



# VINELAND

## *Historical and Antiquarian Society*

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2018

*The oldest local historical society in New Jersey, founded in 1864.*

## Author Releases New Landis Biography

For many years, author Vince Farinaccio has been entertaining and educating the readers of his history column in SNJ Today's newspaper, popularly known as "The Grapevine," with tales of Vineland and South Jersey. In many instances, he revealed previously-unknown facts about local residents, including Vineland's founder, Charles K. Landis. Farinaccio ultimately discovered that the truth about Mr. Landis did not always merge with the accepted image and, as a result, decided to write the first biography about this complex personality.

On September 15, the author introduced his work at a presentation held at the museum. He discussed how the story blossomed from an idea into a reality. The book is titled *Before the Wind: Charles K. Landis and Early Vineland*, and is a fascinating true account of local life. It is an engrossing story of a man whose driven personality allowed him to achieve many goals but, at the same time, commit murder when he was pushed too far. Interspersed with Landis' story, readers will learn about Vineland's growth and development and some of the other unique people who chose to settle in the town. Copies of the book are available through [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) or by contacting the Society at 856-691-1111 or [vinelandhistory@gmail.com](mailto:vinelandhistory@gmail.com).

*More than fifty area residents turned out for Vince Farinaccio's first book signing at the Society's museum in September. His new biography of Vineland's founder, Charles K. Landis, takes a close look at a complex individual whose personal and professional life sometimes clashed with dramatic results.*



Photos by John W. Carr

## ***From the Curator...***

We are sorry to report that the newsletter, which has been published four times a year, will only be released twice a year beginning in January 2019. There are several reasons for this change. First, by reducing the publication to just January and June, the Society will save enough money to cover the cost of producing the annual Historical Society Magazine. Second, with our increased presence online, a lot of material can now be found on our web site ([www.discovervinelandhistory.org](http://www.discovervinelandhistory.org)) or our Facebook page. Like most non-profits, we have to s-q-u-e-e-z-e as much as we can out of every penny, which is why this seems like a practical solution.

Trying to protect and preserve history is a bit of an uphill climb these days, especially here in South Jersey. Like most regional historical agencies, we are understaffed, underfunded and under-just about anything else you could name. But then, we recognize that many people are struggling to simply keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.

Despite the obstacles, we're not discouraged. History gives people a sense of perspective, a sense of place. Given that Vineland was a nationally-known and respected community, we feel we have a responsibility to keep doing our job not just for local residents but for those scholars from around the world who want to learn more about Charles K. Landis, Mary Treat and other personalities who once called Vineland home. Still, some people wonder why we do what we do. While we enjoy all of our visitors, one of our greatest inspirations is the fourth grade students who annually visit the museum. The look on their faces when they leave helps us to realize that learning about Vineland's history gives them a better sense of community. We might not be able to save every building or record the life story of every individual in Vineland but, for their sake and the sake of all our visitors, we do the best we can.

## **Society Schedules 'Trunk or Treat' Event in October**

Thanks to the city of Vineland, the Society will host a free Halloween 'Trunk or Treat' event in the public parking lot across the street from the museum on Saturday, October 27, from 3 to 6 p.m. Area residents are invited to bring their cars and participate or just bring the family to join in the fun.

Museum board members, staff and volunteers plan to wear costumes and decorate their cars in appropriate holiday style. Candy and other treats will be distributed at each vehicle. The Trunk or Treat program was started a few years ago as a safe alternative to children going door-to-door to collect candy and other treats. Plastic bags will be available for anyone who needs one.

This is the first time that the Society will host such an event but, if it is successful, the program will become part of the organization's annual schedule. For further information, please contact the Society.



### **Hours & Information**

The Museum Office is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. from February through December by appointment only. The Museum exhibits are open to the public every Saturday during those months, except when a presentation is scheduled; tours are offered at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. There is a \$1 admission charge for visitors over 12 years of age. Please remember: Assistance with library and research facilities is available by appointment only. Call the Museum at 856.691.1111; e-mail: [vinelandhistory@gmail.com](mailto:vinelandhistory@gmail.com); Group and school tours are welcomed and encouraged to visit.

## Area Residents Flock to VHAS Fun Fest

Despite the ferocious heat and threat of rain on August 4, the annual Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society Fun Fest (formerly known as the Open House) drew about 150 area residents to the museum at 108 S. Seventh Street. A yard full of tents protected crafters and visitors from the worst of the elements. Handcrafted items by artists like Wayne Schreiner were for sale during the free event. Visitors also enjoyed refreshments and chatting with crafters like Sharon Speziale, who explained the history of quilting while teaching the art to visitors. Samantha Tai, from Vineland Public Library, entertained the younger visitors with stories, who also played traditional games and were delighted by the petting zoos. During the event, visitors also had the chance to explore the museum.

The Fun Fest closed with an awards ceremony, where Society volunteers Laurie Milana, Ruth Shropshire, Virginia Tamuts and Edwin Ramos received citations from the President's Volunteer Council. This year's drawing was for a basket of gift certificates generously donated by local businesses that included Jersey Jerry's, Inspira's Fitness Center, WaWa, and Yogo Desserts. The basket was won by a former Vineland resident, Charlotte Maenner of The Villages, Florida.



*Visitors explored the museum during the Fun Fest held in August. They also met baby animals, visited with quilter Sharon Speziale and planted seeds in "Gilbert's Garden." Despite the weather, about 150 local residents turned out to enjoy the day.*

## Students Scheduled to Paint First House

In October, students from the Cumberland County Technical Education Center are scheduled to put a fresh coat of paint on the exterior of Vineland's First House. The students will work with their adviser, Tim Campbell, under the direction of trustees Greg Henderson and Jordan Palmieri to sand and then paint the house white, which will more accurately reflect the whitewashing homeowners would have done in the 19th century.

While the green trim will be removed because it's not historically accurate, the Society plans to leave the concrete steps in place as a safety precaution. The green shutters and doors will be painted a neutral brown shade to better reflect the earlier time period when the house was built.

The First House originally was established on a brick base but a Jersey ironstone base was constructed for it when it was moved to its present location. The First House was literally the first house built in Vineland in 1862 at the northeast corner of Landis Avenue and the Boulevard. It was later moved to two lots on Peach Street and then to Landis Park, where it was inhabited until 1962. At that time, the house was moved to the north lawn of the museum grounds, where it remains today and is open for public tours.

Charles K. Landis required all newcomers to his town to build such homes to show that they were seriously interested in settling in Vineland. Although small—roughly 14 by 16 feet in size—they became a symbol of the fresh start that the new community offered its residents.

## Museum to Close to Public in January 2019

The Society's museum will once again be closed to the public in January 2019 to allow the staff and volunteers to finish some changes to the exhibits that were started earlier this year. One major change will involve removing the small Music Room exhibit to make room for the collection of Native American artifacts. Once the Native American collection is moved, that space will become home to the Society's Civil War collection.

"Since we need more storage space for the collections and the current Civil War room is adjacent to our existing storage, it only made sense to make these changes," said Patricia A. Martinelli, Society curator. "The artifacts in the Music Room will go temporarily into storage until we can relocate them to other exhibit areas."

In recent years, the museum exhibits have been evolving to provide a more accurate look at life in Vineland. Besides adding exhibits for the African-Americans and early European settlers, Martinelli is currently working on one that reflects the contributions of the Puerto Rican community.

"Since Vineland has been a culturally diverse town right from the start, it is very important to us that our museum accurately reflect the lives of the people who have lived here over the years," she said.

*The Civil War room will be relocated in January 2019.*

