

# The Beacon

A Collaboration Between  
The Margate City Historical Society and The Margate Public Library

## Margate Once had a Boardwalk: 1906-1944

### Margate Boardwalk by Year

- **1906** Margate Boardwalk Built
- **1909** South Atlantic City Named Margate
- **1910** Margate Boardwalk Lighted
- **1914** Boardwalk Sustains Damage/ WWI Begins
- **1918** WWI Ends
- **1920s** Continual Improvements to Boardwalk
- **1934** Historic Ice Storm
- **1939** WWII Starts
- **1944** The Great Atlantic Hurricane Destroys most of the Boardwalk
- **1962** The Ash Wednesday Storm carried away what little Boardwalk remained.

### Margate Boardwalk Construction

In fact, the Margate Boardwalk slightly predated the Margate City. The Boardwalk was built by P.E. Lane for the "Common Council of the City of South Atlantic City" in 1906. It was not until 1909 that the common council decided to rename this municipality to distinguish it from Atlantic City.

Original work contracts from 1910 indicate that the boardwalk was lighted in 1910 by Atlantic City Electric Light Co.

Four years after the Margate Boardwalk was lighted, World War I began in Europe. In early January 1914, Absecon Island sustained a nor'easter that caused the first significant damage to the Margate Boardwalk. The City Clerk wrote that there were "two or three breaks in the deck of the boardwalk, [and] shifting of other portions of the boardwalk." (Clerk, January 6, 1914, pg. 1) The Margate Boardwalk was repaired by A. Frank Stiegler. Further reconstruction in 1915 was performed by



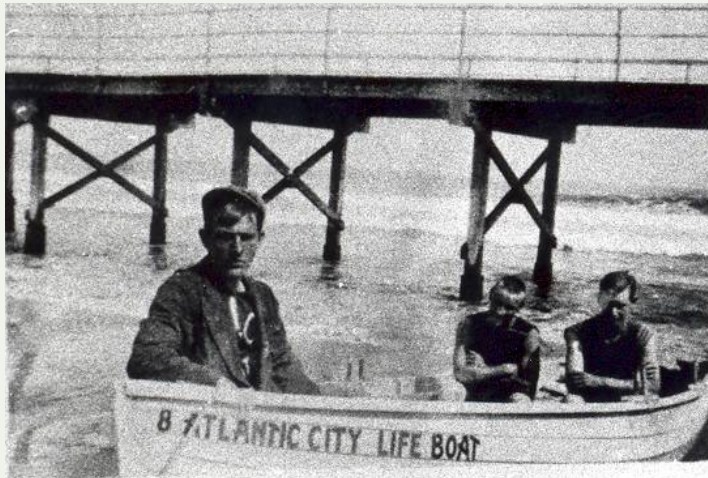
*Two Victorian beauties survey a more adventuresome lady from their perch on the new Margate Boardwalk. 1906.*

J.W. Ingersoll. The Margate Boardwalk would serve as a pedestrian and bicycle thoroughfare from Atlantic City through Ventnor and Margate from 1906-1944.

### The Glory Years of the Margate Boardwalk

During the 1920s piers were added to the Margate Boardwalk. The walk, which connected through Ventnor's Boardwalk to the famous Atlantic City Boardwalk, is shown in its' final form at the right. The Boardwalk received heavy bicycle traffic, and endured ice storms in 1934.





Fred Hackney and two others in an Atlantic City Life Guard Boat at Coolidge Avenue and the Boardwalk, 1908.



“Jim Eichwald and the boys on top of the elephant at Cedar Grove and the beach 1939.”

**On September 14, 1944, The Great Atlantic Hurricane and the Demise of the Margate Boardwalk**

**Atlantic Hurricane reeled up the East Coast from North Carolina to Maine. There were two Atlantic City deaths due to the storm.**

*Thanks to Mike Pred, past President of the Board of the Margate Library, for sharing his memories for this story.*

The Great Atlantic Hurricane demolished the Margate Boardwalk almost entirely. But, it did much worse damage than that. The storm reeled up the Eastern Seaboard from North Carolina to Maine on September 14, 1944. The worst loss of life was not on land, but rather at sea. The Hurricane wrought devastation to the busy military Shipping activities in the Atlantic as the United States fought successfully to bring the Second World War to a close. The United States lost the *USS Warrington, YMS-409*, the *Bedloe*, the *Vinyard Sound Lightship*, and the

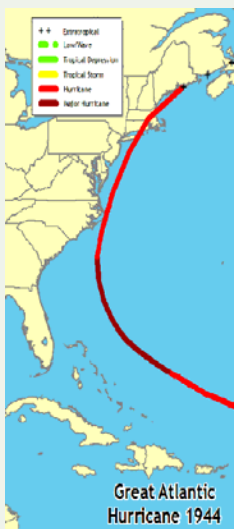
*Jackson*— along with at least 307 sailors and soldiers— to the wrath of the storm. (Schwartz, 2007, 180) The Great Atlantic Hurricane did enormous damage on land as well. On land, 46 people died in the storm. (Schwartz, 2007, 182) In Atlantic City 121 people were injured.

Mike Pred is a past President of the Board of the Margate Library. He was a freshman at Atlantic City High School when the September storm struck. He recalls being sent home early from school on September 14.. “They sent us home from school at 11 o’clock. Our parents sent us all to the movies— it only cost 10 cents.” Meanwhile, the storm moved up the coast swiftly, and the children had to fetched home. “By 4 P.M., the ba-

rometer read 28.73 [... ]At the same time the Weather Bureau clocked 105 miles an hour [windspeed]”(Savadove & Buchholz, 1993, pg. 60) Mike waited out the hurricane in his family’s second floor apartment. From the window, he watched the Atlantic City Boardwalk, rising and falling on the waves, and every so often, pieces of the walk would break off and hit the utility pole below— the utility pole shielded the building from worse damage.

Damage all over Absecon Island was extensive. The Ocean met the bay in Longport. (Savadove & Buchholz, 1993, pg. 60) There was serious flooding. In *Great Storms of the Jersey Shore*, Lee Gordon remem-

*(Continued on page 3)*



### The Great Atlantic Hurricane of 1944 (cont.)

bers, "Lifeguard boats were riding up and down Pacific [Avenue]." (Savadove & Bucholz, 1993, pg. 65) When the waters receded the Boardwalk was destroyed. There was severe damage to property. Mike Pred remembers "for weeks after that hurricane, I spent all my time shoveling sand out of basements."

Most of the Margate Boardwalk was obliterated, and the citizens of Margate decided not to rebuild it. "They didn't want [the Boardwalk] rebuilt, because the boardwalk blocked the view" Pred stated... and, some sources say, because not everyone appreciated the bicycle traffic from Atlantic City. The Great Atlantic Hurricane returned the Margate beach to its pristine state, and Margations chose to leave it that way afterall.



The debris from the Margate Boardwalk after the Great Atlantic Hurricane, 1944.

### The Ash Wednesday Nor'easter of 1962

Frank Tiemann, the President of the Margate City Historical Society remembers how a few yards of the Margate Boardwalk from Fredricksburg Ave. to Gladstone survived the Great Atlan-



Men atop a the roof of the collapsed Boardwalk Pavilion in Margate after the 1962 Ash Wednesday Nor'easter.

tic Hurricane and remained standing until the Ash Wednesday storm of 1962, which consisted of a massive low pressure system that flooded the Middle Atlantic region during five consecutive high tides. Savadove & Bucholz called it "a north-easter more ruinous than any hurricane that ever happened here." (1993, page 103).

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Have an idea for an historical feature story in *The Beacon*? Send it to: [MargateBeacon@gmail.com](mailto:MargateBeacon@gmail.com)



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**A New Look for The Beacon**

Did you notice the new look for the Beacon? The Margate Library is pleased to enter a partnership with the Margate City Historical Society. We look forward to working together to publish *The Beacon*— this is our first joint issue. If you have questions, feedback, or ideas for future publications, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The Margate City Public Library is dedicated to serving our community by providing cutting edge library services. We offer a current collection of information resources including books, DVDs, sound recordings, and more. We also provide access to computers, the internet, and an excellent selection of online databases for homework and research.

**B e a M a r g a t e H i s t o r i a n !  
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Local history is a wonderful hobby. Are you a history buff? If so, you might enjoy a new service from Margate Public Library called *Research Pro*. You can find the link to *Research Pro* in the services section on the left hand side of the Margate Library Catalog Webpage.

Research Pro is a remarkably powerful tool called a federated search. It allows you to search once and find results in the Library catalog, in ebooks, in databases and on the world wide web with just one click. That means you find a wealth of historical information with ease.

In fact, much of the historical information used to write this issue of *The Beacon* can be accessed through Research Pro. Are you curious? You can ask the Reference Librarian at the Margate Library to tell you more about Research Pro, or give you a demonstration!



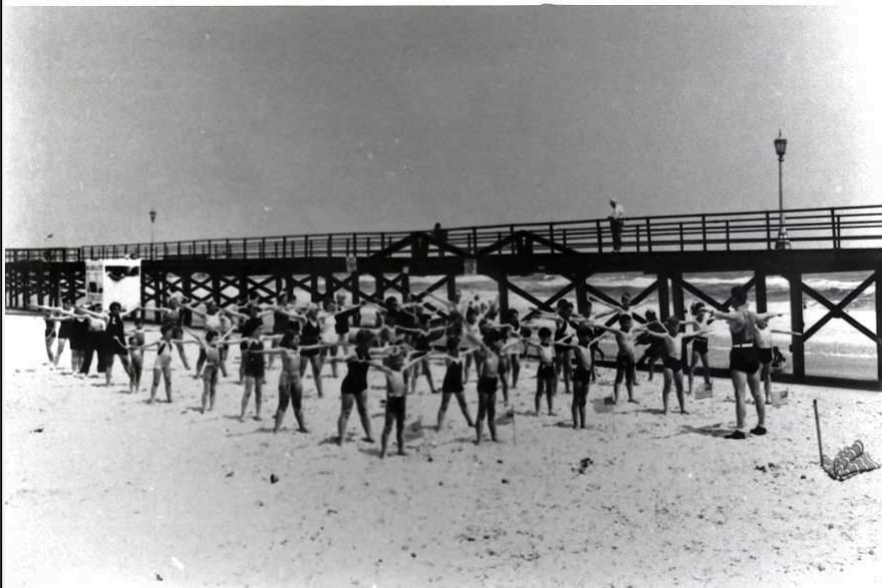
**The Margate Boardwalk after a 1934 Ice Storm**

**Beacon Bibliography:**

Savadove, L. & Bucholz, M. (1993). *Great Storms of the Jersey Shore*. Harvey Cedars, New Jersey: Down the Shore Publishing and The SandPaper, Inc.  
Schwartz, R. (2007). *Hurricanes and the Middle Atlantic States: a suprising history from Jamestown to the present*. Springfield, Virginia: Blue Diamond Books.

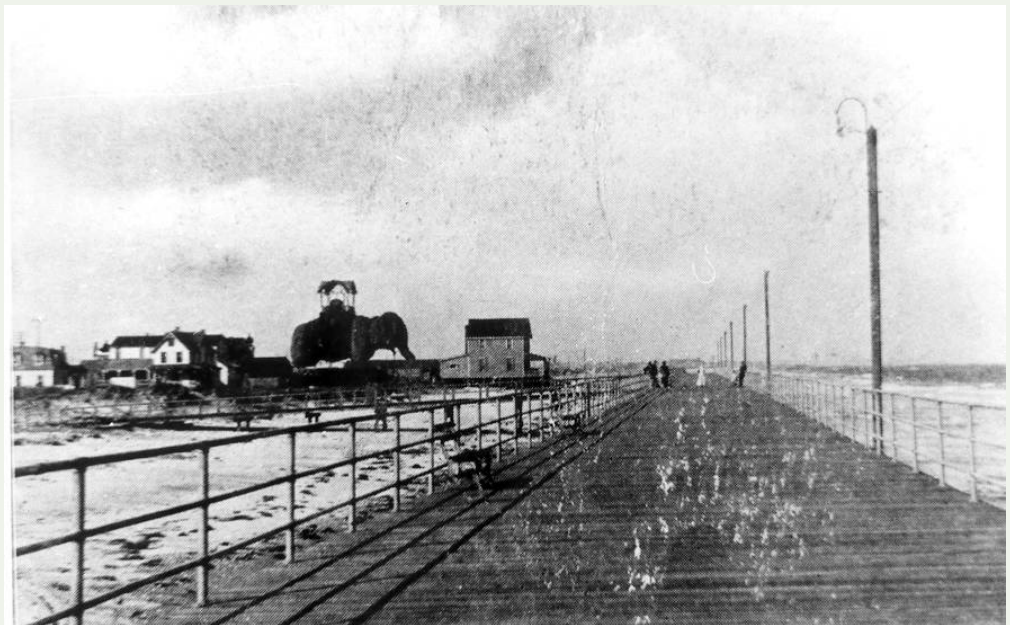
Many primary sources from the Margate City Historical Society.

## The Picture Page



*Children Exercising on the beach by the Margate Boardwalk, July 11, 1936*

*The Margate Boardwalk in 1915. You can see the early electric light fixture, as well as the famous elephant.*



*The fishing pier and the Margate Boardwalk in 1939.*

## ***The Beacon and Historical Society*** **Membership Form**

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Margate City, N.J. 08402

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