



Timelines of  
Point  
Pleasant  
History

# Point Pleasant Boro Beginnings

Did you  
know...

The West Point Pleasant section became independent of Brick Township and called itself Point Pleasant. A contemporary newspaper article predicted the confusion with Point Pleasant Beach this would always bring.



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**A Century Since  
The 1920 Founding**

Right: Point Pleasant's original Borough Hall in 1926 the intersection of Arnold Avenue and Route 88 where Dunkin Donuts is today.

## Secession from Brick Township:

On May 19, 1920 the people in what was then known as West Point Pleasant voted 153 — 8 to leave Brick Township and form the Borough of Point Pleasant. They followed the lead of Lakewood, Point Pleasant Beach, Bay Head and Mantoloking, all of which had split from Brick over the years. Proponents of succession said the area was experiencing rapid growth and would be better able to tend to its needs independently, rather than be dependent on the remote Brick government, based in Laurelton.

When a New Jersey Senate committee held a hearing on the proposal two months before the vote, no one came to Trenton to speak in opposition, but the committee chairman reported receiving several letters of protest.

Some residents of Point Pleasant Beach suggested a better course of action would be for the Beach to annex the West Point Pleasant area, according to the Toms River Courier. Thus the perennial proposition of a Beach and Boro merger was first raised: "Some of those who are trying to form the new borough, might not very strongly oppose such a consolidation but they say the time is not yet ripe for it. They say that if the new borough is formed, and things work right, it might after a few years, be possible to consolidate but that West Point Pleasant people at the present time want to go it alone."

Nearly 200 people voted in Point Pleasant's first municipal elections, held in June. J. Holmes Harvey was elected mayor, but, citing poor health, declined to accept the office. The new Township Council then selected Melleville B. Parker from their ranks who became the first Mayor.

The next year Brick Township petitioned the legislature for financial assistance, claiming that Point Pleasant's succession had eliminated more than half of its tax ratables, which would necessitate a major tax increase if aid was not forthcoming.

## Point Pleasant in its First Year:

In the year Point Pleasant was being created, people in the new borough worried that the under-construction Point Pleasant canal would never be finished. They coped with a smallpox scare, lost their trolley service, and made plans for the first paved highway in town. Articles from the Toms River Courier showed the following issues and concerns in 1920, the year Point Pleasant was spun off from Point Pleasant Beach:

The canal had been under construction, on and off, since 1916 but had been dug only from Barnegat Bay to a few feet north of what is now Rt. 88. Funding was the problem. Engineers figured that it would take another four years to finish if the current level of \$25,000 a year in funding was maintained by the New Jersey Legislature. Excavation costs were escalating and had reached a price of 27 cents per cubic yard as opposed to 15 cents during the first year of construction. The canal was finally opened in 1926. (See Also: History of the canal)

(continued from front page)

The Point Pleasant Traction company, which had never made a profit, decided to discontinue its trolley service. In the summers trolleys had run from Clarks Landing through Bay and Atlantic Avenues, into Bay Head. Plans to connect the line to trolleys in Monmouth County never materialized because the company was unable to get permission to use the railroad bridge and could not find another way to cross the Manasquan River. A project to extend the line to Lakewood also was not completed, although portions of the right-of-way can still be seen in the borough. (see also: Trolley Follies).

As trolley service died, the first concrete highway in Ocean County, connecting Point Pleasant to Lakewood, was planned. The State Highway Commission had announced it would take over Rt. 4, now Rt. 88. Paving would be done by the county at a cost of about \$40,000 per mile and the state would pay the county back in two years from the proceeds of a state road tax fund. The Courier hailed a resolution by the freeholders to get the project started as "...a new era in county road building in Ocean County — the substitution of cement or concrete for gravel, which has heretofore been practically the only road material used."

In May there was a smallpox scare and the State Board of Health was called in. "For some time this spring and late winter there has been a kind of rash or itch prevalent in Point Pleasant, it is reported, but only in the past few days did any cases develop that caused alarm" The Courier reported. Almost everyone was vaccinated and those who had suspected cases were quarantined. It was not clear from the article whether cases actually were confirmed, but there was fear.

— **By Jeff Heim**



## Point Pleasant Borough Population

2010 Census: 18,392

2000 Census: 19,306

1990 Census: 18,177

The first word on confusing the Point Beach and the Boro: The following article appeared in the Feb. 27, 1920 Toms River Courier:

*If a measure now in the legislature passes, and the people involved concur there may be colloquially two 'Boroughs of Point Pleasant' side by side in the northeast corner of the county. Incidentally the matter recalls an old fight over the name Point Pleasant, between what is now the Borough of Point Pleasant Beach and what is now West Point Pleasant.*

*The name Point Pleasant was first applied to the fishing village which is now known as West Point Pleasant. When Capt. John Arnold and his associates in the early [eighteen] seventies started the summer resort of Point Pleasant, and it had grown big enough to warrant a postoffice, it was planned to move Point Pleasant postoffice down town, nearer the beach; and the plan was carried out. The dwellers in the older village resented this and insisted they had the first right to the title Point Pleasant, for their postoffice, and put up a strong fight. They were unable to save the name, because the moneyed men backing the beach development had the pull with the postoffice department, but they did save their postoffice, which has ever since been designated as West Point Pleasant. After more than 40 years, somebody who remembered the old fight, it would seem, is trying to score.*

*Point Pleasant, the resort, was taken out of Brick township and incorporated as one of the first boroughs in the county some thirty years ago, under the title, 'Borough of Point Pleasant Beach,' but is colloquially spoken of as the 'Borough of Point Pleasant.' Now a bill has been introduced in the legislature to incorporate 'Borough of Point Pleasant.' It is difficult to see how the borough of Point Pleasant Beach can object to West Point Pleasant being known as Borough of Point Pleasant, and yet the mixups and complications that might occur are obvious to anybody.*

*But of course all the worriment, if worriment there be, is in Point Pleasant Beach borough. And it would look as if somebody was having a fine laugh over the revenge that whirligig of time sometimes brings around.*

## People who were born in, residents of, or otherwise closely associated with Point Pleasant Borough include:

- **Rachel Bolan** (born 1966), bass guitar player and main songwriter of the metal band, Skid Row.
- **Agnes Boulton** (1893–1968), pulp fiction writer who married Eugene O'Neill, living in her home there after their marriage.
- **Peter Cancro**, CEO of Jersey Mike's Subs, who started working at the chain's Point Pleasant location as a 14-year-old.
- **Caroline Casagrande** (born 1976), member of the New Jersey General Assembly representing the 11th District, who was the youngest assemblywoman ever when she was elected in 2008.
- **Fred J. Cook** (1911–2003), investigative journalist and author.
- **Dick Cooke** (born 1956), head coach of the Davidson Wildcats baseball team since 1991 who spent three years pitching in the minor leagues for the Boston Red Sox.
- **Arnold D'Ambrosa** (born 1933), politician who served in the New Jersey General Assembly from 1974 to 1976, until his career was cut short by a political scandal.
- **Michael J. Doherty** (born 1963), member of the New Jersey Senate representing the 23rd Legislative District since 2009.
- **Marlene Lynch Ford** (born 1954), politician, prosecutor and jurist who served in the New Jersey General Assembly.
- **Jeff Frazier** (born 1982), professional outfielder who played in Major League Baseball for the Detroit Tigers in 2010.
- **Todd Frazier** (born 1986), major league baseball player for the New York Mets.
- **Niko Gkionis** (born 1985), professional soccer player.
- **Virginia E. Haines** (born 1946), politician who serves on the Ocean County Board of chosen freeholders and had served in the New Jersey General Assembly from 1992 to 1994 and as Executive Director of the New Jersey Lottery from 1994 to 2002.
- **Frankie Hayes** (1914–1955), catcher who played for 14 seasons in Major League Baseball who holds the record for most consecutive games played by a catcher.
- **Laurel Hester** (1956–2006), police officer who rose to national attention with her deathbed appeal for the extension of pension benefits to her domestic partner.
- **Leonard "Bud" Lomell** (1919–2011), United States Army Ranger who played a pivotal role in destroying German gun emplacements on D-Day.
- **Ryan Malleck** (born 1993), American football tight end for the Houston Texans of the National Football League.
- **"Irish" Teddy Mann** (born 1951), former professional boxer.
- **Dale "Bud" Mayo**, business executive who is the founder of Digital Cinema Destinations Corp.
- **Eugene O'Neill** (1888–1953), playwright.
- **Oona O'Neill** (1925–1991), daughter of Eugene O'Neill and writer Agnes Boulton, and the fourth and last wife of comic and filmmaker Charlie Chaplin.
- **Diamond Dallas Page** (born 1956), former professional wrestler.
- **Christie Rampone** (born 1975; formerly Christie Pearcee), USA Soccer player (US Olympic Gold Medalist, World Cup Gold Medalist).
- **Kurt Pellegrino** (born 1979), MMA fighter who competes under the UFC brand.
- **Soraya** (1969–2006), Grammy Award-winning, musician.(B)
- **Michael John Trotta** (born 1978), composer and conductor.
- **Arthur Augustus Zimmerman** (1869–1936), cycling sprint rider who won the first world championship in 1893.