


## Photo reunites first Atlantic City mailman with family

 Post this article for your Facebook friends

Like

7 people like this.

By DONALD WITTKOWSKI Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, August 15, 2010

**ATLANTIC CITY** — A few days ago, John T. Harrold and his son, John Jr., had a family reunion of sorts with another John Harrold.

Father and son finally became acquainted with a man they had faintly heard of through family chit-chat over the years, but never had a chance to meet.

“I feel like I’m meeting him for the very first time. I feel proud that he was part of the city’s beginnings and had such an important job,” John T. Harrold said, beaming.

This “meeting” occurred Thursday when John T. Harrold was presented with a photograph of his great-grandfather John Harrold that was taken in 1897 when he was Atlantic City’s first mailman.

John Harrold has been dead for many years, but the discovery of his long-forgotten picture has allowed his family to reconnect with the man who was part of Atlantic City’s early history.

“I’m proud to be his great-great-grandson,” said John T. Harrold Jr., a 21-year-old college student. “I told all of my friends about him and they think it’s the coolest thing. It reinforces the fact that our family has been here for such a long time.”

A bit yellowed, but in otherwise remarkably good shape, the photo was found inside a time capsule that had been buried under Atlantic City’s old post office at the corner of Pacific Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard since 1936. The time capsule was recovered in June when the post office was being demolished to make room for a road-widening project by the state Casino Reinvestment Development Authority.

“I drove by one morning and saw it. It was laying on top of the rubble and I called over a construction worker to get it,” CRDA spokesman Daniel Douglas recalled of his discovery.

The CRDA showed off the contents of the time capsule — made of copper and about twice the size of a cigar box — to the media in July. The artifacts included old newspapers, documents, letters from dignitaries and a souvenir program from Atlantic City’s 50-year celebration of 1904.

Perhaps the most striking item was the photograph of John Harrold. The photograph shows him lugging a heavy sack of mail on his back, looking like Santa Claus on the way to deliver Christmas presents.

John T. Harrold, 47, who lives in Ventnor, could hardly believe it when he saw the picture published in the newspaper the next morning.

“My reaction was, ‘My God, that’s my great-grandfather!’” he said.

John Harrold retired from the post office in the 1930s. A little family research also showed that his son, John T. Harrold, the 47-year-old Harrold’s grandfather, was the superintendent of the Ventnor post office decades ago.

“I’m surprised that I’m not working at the post office,” John T. Harrold, an engineering manager for cable TV provider Comcast, joked of his family history.

A note from 1936 that accompanied the old photo in the time capsule said that Harrold’s postal route included both sides of South Carolina Avenue to the Boardwalk as well as parts of Atlantic and Pacific avenues.

The Casino Reinvestment Development Authority has possession of the photo and other contents from the time capsule, but plans are being made to have the items publicly displayed in coming months at the Atlantic City Free Public Library. The CRDA has made a poster-size blowup of the photo. Copies of the picture were given by the CRDA to John T. Harrold and his son.

“This guy had a hell of a job to do. Look at that big sack of mail that he is carrying,” John T. Harrold said while marveling at the photo.

Contact Donald Wittkowski:

609-272-7258

DWittkowski@pressofac.com

## Story Commenting Notice

PressofAtlanticCity.com is integrating Facebook into a new method for commenting on stories on the site. This feature allows you to easily share content and comments with your social network, and you will be able to see what your friends and other PressofAtlanticCity.com readers are responding to as well. Simply log into Facebook below to post your comment.

[View our full terms of service and privacy agreement](#)

[Click here to report a comment as abusive.](#)