

November 2021

The Sand Paper A Newsletter from The Sandy Hook Foundation

Dear Friends of Sandy Hook,

As we head into the holidays and the season of giving, we reflect back on our work throughout the year and are forever grateful to have beautiful Sandy Hook as our stunning backdrop.

Our vast outdoor playground truly offers something for everyone ... the history buff, the outdoor enthusiast, the photographer, the dog walker, the birder, the beach goer, the beach comber, and so many more.

Please consider your year-end support in celebration of our park, Sandy Hook, with a generous contribution to our End of Year Appeal. We can't do it without you

The Staff and Board of Trustees of the Sandy Hook Foundation

**Your Donation Makes a
Difference**

Meet Tom Hoffman
Sandy Hook Park Historian

November Programs in the Park

Holly Forest Ramble

This November, join a ranger for a guided hike

through Sandy Hook's ancient maritime forest to visit the area. Learn how the plants and animals in this habitat adapt to extreme climate conditions, salt spray, and environment.

U.S. Life-Saving Station Parking Lot (between Lot D and Lot E)

Saturday, 11/6

2 pm – 3:30 pm

Reservations required by calling 732-872-5970, 1 mile



What to Know about Deer During Rutting Season

Join a park ranger for a walk in the woods to observe and learn about one of our most common critters at Sandy Hook, the white-tailed deer! The tour is wheelchair accessible on the paved multi-use path.

Sandy Hook Lighthouse Keepers Quarters, Building 84

Saturday, 11/20

3 pm – 5 pm

Reservations required by calling 732-872-5970, 1.5 miles

Photo below by Thomas Pantaleo



It was a foggy day in early April, 1974 when Tom Hoffman visited Sandy Hook with his father. At that time, the southern two miles of Sandy Hook, which had been Sandy Hook State Park 1962-1973, was now the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area. Jim Griffin was the friendly ranger on duty and told Tom that there were no full time positions available other than life guarding, so Tom asked if he could volunteer. Tom's lifelong love of sharing history, especially around the events of the American Revolution and Civil war, was about to be fulfilled as he became the first volunteer in the park (VIP) at Sandy Hook.

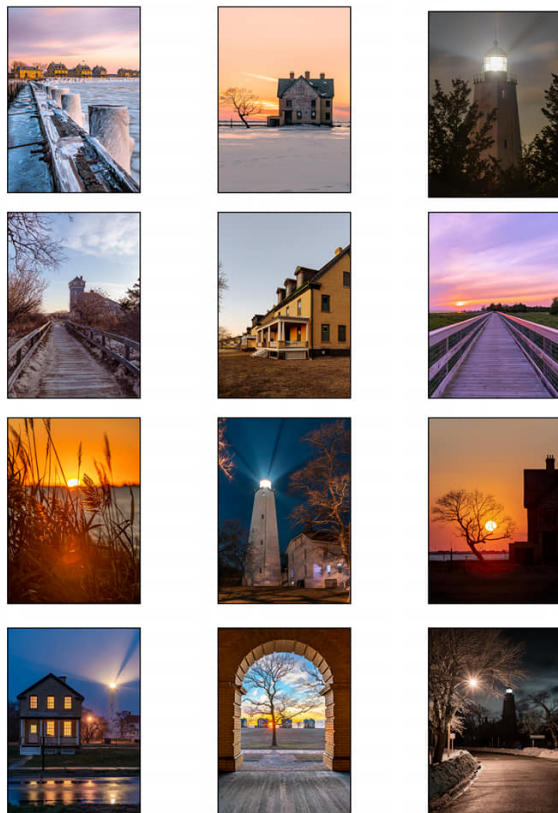
Tom caught the history bug early-on. In 1956 when he was 6, his father, who was a WWII Marine Corps veteran, showed him a picture in the newspaper of the last Union veteran from the Civil War, Albert Woolson, from Duluth, MN, who was 109 years old when he died. Tom began to ask about the Civil War, as he also found in their family's attic a locker filled with cardboard boxes containing books from his dad's college, including a red, hard-covered volume called "The Battle of Gettysburg." Tom was learning to read and write but was enthralled by the illustrations in the book. His father decided the lessons would be best learned in person and took Tom to Gettysburg in August, 1958. Instead of just reading about it, Tom experienced it, and found he wanted to become an interpreter, give tours, and talk to people about history too.

Tom filled out the paperwork and began work as a VIP at the park's Visitors Center from Memorial Day through Labor Day. That year, the National Park Service acquired the park from the State of New Jersey, and some of the volunteers and workers were taken under the wing of the federal government including Tom. He remembers nonstop visitors at the center, then situated between Lots D and E. Before the advent of cell phones and online research, visitors to the park all stopped by. One thing that Tom says hasn't changed is the most often asked question, "Do you have a restroom."



Looking for the Perfect Holiday Gift?

Purchase a 2022 Calendar with Stunning Images of Sandy Hook by Photographer Eric Thacke



Eric is a local photographer, life long resident of Monmouth County and lover of Sandy Hook. He's married with two grown sons and loves the outdoors, nature, and photography. Eric has created an assembly of some of his best Sandy Hook and Fort Hancock photographs in this beautiful spiral-bound, 11" x 17" vertical-format calendar, printed on heavy card stock. The calendar dates are formatted in small print under each photo.

The calendar is \$25 and a portion of each sale will be donated to The Sandy Hook Foundation to support our work in the park. Postage is additional, or delivery local to Sandy Hook is available. The photos are large and a high-quality print.

To order, contact Eric directly at ethacke@comcast.net or visit his Facebook page [here](#) and send him a DM.

What also hasn't changed is Tom's thoughts on going to places to learn about them.

When it was time to take his own daughter to Gettysburg, Tom told her they were going to learn about Virginia "Jennie" Wade and visit the house where she died. The stories are what people remember, said Tom, and so it went that Jennie was the only direct civilian casualty at the Battle of Gettysburg, when she was killed by a stray bullet on July 3, 1863 while kneading bread in her sister's kitchen. She may have been engaged to Johnston Hastings "Jack" Skelly, a corporal in the 87th Pennsylvania, who had been wounded two weeks earlier in the Battle of Winchester. He died from his injuries on July 12, 1863, unaware that Wade had died days earlier. In Jennie's pocket was found a *carte de visite* which was a type of small photograph patented in Paris in 1854. Each photograph was the size of a visiting card, and such photograph cards were commonly traded among friends and visitors. The *carte de visite* photograph proved to be a very popular item during the American Civil War. Soldiers, friends and family members would have a means of inexpensively obtaining photographs and sending them to loved ones in small envelopes. Their fates were sealed by the events of the war, but what young girl wouldn't remember the story of Jennie Wade in the context of the Battle of Gettysburg and the greater Civil War.

In addition to interacting with visitors, Tom loves to do primary research and oral history interviews in order to be able to tell the many stories about Sandy Hook. As he would say, Arlington National Cemetery is full of NOT famous people about whom there are many interesting stories.

Early on while with the National Park Service, Tom came back after his second trip to the National Archives and told the chief interpreter at that time, John Crisco, that he could send Tom back to the National Archives any time, but that he would never come back to the Hook simply because it would take a lifetime or two to research the vast records there.

Local author Randy Gabrielan writes, "historian Thomas Hoffman has developed an encyclopedic knowledge of the park and its history in his decades of service." This knowledge led to Tom writing a book called "Fort Hancock" that can be found in the Images of America series and is available today through [Arcadia Press](#). Sale proceeds will benefit The Sandy Hook Foundation. Tom hopes to find the time to write a second book that explores Fort Hancock's history post WWII.

Tom would say that one of the best mantras is to know what happened before you arrived here. If you don't know what your parents, their parents, and their parents experienced, and you don't know what happened in your town, your county, your state, and your country, history will repeat itself. Don't be ignorant, that's why books are written!

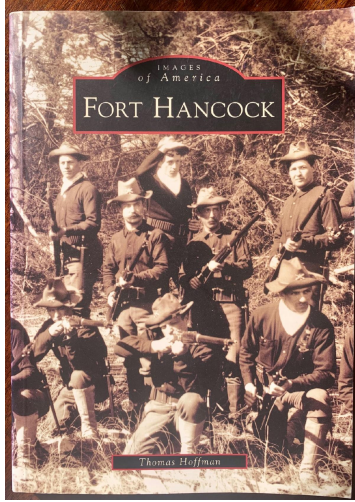
Meet Sandy Hook's New Interns

The Sandy Hook Foundation is delighted to welcome two high school seniors, Nora Phillips (Trinity Hall) and Ian O'Neill (Red Bank Regional), who will be interning with the Foundation this year to support marketing and social media efforts. Welcome Nora and Ian!



Hydration Station

Thank you to our funder, Manasquan Bank Foundation, whose grant partially funded the installation of The Sandy Hook Foundation's Hydration Station #1. We look forward to informing visitors about water usage and recycling efforts on Sandy Hook as they fill up their reusable water bottles near Lot M on the Hook. Four large-scale signs with spigots for water will be available next spring. Big thanks to Matt Brescia from the National Park Service and his Sandy Hook staff for their work on this project!



The Sandy Hook Foundation, a designated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the Official Friends Group of the National Park Service at Sandy Hook. We rely on your support and every donation is meaningful. Please, consider your contribution today.

Representative from the National Park Foundation Tours Sandy Hook

The National Park Foundation (NPF) is the official charitable partner of the United States' National Park Service. Dedicated to supporting friends groups like The Sandy Hook Foundation (SHF) through the Friends Alliance Network, NPF provides resources to help nonprofits like SHF be the best park partners we can be.



The Sandy Hook Foundation (SHF) has achieved the Platinum Seal of Transparency from Guidestar, the highest level of transparency. Guidestar's mission is to revolutionize philanthropy by providing information that advances transparency, enables users to make better decisions, and encourages charitable giving.



l. to r. Pete McCarthy, Unit Coordinator, Jessica Winberry, Director Principal Giving/NPF, Pat Alcaro, President/The Sandy Hook Foundation, Laurie Bratone, Director of Development/The Sandy Hook Foundation



It's just around the corner.
Tuesday, November 30, 2021
 Please consider a Giving Tuesday gift to The Sandy Hook Foundation and join in the global initiative of support. People care and take action, you can too.

GIVING TUESDAY

Please Donate

Yes, I want to Support Sandy Hook, Our Park in All Seasons

Contact Us!

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