

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

The biggest private project of the spring of 1905 began with a communication from Henry Ottens on April 19 “requesting Council to vacate portions of certain avenues in the Borough of Anglesea for the purpose of constructing a canal through the meadows to grassy sounds was received and on motion of Young seconded by Buck the Clerk be instructed to notify the Solicitor to prepare an ordinance granting the privileges as requested in said communication.”ⁱ

The Solicitor prepared Ordinance No. 58ⁱⁱ for introduction on April 27,ⁱⁱⁱ with the first three paragraphs reading thus:

ORDINANCE NO. 58

AN ORDINANCE TO VACATE 18TH AVENUE WEST OF DELAWARE AVENUE

WHEREAS, Henry H. Ottens has agreed to build a canal one hundred feet in width in the Borough of Anglesea, beginning at the west side of Delaware Avenue and running westward, at right angles to Delaware Avenue, of that width to Grassy Sound; the centre line of which is the centre line of 18th Avenue; and

WHEREAS, it is judgement [sic] of this Council that the building of said canal is necessary and proper, and that 18th Avenue from Delaware Avenue westward should be vacated for that purpose.

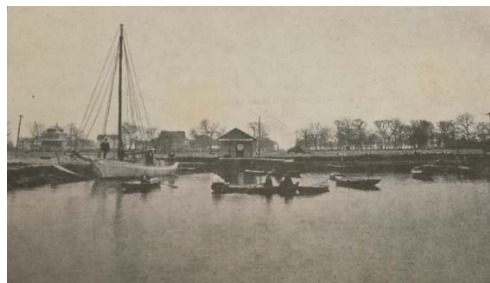
THEREFORE, SECTION I: BE IT ORDAINED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Anglesea that 18th Avenue from the west side of Delaware Avenue of the full width of Seventy Feet, including sidewalks on both sides, westwardly, as now laid out on the map or plan of Anglesea, be, and the same is hereby vacated, including the intersections of Maryland Avenue, Virginia Avenue, Ohio Avenue and Indiana Avenue.

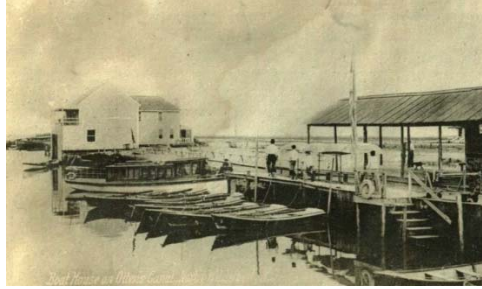
On May 9, with the ordinance placed for second reading, the following section was added:^{iv}

SECTION II: Provided, however, that the Borough shall have the right and privilege at any and all times to bridge the intersections of Ohio, Virginia and Maryland Avenues. Said bridges to be so constructed as not to interfere with ships, vessels, or other boats trading in and out of said canal.

Mayor and Council were aware, due to its dealings with Henry Ottens for the past five years, that any project undertaken by him was sure to be successful, and successful real estate developments meant increased tax revenues for the Borough. Ottens Canal, as it came to be called, was in the middle of a large parcel known as Ottens Tract No. 1 or Ottens Canal Tract, and although Henry Ottens stated correctly that he wanted a canal with access to Grassy Sound, he also obviously knew that digging the canal would allow him to market lots for sale as waterfront property. Anticipating the growth that would come to the area, Council reserved the right to build bridges over the canal, though none were ever built.

Excavation of the canal continued throughout the spring and summer of 1905. Enough earth had been moved by mid-summer that the Five Mile Beach Journal was able to report on July 26 that: “The Ottens Canal will be opened the latter part of this week for fishing and crabbing parties. It is within three blocks of the





Boardwalk and the facilities it offers for reaching the fishing grounds will soon be appreciated by those who make use of same.”^v The Journal reported two weeks later: “The first crabbing party to take advantage of the new Ottens Canal consisted of Louis Loeffling and wife, Chas. Schaefer and wife, Misses Alberta Smith, Jennie McArdle, Adele McGrath, George Franet and Herman W. Beck. The party met with great success and landed 103 crabs in less than two hours.”^{vi}

The final dredging was completed by December, with the finishing touches (and benefits) being announced in the Journal: “The dredge ‘Happy-Go-Lucky’ is doing excellent work in dredging out the Ottens Canal, which will be 150 feet wide and 40 feet deep, extending from Delaware Avenue through the salt pit cove^{vii} to the Grassy Sound, a distance of only 1440 feet, which will make it the most convenient canal on the New Jersey coast for crabbing and inside fishing.”^{viii}

ⁱ Borough of Anglesea Minutes, Volume 3, 16.

ⁱⁱ Borough of Anglesea Ordinances, Book 1, 123.

ⁱⁱⁱ Borough of Anglesea Minutes, Volume 3, 18.

^{iv} Borough of Anglesea Minutes, Volume 3, 19.

^v Five Mile Beach Journal, July 26, 1905.

^{vi} Five Mile Beach Journal, August 9, 1905.

^{vii} Henry Otten’s Canal Tract Plan calls it “Saw Pit Cove.”

^{viii} Five Mile Beach Journal, December 6, 1905.