



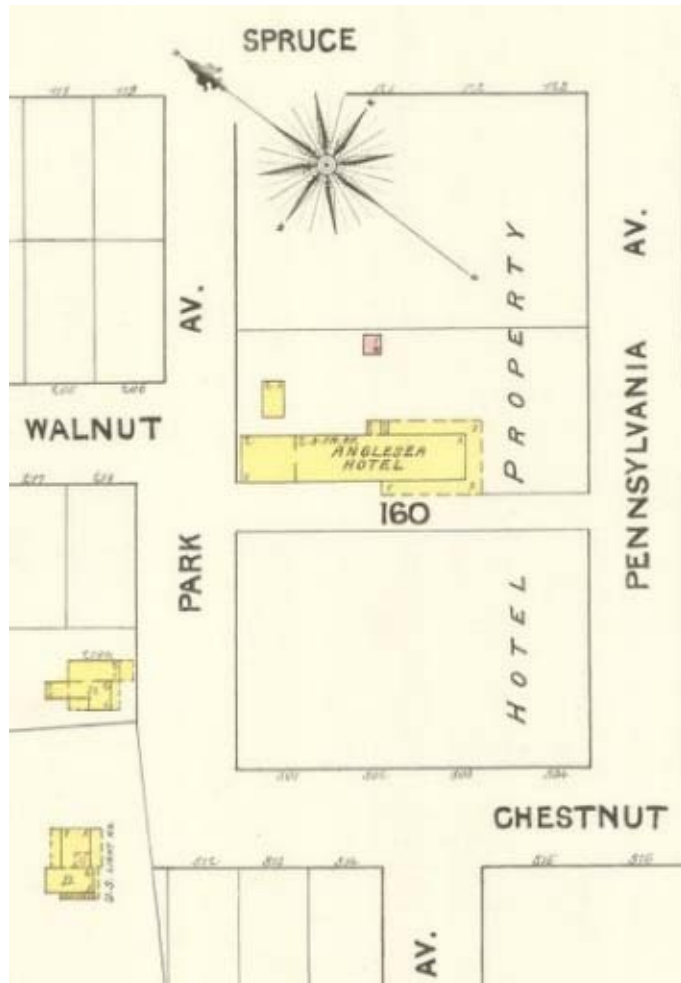
(The following are excerpts from *Borough of Anglesea: 1885-1906* by W. Scott Jett, City Clerk)

In the meantime, Swope knew that if he wanted people to come to Five Mile Beach he would need to provide them with lodging. In 1880, he began construction of the 50-room Hotel Anglesea just to the east of the Lighthouse. Construction lagged, however, as Swope's concentration was divided between the Hotel, the Railroad, development of the area, and his real estate endeavors in Philadelphia. The Hotel did not officially open until 1884, by which time another hotel, the Hereford House, had been built and a number of visitors had erected homes of their own.<sup>i</sup> In 1886 Swope sold the Hotel and its surrounding property to Jonas Bowman, who had an interest in the property as early as 1882.<sup>ii</sup>



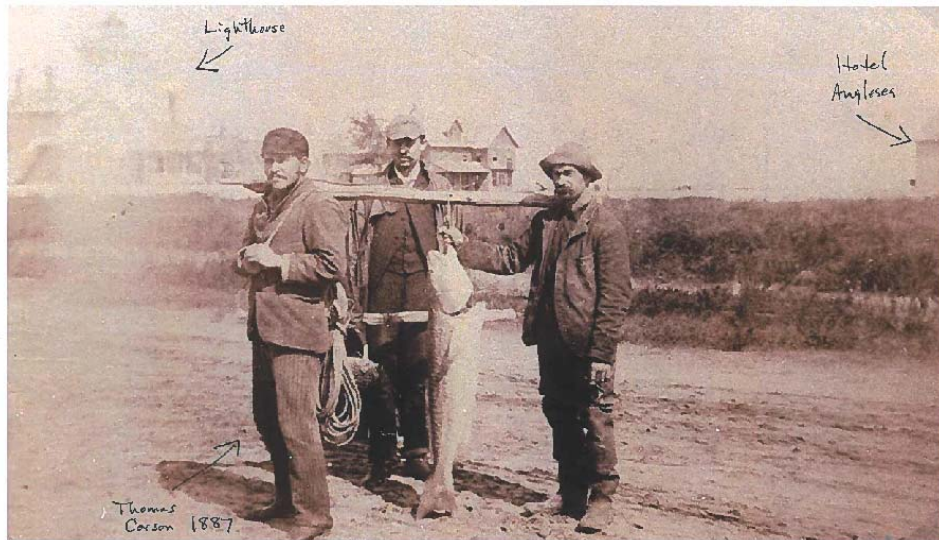
The third liquor license in the Borough was issued on April 15, 1887 to Alexander Grey, who had purchased the Hotel Anglesea from owner Jonas Bowman.<sup>iii</sup> A month later, Council resolved that no more liquor licenses would be issued unless the requestor presented a petition signed by at least five property owners who resided in the Borough.<sup>iv</sup> In the meantime, Grey had not paid the \$75.00 fee for his license and Council handed the matter over to the Solicitor for collection. The Borough won judgment against Grey but the matter was not finally resolved until January 1888 when Solicitor Leaming was authorized to make settlement for \$50.00.<sup>v</sup> In the meantime, Grey and Bowman had ended up in Chancery Court, with the Cape May County Gazette reporting on June 15, 1888:

“Vice Chancellor Bird on Monday rendered a decision in the suit of Alexander Grey, of Camden, vs. Jonas Bowman, in favor of the plaintiff. Bowman sold Grey the Anglesea Hotel in trade for four Camden houses and a tract of land, Bowman representing that the hotel averaged 70 guests a day during the summer season, while the register showed that rarely did 25 register in a day. Counsel for the defendant denied any fraudulent intention, and took the ground that if Mr. Grey had known how to manage a hotel he could have made the hotel more profitable than the four houses he traded for it. The Vice Chancellor decided that the contract could not stand and the properties should be deeded back to the rightful owners. The hotel has this season been managed by Morgan Hand, Esq., receiver, appointed by the Vice Chancellor since the suit commenced.”<sup>vi</sup>



In the midst of his tax problems, Jonas Bowman had arrived from his home in Collegeville, PA to air out the Hotel Anglesea and secure the building for the winter. On the morning of October 17, 1895 members of the Life-Saving Service saw flames on the top floor of the Hotel.<sup>vii</sup> Rushing to the scene with buckets, and with help from neighbors, they could only keep the flames from spreading to nearby cottages; the Hotel Anglesea was completely destroyed.<sup>viii</sup> The fire was reportedly of suspicious origin, and the rumor that the Hotel was “heavily insured” and “fully covered”<sup>ix</sup> only added to the question of whether the fire was truly accidental. The continuing encroachment of Hereford Inlet towards the Hotel property meant that it was only a matter of time before the Hotel would meet a watery fate. This encroachment would persuade Charles Mace to move his Hotel Royal to safer ground by the next spring. But the Hotel Anglesea, more than 150’ long, may have been too large to move at the time, and Bowman’s financial situation may not have allowed it anyway.<sup>x</sup> In addition, with the potential loss of his properties at the tax sale in a few weeks, Bowman did not have a definite place to which to move the Hotel. Collecting the insurance money would give Bowman something in return for the loss of his property, and the collection of money through such a plan could have been facilitated by Bowman’s position as a trustee of the American Life Insurance and Trust Company of Philadelphia.<sup>xi</sup> However, that explanation unfairly points the finger of arson at Bowman, as there is no definite proof, and it should be remembered that Bowman was less than

a week shy of his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday;<sup>xii</sup> it is certainly conceivable that a lantern or candle, mistakenly left burning, could have caused the destructive fire.<sup>xiii</sup>



<sup>i</sup> Francis, Francis and Scully, *Wildwood-By-The-Sea*, 16.

<sup>ii</sup> Office of the Cape May County Clerk, Deed Book 75, Page 136. Swope had formed the Anglesea Hotel Company earlier that year, transferred title from himself to the Company, then from the Company to Bowman. Swope may have decided to sell the Hotel because his Hotel manager, William A. Tompkins, passed away in January 1886.

<sup>iii</sup> Borough of Anglesea Minutes, Volume 1, 128.

<sup>iv</sup> Borough of Anglesea Minutes, Volume 1, 133.

<sup>v</sup> Borough of Anglesea Minutes, Volume 1, 166.

<sup>vi</sup> Cape May County Gazette, June 15, 1888. Morgan Hand arranged a lease with N. F. Chew and Noah Ayres to run the Hotel for the 1888 season.

<sup>vii</sup> Various publications erroneously place the fire in the year 1893.

<sup>viii</sup> 1895 Annual Report US Life Saving Service, October 17, 1895.

<sup>ix</sup> Five Mile Beach Journal, October 18, 1895; see also Cape May County Gazette, October 19, 1895, which states that "there are ample grounds for suspecting the work of an incendiary."

<sup>x</sup> Bowman's name appears with John T. Ryon on various offers by Council regarding delinquent taxes.

<sup>xi</sup> See Legal Intelligencer (viewable at [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com)), Volume 20, 131, for a list of Trustees of the company.

<sup>xii</sup> Five Mile Beach Journal, January 23, 1903, reported that Charles Mace had recently been in Philadelphia and visited Bowman, who was "enjoying life at the good old age of 94."

<sup>xiii</sup> Bowman would live to the age of 92, passing away in 1903.