

Tuckerton Gravel Pit  
Manahawkin Gravel Pit  
Manahawkin Speedway  
1950-1953

**Marv Inman**

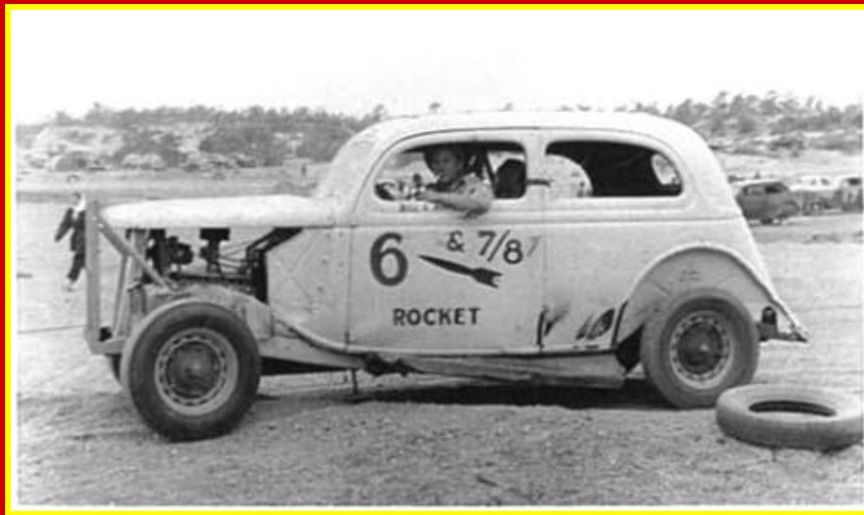


Photo Source Unknown

**Marv Inman drove this sedan at Manahawkin Speedway. His life was around the Atlantic shore as a bayman in New Jersey. I have yet to figure out why so many early '50's teams used this exact number, but the rocket reference is unmistakable.**

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It was announced that no races would be held Easter Sunday. It was also disclosed that officials of the newly-formed **Tuckerton** club conferred over the weekend with Speed Kings officials and obtained by-laws of the local club to use in forming their unit. Racing in **Tuckerton** is to start within a few weeks.

4/3/1950

The commission was told by John Quinn that the county firemen's association will sponsor a parade on a Saturday in August in connection with the centennial.

A suggestion by Dr. Weber that the commission carry the centennial theme into a Sunday stock car race at the gravel pit north of here failed to get support. 4/4/1950

# Tuckerton Plans Holiday Parade

TUCKERTON. — The Memorial day parade here will feature three bands, 17 fire companies, 30 floats and a marching unit of the United States Army, Ocean County Clerk Sylvester B. Mathis, general chairman, announced yesterday.

Two baseball games are to be played. The Tuckerton Athletic association faces the **Manahawkin** Bears at 2 p.m. on Memorial field. At 3 p.m., the Tuckerton American Legion faces the Pleasantville All-Stars at Leitz's field, West Tuckerton. **Stock car** races will be held in the old gravel pit on Green street.

5/12/1950

## Tuckerton Racer Killed

**TUCKERTON**—Robert Dawson, 26, died last night in Atlantic City hospital of head injuries he suffered late in the afternoon as his car hit a deep rut and flipped on the east turn of the **Tuckerton Stock Car** Racing association track.

Witnesses at the accident scene, two miles north of here on North Green street, said Mr. Dawson, who lives near the track, had just put in a spoke wheel, prior to the race, replacing a solid wheel.

The wheel collapsed after hitting a rut in the dirt track in the final feature race of the program as 300 persons watched. The rut had been worn by previous cars.

The wheel anchored, according to witnesses, who said the car's momentum carried it into the air, doing a flip and landing on its roof and then coming to rest on its side.

There were six cars in the race, the victim being third in the tight contest which was halted immediately. They were on the 10th lap of the 15-lap race. 8/6/1951

8/7/1951

# Tuckerton Race Group to Study Ban Possibility

**TUCKERTON** — The Tuckerton **Stock Car** Racing association has scheduled a special meeting tonight to get the opinion of members and spectators on whether to continue sponsoring races after the death Sunday of Robert Dawson, 26, one of the drivers in the 15-lap feature race.

Barzilla Pullen, secretary-treasurer, has invited members of **stock car** clubs in **Manahawkin** and Pleasantville. The session will start at 8:30 p.m. in the West Tuckerton firehouse. It is possible plans to assist the victim's widow, Pearl, and three-year-old daughter, Beverly Ann, will be discussed.

Meanwhile, Dr. J. T. Pettinga, an Atlantic county coroner, said yesterday after an autopsy that the death was caused by a severe fractured skull and epidural hemorrhage. Mr. Dawson died in Atlantic City hospital, less than four hours after the accident.

## Nose Dug in Ground

Mr. Dawson was driving a 1934 model Ford Tudor sedan owned by Clifton Brown, New Gretna, president of the association. According to a state police report made yesterday afternoon, Dawson had started to round the east turn when he lost control of the car and it rolled over on the right side.

The report said that while on its side the nose dug into the ground, throwing the rear end up into the air, the car resting on its right side.

Mr. Dawson's safety belt remained fastened and his helmet was still on his head, according to the report. Dr. L. Elmore Hess, Absecon, attending track physician, advised that the victim be taken to a hospital.

An association spokesman said today he feels the young driver, a mechanic in **Manahawkin**, "black-ed out" just before the car struck a deep rut in the dirt track, his head striking the knob on the gear shift lever. The spokesman added the driver had "one of the safest-type cars on the track."

Trooper Martin Durney made the police report.

# Stock Car Racer Dies After Jersey Crackup

TUCKERTON, N. J., Aug. 6 (AP).—  
A bad crackup at the Tuckerton  
stock car race track last night killed  
25-year-old Robert Dawson.

Witnesses told state police the  
local driver's 1934 Ford stock car  
racer turned over on a curve and  
plowed along the ground.

Dawson was pulled out of the car  
and taken to Atlantic City Hospital  
where he died. Atlantic County Cor-  
oner J. T. Petinga said death was  
due to a fractured skull. 8/7/1951



# Race Drivers Halt Programs At Tuckerton

**TUCKERTON**—The Tuckerton Car Racing association in a special meeting Tuesday night voted to temporarily suspend its Sunday programs as a result of the fatal injury received Sunday by Robert Dawson, 26, North Green street.

The association at the same time approved a statement concerning the accident "to correct some of the false reports that have been given" and discussed plans to sponsor a benefit race to aid the victim's widow, Pearl Richmond Dawson, and their three-year-old daughter, Beverly Ann.

Clifton Brown, New Gretna, owner of the car Mr. Dawson was driving and president of the association, told the 50 persons attending in the West Tuckerton firehouse that he is resigning as president. The group voted to meet Friday night to elect a new president and continue the discussion of the time and place of the benefit race. **Stock car** clubs of **Manahawkin** and **Pleasantville** may

cooperate in the benefit.

The statement, in part, says:

"We, the officers of the association and others in a position to know the true facts in connection with the accident . . . in the feature and final race Sunday assert that during the fourteenth lap of the 15-lap race, the car driven by Robert Dawson, an experienced driver, catapulted in the air. Witnesses nearest the scene inform us that while in the air the driver appeared to be limp and not in control of the car. The engine had slowed down.

"We believe that altho he knew of a break in the surface of the track, caused by excessive pounding of the cars, the driver had run wide in passing another car and, in accelerating his car in order to gain on the cars ahead, had attained a speed which he could not control. This allowed the car, out of control, to hit the depression in the track, causing it to go into the air under its own momentum. We believe the driver suffered the fatal injury when the car came down on the right rear wheel, which may have collapsed from the impact.

"When three of our drivers reached the scene, the helmet, goggles and safety belt were still in proper position. The driver was limp and unconscious. His helmet, goggles and safety belt were released by these drivers and his

body carefully lifted out of the car. First aid was given immediately by Dr. L. E. Hess, Absecon, before the ambulance took him to Atlantic City hospital. (He died 8:35 p.m. Sunday)

"A thoro examination of the car shows nothing out of order. The bracing and other safety features that are compulsory requirements in cars engaged in this sport were in perfect condition when checked by state police and Dr. Hess . . .

"The association is not trying to hide anything . . . We welcome an investigation by anyone qualified. We also welcome any feasible and possible suggestion that would help us conduct future programs in a safer manner."

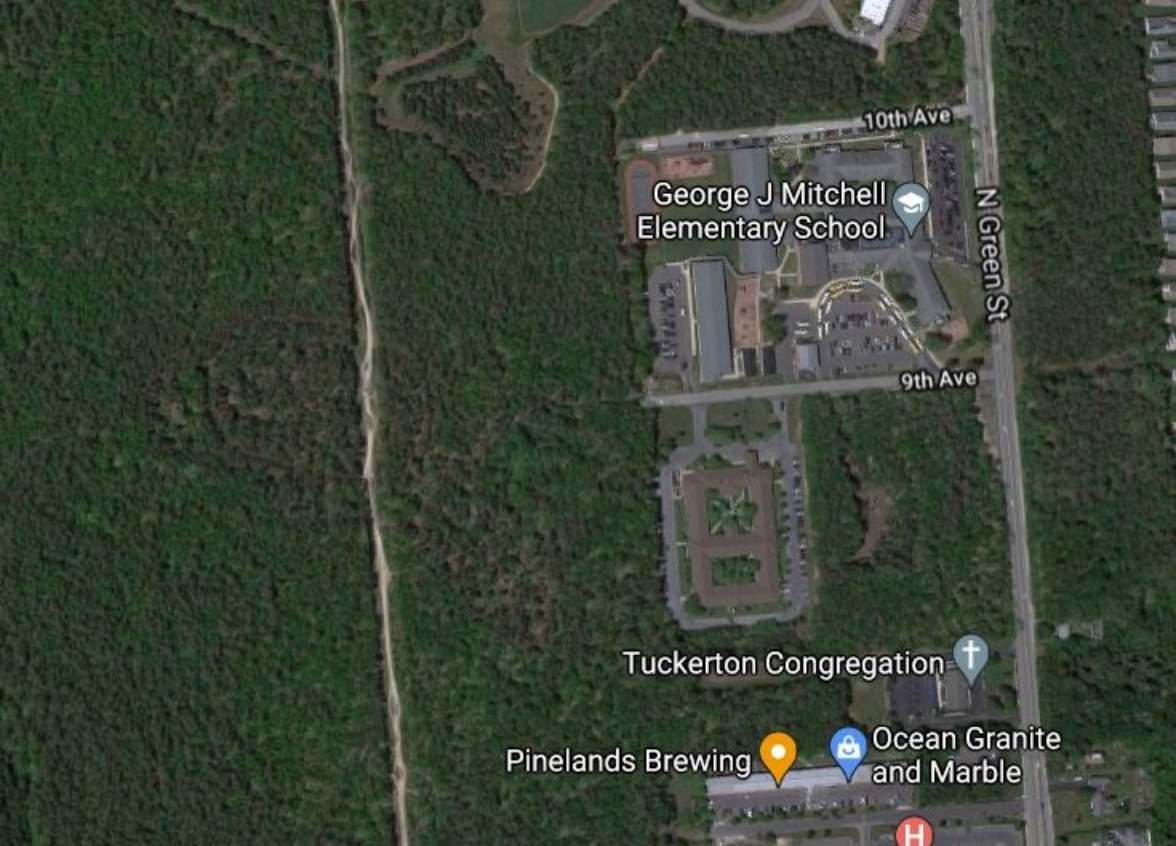
Mr. Brown opposed continuing racing at the North Green street track which is adjacent to the Dawson home. It was decided when the races would be resumed but one member said the Little Egg Harbor township committee has no thought of interrupting the races. The track is in the township.

Irving Richmond, brother-in-law of the victim, criticized the lack of enthusiasm of members in keeping up the track condition. He held the hole in the dirt track was "the size of a car" Monday. Mr. Brown said it was filled in before the race.





Tucketon Gravel Pit 1951



Tuckerton Gravel Pit 2021

## AUTO RACE SAFETY

To the Editor:

4/6/1951

The citizens of New Jersey casting their ballots for representation for the people, by the people, and of the people often wonder why representation for them is not being considered. Take for instance a non-controversial legislative bill, A-141, for protection and safety, introduced by Assemblyman George Neutze on or about March 9, 1951, in Trenton. As a result of delaying action on A-141, another tragedy took place at the opening of the Manahawkin stock car race track Sunday, April 1.

Fortunately no spectators were injured, because of the sense of control by one of the drivers, who suffered concussion of the brain and internal injuries.

This incident at the opening of the auto racing season should be a warning that safety inspection of auto race tracks is necessary, and prompt action should be taken to protect against any future tragedies.

On April 1, 1951, the auto racing season opened in this state with a race at Manahawkin. One of the contestants, Dick McMahon of Clementon, was badly injured because four people were on the track due to no safety precautions and in order to keep from hitting them he smashed his car up and laid on the track for over one hour before receiving any aid at all, due again to no safety regulations.

6/5/1951



# State Law Hits Smaller Stock Car Raceways

The new state law which sets up regulations for the safety of spectators at New Jersey auto race tracks, and levies a \$75 fee for each racing day, may cause many of the Monmouth and Ocean County smaller stock car tracks to close.

While Wall Stadium, largest of the Shore's tracks, will not be affected by the new regulation, except for the \$75 fee, tracks at Hope Chapel in Lakewood, New Egypt, Manahawkin, and Hightstown may find the going hard as the result of the rule.

The owners of the tracks were called to Trenton Wednesday to confer with Attorney General Theodore D. Parsons and Col. H. Norman Schwartzkopf, state safety

director, on the law. They were told that tracks must comply with the law immediately, and after explaining the law, Parsons gave each track operator applications for state licenses. The licenses will cost \$75 for each racing day.

## May Close Small Tracks

The operators didn't appear very happy about the new license fee, and one operator commented that it would put many of the smaller tracks out of business. The fee, Parsons explained, would barely cover the cost of state inspections.

The new law requires that all tracks must have heavy guard rails and special fences for the protection of spectators.

Drivers at the Hope Chapel track at Lakewood said that they had paid the \$75 to race today, but didn't know whether today's might not be the final race. One spokesman said that the Hope Chapel drivers had just purchased the track site, at \$2,700, and that the group still had a mortgage to pay off.

"We don't charge," he said, "and you know we'll never get \$75 in collections to pay the fee, let alone

6/1/1952

enough to pay other expenses.

"It looks pretty bad," he said.

There was an indication at the meeting in Trenton, the Hope Chapel driver said, that the rule might be relaxed in the case of small tracks not charging admissions. He said that at the meeting Parsons said the rule would undergo further study, but at present, the \$75 fee stands.

Existing tracks may continue, it was indicated, under present conditions until the licenses are granted. The fee, tho, is payable at once.

**REFEREE** — Jersey Joe Walcott will officiate at the weekly boxing matches staged at **Manahawkin Speedway,**

Route S-40, Monday night. The bouts, under the jurisdiction of the Middle Atlantic AAU, are sponsored by the Cedar Run IOOF Boys Athletic Club. The club was recently organized by the IOOF lodge to promote youth activities in nearby communities. The bouts get underway at 9 P.M. 8/9/1952



## Safety on Stock Car Tracks

12/11/1952

Motor Vehicle Director William J. Dearden has announced today that during the past stock car racing season he licensed 13 race tracks and issued 282 permits, attesting to the popularity of the outdoor auto race meets. Mr. Dearden made his report to Attorney General Theodore D. Parsons and said that it was his first since May 27, when the licensing of tracks went into effect as a safety measure.

Many of the stock car drivers protested the licensing at the time and said that the tax idea was unfair. The drivers in some cases threatened to close the tracks, but then failed to do so. Inspection of the tracks were made necessary by an increased number of accidents, and Director Dearden said he had approved the 13 tracks and issued the permits to drivers only after a thoro inspection and the installation of safety measures.

A total revenue of \$21,150 went into the state's treasury as a result of the inspections and while the revenue is welcome, it was not the primary reason for the new rule. At first we wondered why the tracks were suddenly being put to this additional expense, particularly in the case of the smaller tracks which already had a tough time making things go.

But, after noting the decrease of spectator and driver accidents due to the increased safety measures, we're in full accord with the strict state inspection and licensing. Included in the list announced by the director were the Lakewood Racing Club, Lakewood; Central Jersey **Speedway**, Hightstown; **Manahawkin Speedway**, Browns Mills; Sportsman's Stock Car Association, New Egypt, and the Wall Stadium, Belmar.

Director Dearden said that he believes the law has greatly improved spectator and participant safety, and while the operators seem satisfied with the reasonableness of the regulations and now favor their retention, he has recommended to Attorney General Parsons that a meeting of the operators be held for further discussion and possible agreement on additional safety precautions.

Safety is important, and we're sure that the operators and participants will agree that it's the only way to do things.

# Shore Racing Club Lists Program

**MANAHAWKIN** — The Shore Race Club will start activities again on the one-third mile **Manahawkin Speedway** Sunday afternoon, it was announced today. Races will get underway at 5:30, with the Shore club joining in activity with the Manahawkin Race Club in sponsoring the stock car races.

One of the first stock car racing associations in the state, the Shore Club, the club members have raced on almost all of the major ovals in the Shore area. Including in the list of club drivers are Bill Pfister, Pete LaVance, Dick Davis, Charlie Birdsall, and Joe Vigue.

The **Manahawkin Speedway**, newly constructed, is an asphalt-surfaced track with high-banked turns. Adequate parking facilities are available.

The track is located on Route 72, here.

7/24/1953

# Races Start At Manahawkin

7/28/1953

**MANAHAWKIN** — The newly paved **Manahawkin Speedway** opened Sunday under the auspices of the Shore Race Club as close to 1,000 fans watched Jack Stackhouse speed to a spectacular win in the feature event on the seven-race card.

Stackhouse, driving his fast Ford V-8, No. 5 started in 12th position and had gained the fifth spot by the end of the first lap. By the 19th oval he took the lead. He had a six car length lead over Other Johnson at the finish.

Stackhouse had to gain the feature the hard way as he placed 2nd in his heat and did not qualify in the semi-final. He won the consolation to gain the feature. Ted Schneider was second in the consolation.

## Charlie Birdsall Flips

Charlie Birdsall took one of the

most spectacular flips of the infant season. He had won his heat and was about to take the front in the semi when his throttle stuck to the floorboards and he sped down the backstretch about 75 mph. He smashed thru the fence and flew into the air going end over end. The car landed 75 feet from the point of the takeoff. Miraculously he was not hurt. The car was completely demolished.

The next races will be held Sunday at 5:30 P.M.

**FIRST HEAT**, 10 laps — Car No. 107, Steve Ferrara, John Earlin.

**SECOND HEAT**, 10 laps — Charlie Birdsall, Augie Moschera, Ike Cothell.

**THIRD HEAT**, 10 laps — Ed Siegler, Jack Stackhouse, Peanut Wardell.

**FIRST SEMI**, 15 laps — John Perdoni, Augie Moschera, Ike Cothell.

**SECOND SEMI**, 15 laps — Peanut Wardell, Dick Davis, Ed Siegler.

**CONSOLATION**, 12 laps — Jack Stackhouse, Ted Schneider, Other Johnson.

**FEATURE EVENT**, 25 laps — Jack Stackhouse, Other Johnson, Ike Cothell, Augie Moschera, Dick Davis.

# Manahawkin Races

**MANAHAWKIN** — The Shore Club stock car program will resume tomorrow afternoon at 5:30, after a week's layoff due to the weather. Races were scheduled for last Sunday, but were rained out.

Returning to action tomorrow will be Joe Vigue, Dick Davis, Charles Birdsall, **Jack Stackhouse**, Ed Seigler, and Ted Schneider. A match race has been scheduled between Vigue and Schneider.

The Manahawkin oval is located on Route 72.

8/8/1953

# Birdsall Wins Feature Race

8/11/1953

**MANAHAWKIN** — Charles Birdsall, taking the lead on the seventh lap, won the 25-lap feature event here Sunday before 700 spectators. Otha Johnson finished second. Birdsall also won his heat and placed second in the semi-final event.

Johnson and Don Cranmer finished in a tie in their match race and the match race between **Ted Schneider** and Joe Vigue was cancelled when Vigue failed to appear. The second semi-final was dropped because of threatening rain.

**1st Heat, 10 laps** — 1, Brother Groff, New Egypt; 2, Ted Schneider, Belmar; 3, Harry Wilby, Burlington.

**2nd Heat, 10 laps** — 1, Charlie Birdsall, Point Pleasant; 2, Ev Cramer, Mayetta; 3, Otha Johnson, Hightstown.

**3rd Heat, 10 laps** — 1, Jack Stackhouse, Hightstown; 2, Augie Moschera, New Egypt; 3, **Ted Schneider**.

**1st Semi-Final, 15 laps** — 1, Augie Moschera; 2, Charlie Birdsall; 3, Otha Johnson.

**Feature Event, 25 laps** — 1, Charlie Birdsall; 2, Otha Johnson; 3, Harry Wilby; 4, Ev Cramer; 5, Ted Schneider.



# Cottrell Grabs 8/20/1953 Stock Car Run

**MANAHAWKIN**—Ike Cottrell, New Egypt, took the lead in the 23rd lap of the feature 25 lap finale at the Manahawkin Raceway and held on to beat out Harry Wilby for first place here last weekend.

Cottrell had previously finished second in his 10 lap heat, and second in the 15 lap semi-final.

**Jack Stackhouse**, Hightstown, led the field for the first eight turns around the track but he gave way to Wilby when he blew his right front tire. Cottrell then grabbed the lead from Wilby to win going away. Ted Schneider held down the third position in his Forry 41 Ford.

Speedway fans were treated to some real thrills in the second semi-final when John Earlin lost his right rear wheel directly in front of Schneider. The wheel flew over Schneider's car while the car skidded out of control. Schneider avoided Earlin's auto as did Steve Ferrara who came on to cop the semi.





**STOCK CAR  
RACES!**

**SUNDAY AT 5:30 P.M.**

**FREE PARKING**

8/29/1953

**1/2 MILE FULL BANK TRACK**

**MANAHAWKIN SPEEDWAY**

**ROUTE 72, MANAHAWKIN, N. J.**

**SANCTION SHORE RACE CLUB ASSOC.**



Manahawkin Gravel Pit 1951



Manahawkin Speedway 1956





# Vintage Views

*The Official Newsletter of the  
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July/August 1999

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## MANAHAWKIN SPEEDWAY

8/1/1999



Al 'Peanut' Wardell poses with his race car in the pit area at the Manahawkin Speedway in 1953. (Wardell family collection)

To Joe:

Joe here is what I discovered while researching Manahawkin Speedway. In 1950 there was talk of racing in a Tuckerton gravel pit on North Green Street (Rt 539) on Memorial day. You can still see the outline of the pit behind the George J Mitchell elementary school. In August of 1951 a driver was killed and after a few articles, there are no more mentions of the Tuckerton Gravel Pits.

Manahawkin had two race tracks on what looks like the same piece of property on Rt 72. In 1951, they raced in a gravel pit where the Stafford Square Mall is. In 1953 they raced on a new banked asphalt track where the Manahawkin Commons shopping center is. These were probably the same property back then. The 1953 articles state the track was newly paved.

It is unclear what was going on in 1952. There are articles about Jersey Joe Wolcott officiating boxing matches at Manahawkin Speedway. Hard to imagine it was at the gravel pits. I'm speculating that the second track was there in 1952 as a dirt track.

Allan Brown's book references (1) a gravel pit in 1951-1952, and (2) a 1/2 mile dirt oval 1948-1950 then a paved oval 1952-1954. I think the info is partially incorrect since he references the gravel pit at Monmouth Airport as the second track. The gravel pit at Manahawkin sounds right but I can only confirm an April 1 1951 race. The 1951 map does not support the existence of any second track at that time, it shows up later on the 1956 map.

From Joe:

The Tuckerton track was about 8 -10 miles away from Manahawkin

The first track in Manahawkin was nothing more than a hole in the ground that people stood around the top rim and watched the cars go around down in the hole.

The 2nd Manahawkin track (which I think was located within 1/2 mile of the "hole" was an actual track with stands and stuff from what I was told. According to Bill Force, it was located right behind where the Verizon store is currently located in a strip mall on Rt 72 in Manahawkin. Bill told me that it had paved straightaways and the corners were asphalt (or was it the other way around???)

As mentioned, my mom attended races at the first track, and possibly the 2nd track as well.

A fellow named Ray who lived in down by Columbus NJ did a presentation on Arneys Mt a few years ago at the Springfield (Mansfield?) municipal building, and he had a lot of info on Manahawkin as well because a lot of the guys ran at both Arney's Mt and at Manahawkin.







