IS TRANSLATED AS, "ORIGINAL PEOPLE," AND THE UNALACHTIGO TRIBE IS TRANSLATED AS, "PEOPLE WHO LIVE NEAR THE OCEAN."

SOURCE: ILLUSTRATED BY ALEXANDRA MORRIS, ADAPTED FROM THE MAP BY THE LENNI LENAPE NATIONAL HISTORIC PROJECT, INC. WWW.LENNILENAPE.COM

DURING THE SUMMER SEASONS, THE TRIBE WOULD MIGRATE TO ABSECON ISLAND. HERE, THEY WERE ABLE TO ACCESS THE OCEAN, RIVERS, AND BAY TO GATHER NATURAL RESOURCES LIKE OYSTERS, CLAMS, AND FISH. IN THE FALL, THEY WOULD RETURN TO THEIR SETTLEMENTS ON THE MAINLAND TO GATHER THEIR HARVEST, HUNT, AND PLANT CROPS. THEY WOULD REMAIN HERE UNTIL THE FOLLOWING SUMMER.

THE UNALACHTIGO TRIBE PROSPERED NEAR THE VARIOUS BODIES OF WATER, AS MEANS OF COOKING, BATHING, AND TRAVEL WERE EASILY ACCESSIBLE. THE RIVERS SERVED AS AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE TO THE TRIBE WHO TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

THE FOUNDING OF ATLANTIC CITY

ATLANTIC CITY WAS A WOODED ISLAND BEFORE IT BECAME A CITY FOR TOURISTS. THE FIRST INHABITANTS OF ATLANTIC CITY WERE THE LENNI LENAPE NATIVE AMERICANS. IN THE LATE 1670S, THOMAS BUDD WAS THE FIRST DOCUMENTED OWNER AND SELLER OF LAND THROUGHOUT ABSECON ISLAND. AFTER BUDD, JEREMIAH LEEDS, THE FIRST SETTLER AND PERMANENT RESIDENT OF THE ISLAND, BUILT THE FIRST HOME IN 1783. HIS FAMILY GREW VEGETATION AND RAISED ANIMALS ON THEIR PROPERTY. AFTER HIS DEATH IN 1839, LEEDS' SECOND WIFE, MILLICENT OPENED A TAVERN CALLED AUNT MILLIE'S BOARDING HOUSE, MAKING IT THE FIRST BUSINESS OF ABSECON ISLAND. THE LEEDS FAMILY CONTINUED LIVING ON THE ISLAND AND LATER TOOK ON SEVERAL FIRST ROLES WITHIN THE CITY SUCH AS POSTMASTER AND MAYOR.

SOURCE: GATEWAY MAP PUBLISHERS, ATLANTIC CITY, NJ. 1900. COURTESY OF THE GEORGE LAND MAPS AND CARTOGRAPHY DATA, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, THE TRUSTEES OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, HTTP://PRINCETON.EDU/LIBRARY/MAPS/PRINCETON-DIGITAL-GEOGRAPHY-COLLECTION/

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THE CREATION OF THE BOARDWALK
PAVING A WALKWAY TO HOTELS AND RAILROAD CARS

SOURCE: BOARDWALK AT VALDEMOSA VILLA, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. 1920-1940. THE TICHNOR BROTHERS COLLECTION, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

DURING THE 19TH CENTURY, THE POPULARITY OF THE BEACH BROUGHT PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER TO ATLANTIC CITY. AFTER A VISIT TO THE BEACH, TOURISTS WOULD STOP AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS, HOTELS, AND BACK ON TO THE TRAIN, TRACKING SAND WITH THEM. IN ORDER TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE, RAILROAD CONDUCTOR ALEXANDER BOARDMAN AND HOTEL OWNER JACOB KEIM CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF A BOARDWALK. THE FIRST PART OF THE BOARDWALK WAS 8 FEET WIDE AND 1 MILE LONG. AFTER THE SUMMER SEASON, THE BOARDWALK WOULD BE TAKEN DOWN AND BUSINESSES WERE FORBIDDEN TO BUILD IN PLACE OF THE BOARDWALK'S LOCATION.

ROLLING CHAIR PARADE, BOARDWALK

SOURCE: GARDNER'S ART COMPANY, "ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.", 1900-1910. COURTESY OF GARDNER'S ART COMPANY, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, THE TRUSTEES OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, HTTP://PRINCETON.EDU/LIBRARY/MAPS/PRINCETON-DIGITAL-GEOGRAPHY-COLLECTION/

SOURCE: ROLLING BEACH AND BOARDWALK — SHOWING HOTELS, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. 1910-1940. THE TICHNOR BROTHERS COLLECTION, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

IN 1880, THE SECOND BOARDWALK WAS BUILT AND BY 1883, THE RULES OF THE BOARDWALK CHANGED. VISITORS FOUND MORE SHOPS AND VENDORS POPPING UP ALONGSIDE THE BOARDS.

IN 1889, A HURRICANE DESTROYED THE BOARDWALK. THIS LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN BOARDWALK. IT WAS BUILT TO BE 24 FEET WIDE, 10 FEET HIGH, AND 4 MILES LONG WHICH LATER EXPANDED TO 60 FEET WIDE AND 5 MILES LONG. IN 1916, RAILINGS AND SUPPORT BEAMS WERE ADDED TO REINFORCE AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AMUSEMENT PARKS AND MORE BUSINESSES.

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THE FACES OF DUCKTOWN
A COMMUNITY OF DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

SOURCE: FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF ADDIELLE STUDIO, JOSHUA MANGUBHAI PHOTO, LEFT, ADDIELLE & POTTERY TRUCE MUGS IN OCEANA, NIGHT, WHO DID HOT YOGA? TO DESCRIPT WEE LUCK MUGS, OF ATLANTIC CITY AS A PART OF THE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT HELPS HOMELESS VETERANS IN ATLANTIC CITY. EARN EXPERIENCES, WITH THE TRUCE CREATION POTTERY. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2016, STOCKTON PRINCETON PHOTOGRAPHER

THE AREA KNOWN AS DUCKTOWN WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED THE "LITTLE ITALY" OF ATLANTIC CITY AFTER THE ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS THAT MOVED TO THE AREA IN THE EARLY 1900S, IN SEARCH OF NEW JOBS AND BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR FAMILIES. THEY RESIDED IN ROW HOUSES ALONG THE BAY AREA. MANY BEING HUNTERS, THEY HUNTED THE ABUNDANT WATERFOWL IN THE AREA. OVER THE YEARS, THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES AND MANY OF THE ORIGINAL BUSINESSES OF DUCKTOWN STILL OPERATE TO THIS DAY.

SOURCE: ARTHUR, OWNER OF ATLANTIC CITY TOUR GUIDE AT ITALIAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY'S EVENTS WITH HIGH VOLTAGE TATTOOS HISPANIC AND ASIAN RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES THURSDAY, AUG. 11, 2016. STAB PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY RESTAURANT, 2016 STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

DUCKTOWN HAS BECOME A "MELTING POT" OF ETHNICITIES. IN THE 1990S, HISPANIC AND ASIAN POPULATIONS BEGAN TO SETTLE IN THE AREA, BECOMING DOMINANT ETHNIC GROUPS OF DUCKTOWN. THEY SOON OPENED THEIR OWN BUSINESSES IN DUCKTOWN, DISPLAYING HOW CULTURES CAN SUCCESSFULLY BLEND AND WORK WELL TOGETHER. SOME OF THESE RESTAURANTS INCLUDE PANCHO'S MEXICAN TAQUERIA, PHO SYDNEY, AND EL CHARRO.

THE FACES OF THE AREA ARE EVER-CHANGING AND OVER THE YEARS, PEOPLE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND PUERTO RICO HAVE MOVED INTO THE ROW HOMES. DUCKTOWN SHOWCASES A COMMUNITY FILLED WITH PEOPLE'S DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS AND THEIR APPRECIATION OF ONE ANOTHER. THERE ARE OVER 27 LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN ATLANTIC CITY, WHICH IS A LARGE NUMBER FOR SUCH A SMALL CITY. FOR DECADES, THE CITY HAS DRAWN PEOPLE HERE FOR WORK IN THE CASINO, HOTEL AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRY. THESE OPPORTUNITIES HAVE ALLOWED PEOPLE TO SUPPORT AND RAISE NOT ONLY GENERATIONS OF FAMILIES, BUT ALSO A CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY WITH COMMON VALUES.

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THE FOUNDING OF PITNEY VILLAGE

PITNEY VILLAGE'S BEGINNING TO END

SOURCE: CARNION, CHARLIE. "PITNEY VILLAGE-1965." UNKNOWN, 1965.

PITNEY VILLAGE WAS THE SECOND HOUSING PROJECT IN ATLANTIC CITY, AFTER STANLEY HOLMES VILLAGE. THE VILLAGE WAS NAMED AFTER JONATHAN PITNEY, "THE FATHER OF ATLANTIC CITY." IT WAS CREATED TO SERVE THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING HOUSING FOR WHITE, LOW-INCOME FAMILIES AND A SAFE AND SANITARY ENVIRONMENT IN POOR, URBAN AREAS.

IN 1940, CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSING PROJECT BEGAN, AND WAS COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING YEAR. IT WAS LOCATED AT MISSISSIPPI AND FAIRMOUNT AVENUES. PITNEY VILLAGE HELD A TOTAL OF 333 FAMILIES. THE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTED OF 185 ROW HOUSES AND 16 FLATS IN TWO AND THREE STORY BUILDINGS MADE OUT OF BRICK, STEEL AND CONCRETE.

SOURCE: CARNION, CHARLIE. "PITNEY VILLAGE-1965." UNKNOWN, 1965.

DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT, SKILLED AND UNSKILLED TRADES WERE STRUGGLING. THE PROJECT PROVIDED ABOUT 1,248,750 HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT AND ALLEVIATED THE DEPRESSION OF BUILDING TRADES.

UNFORTUNATELY, IN 1998, THE CITY GOVERNMENT EVICTED RESIDENTS FROM PITNEY VILLAGE IN ORDER TO CREATE ROOM FOR A ROAD AND TUNNEL. THIS TUNNEL WOULD CONNECT THE MARINA DISTRICT TO THE EXPRESSWAY, CREATING A DIRECT ROUTE TO THE CASINOS. RESIDENTS ATTEMPTED TO FIGHT BACK BUT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS WERE ALREADY PUT INTO ITS CONSTRUCTION. PRIOR TO ITS DEMOLITION, PITNEY VILLAGE SERVED A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION, INCLUDING MANY BLACK RESIDENTS WHO WORKED IN THE AREA. THE VILLAGE GAVE ITS RESIDENTS A PLACE TO RAISE THEIR FAMILY AND UNITY.

THE BUSINESSES OF DUCKTOWN

EXPLORE THE BUSINESSES OF DUCKTOWN SINCE THE BEGINNING

SOURCE: ROSS BILLIARD ACADEMY, 2306 ATLANTIC AVENUE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. THE TICHNOR BROTHERS COLLECTION. 1950-1984. THE TICHNOR BROTHERS COLLECTION, BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

ROSS BILLIARD ACADEMY WAS A BILLIARD CLUB LOCATED IN DUCKTOWN AND WAS OWNED BY ROBERT "ROSS" PARKER UNTIL THE LATE 1950S WHEN THE BUSINESS CLOSED. IT DIFFERENTIATED FROM OTHER BILLIARD CLUBS BECAUSE IT WAS SMOKE-FREE AND HAD A LUNCHEONETTE SELLING COFFEE AND ICE CREAM.

SOURCE: SHUMSKY'S RESTAURANT, 2319 PACIFIC AVENUE, ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. 1950-1984. THE TICHNOR BROTHERS COLLECTION. BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY.

SHUMSKY'S RESTAURANT OF ATLANTIC CITY OPENED ITS DOORS IN 1928 AND WAS OWNED BY MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH SHUMSKY, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THEIR SONS. SHUMSKY'S WAS LOCATED ACROSS THE BOARDWALK HALL IN DUCKTOWN, MAKING IT A POPULAR PLACE FOR EVENT-GOERS AND TOURISTS.

SOURCE: AUGUST 1984. THE 1984 ORGAN SOAPBOX. NATIONAL ICEM EDITION 5-11 SESSION 31 CONVENTION HALL IN ATLANTIC CITY. PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB RIESGRAEBER. HTTP://WWW.ICEM.ORG/ICEM-MEDIA/ARCHIVE/COLUMN/5-11/ACC31-1.HTM

BOARDWALK HALL, ALSO KNOWN AS THE ATLANTIC CITY CONVENTION HALL WAS BUILT IN 1929. ITS HISTORIC IMPORTANCE LED IT TO BE A PART OF THE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES IN NEW JERSEY IN 1993. THE HALL CONTINUES TO SERVE AS AN ARENA FOR CONVENTIONS, SPORTS, EVENTS, AND ENTERTAINMENT. THE WORLD'S LARGEST PIPE ORGAN RESIDES IN THE MAIN AUDITORIUM OF THE CENTER.

THE DUCKS OF DUCKTOWN

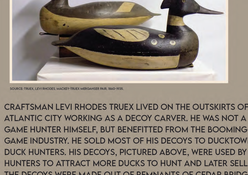
THE ORIGIN OF THE DUCKTOWN NAME

SOURCE: TRUEX, RHODES. LEVI. HACKETT TRUEX CARVING. 1940-1950.

DUCKTOWN ALLEGEDLY ACQUIRED ITS NAME FROM THE RESIDENTS BECAUSE OF THE DUCK HUNTING ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS THAT CAME IN THE EARLY 1900S, AND THE MANY SCATTERED SMALL FARMS IN THE AREA WHERE WILDLIFE INHABITED. THE DUCKTOWN BOUNDARIES ARE BETWEEN TEXAS AND MISSOURI AVENUES, WHERE THE ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS ORIGINALLY SETTLED. THESE ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS BUILT DUCK HOUSES ALONG THE BAY TO RAISE WATERFOWL. THESE HUNTED BIRDS WOULD BE SOLD TO LOCAL HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS IN THE AREA. DECOY DUCKS WERE ALSO MADE FOR HUNTERS TO USE WHILE HUNTING FOR GAME.

DUCKHOUSES WERE BUILT ABOVE OR NEAR PONDS TO PROVIDE SHELTER TO EGG-LAYING DUCKS FROM BAD WEATHER AND PREDATORS. THE PICTURE TO THE RIGHT IS A DUCK HOUSE THAT WAS PURCHASED FROM AN ANTIQUE DEALER IN LANGHORNE, PENNSYLVANIA. IT IS A VICTORIAN STYLE, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT IT WAS BUILT TO MATCH CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE DURING THAT TIME.

SOURCE: DUCK HOUSE. WOOD, PAINTED. WOOD, STAINED GLASS, METAL. 2009-DECEDENT. COLLECTION OF THE HEYER-MORRIS-MENNINGER COLLECTION.



SOURCE: TRUEX, LEVI RHODES. HACKETT-TRUEX HARBINGER PAIR. 1940-1950.

CRAFTSMAN LEVI RHODES TRUEX LIVED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF ATLANTIC CITY WORKING AS A DECOY CARVER. HE WAS NOT A GAME HUNTER HIMSELF, BUT BENEFITTED FROM THE BOOMING GAME INDUSTRY. HE SOLD MOST OF HIS DECOYS TO DUCKTOWN DUCK HUNTERS. HIS DECOYS, PICTURED ABOVE, WERE USED BY HUNTERS TO ATTRACT MORE DUCKS TO HUNT AND LATER SELL. THE DECOYS WERE MADE OUT OF REMNANTS OF CEDAR BRIDGE TIMBERS. HE ALSO MADE SHOREBIRDS THAT ARE SOLD IN THE ATLANTIC CITY AREA.