

A look at how Smithville became what it is today

BY STEVE FIEDLER
Go Green Galloway

I have written in the past about our Galloway Environmental Resource Inventory (The Current, Nov. 15, 2018), which includes many aspects of what makes us a unique community, ecologically and historically. On the historical side, here is a piece from page 40 of that document that gives you food for thought about an important part of our township.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SMITHVILLE

Smithville is a village of Galloway that grew up along an old Indian trail. This Indian trail became a stage-coach route and later a highway. The area was a natural attraction for both the Lenape Indians and early settlers, with proximity to Great

Bay, The Little Egg Harbor (Mullica) River, salt and fresh water marshes, and upland forests.

In 1787, James Baremore built a structure on his "Baremore Plantation" as a residence and a tavern. The place became popular as an Inn to serve stagecoach travelers from Leeds Point to Cooper's Ferry (Camden).

The name Smithville came from Isaac Smith, son-in-law of James Baremore, and son of Daniel Smith, who originally owned the land as a farm. This Smithville Inn was a hub of a diverse community

of farmers, seafarers, baymen, craftsmen, hunters and shopkeepers; of many nationalities, religions and political backgrounds. Early Township meetings and elections were held there between 1824 and 1879, until an official Township Hall was built.

In 1857 Henry Smith, grandson of Isaac Smith, disassembled the original Inn, all but its inner brick core and a couple adjacent rooms. He transported the materials by small boats over the bays to

be re-assembled as a tavern in Brigantine, which at that time was still part of Galloway. Smithville Inn was rebuilt to serve more efficiently and continued in operation.

The advent of the railroad into South Jersey in the latter 1800s did not help Smithville to maintain its status as the railroad passed south through Oceanville, and the seashore towns like Atlantic City grew and flourished. Soon after, the automobile and highway travel made Smithville less of a

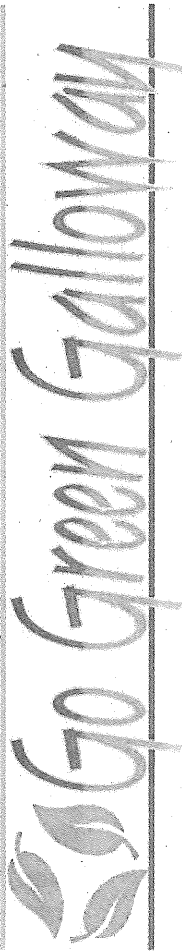
destination and hub. The Inn and village all but disappeared into history.

In near total disrepair, the old Inn and grounds were purchased in 1949 by Fred and Ethel Noyes. A new era of restoration began as the couple brought in historic buildings from all over South Jersey. Each building had a unique story to preserve, and together they made up an atmosphere of history and commerce from the days of early South Jersey. An expanded Smithville Inn, the Inn at Quail Hill and Fred and Ethel's Lantern Light Inn and Tavern became popular dining destinations. At one time the Smithville airport and outdoor theater brought even

more tourists and widespread fame to the area.

As ownership changed, some features were changed, abandoned or improved upon; but the central theme remained the same for what has become known internationally as the "Historic Towne of Smithville". More residential and commercial development now surround this attraction, and the Greater Smithville area has remained a vital and substantial part of the fabric of Galloway.

Go Green Galloway is a volunteer organization dedicated to reducing the carbon footprint of Galloway. We always welcome new volunteer members. Contact us at galloway12@gmail.com






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