



# The Aftoneer<sup>2011</sup>



## Cape May County NEW JERSEY

I love to stand on a New Jersey beach and gaze out to sea. I marvel in the immenseness. I delight in imagining Europe on the other side far, far away. And the surf, well of course I enjoy the surf: doesn't everyone? Standing on a bay beach is also a joy, but so different. You can see across to the other side, but there's usually not much surf. So where does that put the beach in the City of Cape May? It's an ocean beach — complete with surf — there's no doubt about that, but on a clear day you can see to the other side like a bay beach. You have to look the right direction, but you can usually see Delaware to the southwest. I love the way I feel on this beach no matter which way I look. There's a *specialness* here. Is it because I can see both ocean and bay? Is it the lighthouse



flashes marking the spot where the two meet? Maybe it's contemplating that the arriving bay water just lapped along the western shore while the ocean crashed along the east. Perhaps it's envisioning the lapping and crashing happening just “up and around”— on either side. Or maybe it's knowing that I'm as far south as I can be and still be in New Jersey. Should I meander through the sand to find the buoy that marks the exact southernmost spot in the southernmost

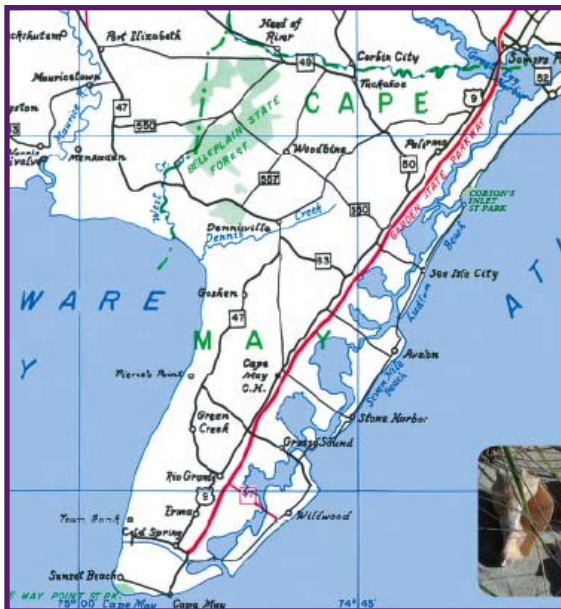


town of New Jersey's southernmost county? This southernmost New Jersey county is, of course, Cape May. Both the county and the city at its southern point bear the name of Dutch sea captain, Cornelius Jacobsen Mey (with a slight spelling change) — one of the

(Continues on Page 2.)

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**The Aftoneer**  
*to enrich learning*  
*“New Jersey”*  
*in the elementary grades.*

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**New Jersey iMap Now Available**  
*This is the Cape May County section of the iMap. The complete map has links for Cape May County and the entire state. View it on your computer; project it on your interactive whiteboard. Click here to see a larger interactive sample.*

first Europeans to see the area early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The treasured shore territory comprises a “V” of county shore land. The “special” beach at Cape May forms the point with sandy beaches extending north along both east and west county borders. Nestled in this “V” lies the south of New Jersey’s Pine Barrens. Here you’ll find Belleplain State Forest, Cape May National Wildlife Refuge, Beaver Swamp Wildlife Management Area and acres of wonderfully mysterious pine and scrub oak forests, wild flowers, streams, bogs, and wild animals.



Henry Hudson sailed past the southern New Jersey shores in 1609. Captain Mey explored here a few years later. Early Dutch settlement attempts failed. Those by English whalers did not. One such settlement, the village of Town Bank, consisted of thirteen houses and overlooked Delaware Bay from a high bluff. Most recently from Long Island and New England, many of these settlers were descendents of *Mayflower* arrivals.

Settlement continued slowly. Dr. Daniel Coxe, of London, purchased 95,000 acres in 1688. He never saw any of it, but when the county was formed in 1692 it was in his Coxe Hall that the first county court convened. In 1690, Shamgar Hand bought 1,000 acres in Rummey Marsh (now Cape May Court House) while John Townsend settled in the upper county. Whaling attracted 18-year-old Thomas Leaming in 1692. Other early land purchasers included Spicers, Schellengers, Hugheses,



For more on Cape May County, see *This Is New Jersey* available as an eStore special. Visit the county’s web site: [www.co.cape-may.nj.us](http://www.co.cape-may.nj.us)

and Ludlams. (You might recognize some of these names in modern-day place names.) Quakers settled in Seaville in the early 1700s, Baptists at Cape May Courthouse in 1712, and Presbyterians at Cold Spring in 1714. In 1726, the first census showed a population of 668 in the close to 300 square miles.



Building didn’t happen in the marshes, of course, and after the sea demolished Town Bank, settlers began to also avoid the coasts. Many area inhabitants continued to fish for a living, but others sought alternatives. Moving inland, some took up farming. Others took to the forests to chop and sell.

In the early 1800s, Philadelphia newspaper ads invited readers to enjoy the delights of Cape May County beaches. It was an easy trip, Philadelphians learned: a stage awaited them every Thursday just across the Delaware River. Departing from Cooper’s Ferry (now Camden), they would arrive at Cape Island on Friday. The Philadelphians were not disappointed; they came, enjoyed, and came back again. Steamboat service in 1819 further facilitated the trip; more visitors arrived from Philadelphia. In the 1840s, Baltimore and Washington discovered the Cape. By the 1850s, Cape May was touted as America’s most famous resort.

New towns sprouted throughout the county. Methodist ministers founded Ocean City as a summer resort in 1879. Charles K. Landis laid out Sea Isle City two years later. Wildwood was born in 1890. Russian refugees first settled in Woodbine in 1891. A year later, 700 people called Woodbine home.

Cape May County began the twentieth century with a population of just over 13,000. By the century’s half, there were almost three times that many, but the shores and pines remained relatively quiet. Before the twenty-first century began, the population had almost tripled again. Now it was considerably less quiet. Change had come, as it usually does, with transportation advances. Beginning in 1954, motorists arrived from the north on the Garden State Parkway. Both the Atlantic City Expressway and Cape May Lewes Ferry opened in



1964. The expressway provides access to the west, and the ferry the south. More people located their year-round residences here. Visitors increased. Some travelers drive through the county nonstop on their way to points north or south. Others stop here for the night or just a meal. Parts of quiet Cape May County can now be quite busy!

Cape May County's size ranks it in the middle of the state's counties. It's near the bottom in population, with a dramatic increase in the summer. Tourism is Cape May County's number one industry. Visitors flock to the beaches in July and August, but many attractions, especially in the City of Cape May, lure tourists year-round. Fishing and farming are also important. The



county's easy access to the bay and the ocean encourages both commercial and sport

*Inside the one-room schoolhouse in Historic Cold Spring Village Cape May County Living History Museum.*  
[www.hcsv.org](http://www.hcsv.org)



*Opened in 1964, the Cape May-Lewes Ferry transports passengers across the Delaware Bay in a little more than an hour. The cruise between Cape May and Lewes, Delaware can be quite pleasant: many experience it for a day's entertainment. Some board as foot passengers: others bring their bicycles. The serious travelers arrive by car. Hopefully they take the time to enjoy the crossing, because once on the other side, they refocus on their destinations and drive off quickly in search of the next road.*

[www.capemaylewesferry.com](http://www.capemaylewesferry.com)

*See over 550 animals including lions, zebras, giraffes, tigers, bears, and leopards on Cape May County Zoo's 85 acres.*



fishing. The many area farms produce tomatoes, corn, peppers, asparagus, blueberries, cantaloupes, strawberries, peaches, pumpkins, watermelons, soybeans, Christmas trees, ornamental plants and shrubs, hay, horses, sheep, goats, lambs, rabbits, lima beans, herbs, wine, and more. Local farm markets sell the Jersey Fresh produce; local restaurants proudly feature it. The beaches are undoubtedly the most popular county spots, but there's a lot more than beaches that are special in Cape May County!



[www.thejerseycape.com](http://www.thejerseycape.com)  
 (the county's department of tourism's web site) is especially helpful.

You'll find more on each municipality in

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Captain Kidd's treasure? Maybe...

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**Where in New Jersey is this?  
The 2012 Aftoneer will give you the answer.**



**Last issue's picture  
is the buoy on the  
beach of Cape May  
that marks the  
southernmost point of  
New Jersey.**



**Click on picture to see  
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Ghosts, puppies, bears, does, fawns, new friends, and spirited adventures await 10-year-old Jessica and her 6-year-old brother, Jonathon. Accompanying Grandmamma and Grandpapa, they are off to celebrate Fourth of July, 1826.

On the eve of the celebration, Grandmamma, Grandpapa and other Revolutionary War participants tell their stories beside a roaring bonfire. They speak of battles, winter encampment sufferings, home front sacrifices and travails, triumphs, casualties, sorrowful farewells, and joyous returns. Interludes of lively discussion clarify war events.

On the Fourth, the celebrants feast, compete in contests and tug of wars, meet a slave, and get lost in an apple orchard. Excerpts from the governor's speech portray life in 1826 while mind wanderings of an inattentive audience lighten the mood. At day's end, Grandpapa reveals the family Mayflower Ghost legend to Jessica beside another blazing bonfire.

A little black dog, Patriot, romps through the Revolution. His look-alike namesake wins the hearts of Jessica and Jonathon.

Recently deceased Papa visits as a whisper — Jonathon once; Grandpapa and Jessica often, but unbeknownst to each other. The whisper coaches happiness and remains until he witnesses a delightful family jump into a stream.

Based on careful Revolutionary War research, it all *could* have happened.

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