



"A harvest of peace is sown from a seed of contentment." ~Farmers Almanac

Allen E. Grace of Anglesea, North Wildwood October 9, 1880 - July 9, 1947

by Kristina Gallagher, 1996



During a recent trip to the Wildwood Historical Museum researching a story on Grace Oil Company founder Allen Grace, we fortuitously came across this story written in 1996 by then-4th grade student Kristina Gallagher. When Sr. Albertine, also a frequent museum visitor, assigned her class the task of researching a famous New Jerseyian, a very wise Kristina Gallagher chose none other than Allen Grace (making our research task infinitely easier).

My report is on Allen E. Grace the founder of the Grace Oil Company. Allen E. Grace was born on October 9, 1880 and grew up in Goshen NJ. He met his wife Bertha who was also from Goshen NJ. They married and had four children, Allen Jr., Kenneth, Pauline, and Ethel. The family lived in the 300 E. block of 20th Ave., North Wildwood NJ.

Allen E. Grace's first business was a grocery store he opened at Chestnut and New Jersey Ave., which is the Anglesea section of North Wildwood NJ. He

opened his grocery store in that area because at that time it was the first developed section of the island and there was a need to service the fishermen and their families who lived in the area. At that time Anglesea was one of the largest fishing ports in New Jersey. Grace's grocery store sold kerosene (coal oil) that was used for cooking, heating, and lighting by the fishermen and their families.

In 1912 Allen Grace started doing business with the Texas Company, now known as the Texaco Oil Company. Grace started purchasing gasoline, kerosene, and engine oils from the Texas Company to sell to his customers. In June 1920, Allen Grace became a distributor for Texaco and in 1928 he formed his own oil company known as the Grace Oil Company. The office and oil tanks were located at 5th and New Jersey Ave., in North Wildwood NJ. The Grace Oil Company is one of the largest businesses in Cape May County and is the oldest Texaco wholesaler in the country. The first piece of equipment Mr. Grace purchased was a 200-gallon tank mounted on a hand drawn cart. He next purchased a horse-drawn tank wagon and as the business grew he purchased motorized tank trucks.

Allen Grace was also very active in the growth of North Wildwood NJ. He served as a member of the Board of Education for 12 years, and was one of the leaders in the development of the school system and the building of the Margaret Mace School. Mr. Grace was also a board member of the Marine National



Allen Grace's store on Olde New Jersey Ave. ~ from Wildwood Historical Museum

Bank located on the corner of Wildwood and Pacific Avenues.

Allen E. Grace died on July 9, 1947 while attending services at the North Wildwood United Methodist Church, still located at the corner of 2nd and Central Avenues. At the time of his death the oil company was turned over to his son, Kenneth Grace.

While doing my report I learned several things. I read about the Anglesea section being the first developed area in the Wildwoods. This area was made up of

fishermen and their families, who bought groceries and kerosene (coal oil) from Allen E. Grace's grocery store.

I admired how Mr. Grace started with a small family grocery store and through hard work, planning, and time, with the help of his family turned the business into the largest oil company in Cape May County. While doing my report I talked with many people who worked for Allen Grace and they all said, "He was one of the nicest people you could ever meet."



Allen Grace Oil Truck, c. 1923 on Olde New Jersey Ave.
Call Richard Dietz locally if you are interested in old photos 215-407-4135



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