

# IN OUR MIDST

Delaware Vignettes  
In Pictures and Prose

Roger Martin

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Delaware Day

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*Roger A. Martin*  
By Roger A. Martin

DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES

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Dedicated to the late Bill Lowe,  
historian extraordinaire of Lewes,  
whose interest in Delaware's past  
was as eclectic as this book purports to be.

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## Prologue

In Our Midst is a collection of photos and vignettes about Delaware history. It includes stories about things in our state that most people know about such as Caesar Rodney's ride to Philadelphia to declare for independence in 1776. It also includes things that people may have heard of but don't know too much about such as the Cape Henlopen Lighthouse falling into the sea in 1926. Finally, most people never heard of the ship Mary G. Farr built in Milton during the Civil War and her sad fate some 20 years later.

As always seems to be the case, there is never enough time or space to write all one would like. In selecting the 50 vignettes for this book, other stories had to be left out that this author thinks were also interesting. For example, there's the story of Methodism which has been so thoroughly dominant particularly downstate for over 200 years. Ironically, its early leaders were so suspected of treason by those desirous of independence from England during the Revolution that Methodist circuit rider Francis Asbury sought refuge from arrest near Whiteleysburg in Kent County.

Another interesting area is the virgin forests that once dotted our landscape before the first settlers came with their axes. My friend, state Senator Bob Venables of Laurel, comes to mind with his revelation in 1994 of a bald cypress still standing not far from his house which dates back perhaps 750 years!

Still another story I wanted to write was how Lord Charles Cornwallis occupied the Cooch House in Newark for a week in September 1777 before moving on to defeat Washington at Brandywine. Strangely, after suffering the ignominy of defeat by this same man at Yorktown, Cornwallis went on in true Teflon fashion without stigma to become Governor-general of India where he died in 1805.

To those sceptics who say because of its small size Delawareans don't have much to talk about, let them begin here. Perhaps the above stories and others will surface in another book, another time.



#### 1. Swanendael, Valley of the Swans, on Lewes Creek

While looking for whale oil in the waters of Delaware Bay, the Dutchman Samuel Godyn and 28 other men disembarked from the 18 gun ship the Whale here in Lewes in early 1631. They immediately set to work building a brick house surrounded by a wooden palisade.

On December 3, 1632, a second expedition arrived in the Whale at Lewes headed this time by David Pietersen de Vries and horrifyingly found the settlement had been massacred to the last man by Indians. Bones of men and skulls of cattle and horses were found strewn about. Even the carcass of a chained up dog was found with 25 arrows in it.

De Vries found out from the Indians after they finally came out of hiding that a misunderstanding occurred when one of them stole a piece of metal from the Dutch with which to make a tobacco pipe. The thief was dealt with quickly by the Indians themselves but then in a surprise move they turned on the Dutch blaming them for the whole situation in the first place. Sneaking up on the unsuspecting colonists, they murdered each one burning the house and palisade as they went.

Such was the attempt at the first European colony on these shores.



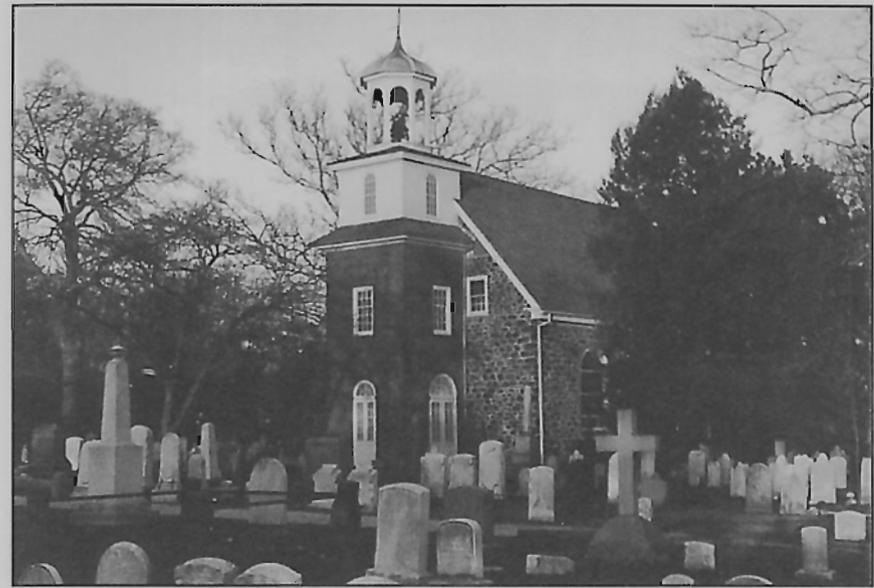
## 2. Peter Minuit and the Kalmar Nyckel

Pictured here is the replica of the ship Kalmar Nyckel commissioned in Wilmington's Christina River May 9, 1998 at a cost of \$4.3 million.

The original Kalmar Nyckel of the Swedish expedition entered the Christina River March 29, 1638 under the command of the Dutchman Peter Minuit (Min-wee). Wanting not to arouse his countrymen the Dutch who were already suspicious of the Swedes, Minuit moved inland up the river where he constructed Fort Christina, so named in honor of the 12 year old Swedish queen. Their purpose in coming to these shores was to, along with Holland, partake in the flourishing fur trade business with the Indians.

No women or children came in the first trip of the Kalmar Nyckel but followed in 3 subsequent trips made by the ship from 1638-1645. The following April Anthony, an Angoler or Moor, was the first Negro in Delaware. Thusly was established the first permanent settlement in the Delaware Valley.

The Kalmar Nyckel was decommissioned in 1651 by Queen Christina and sold; all traces of which disappeared. Minuit suffered the same fate as the ship which first brought him to Wilmington. He perished in a hurricane in the Caribbean not 5 months later after having landed on these shores.



## 3. Old Swedes Church

For almost 60 years after the Swedes first landed at The Rocks in Wilmington, there was no suitable permanent place in which to conduct Lutheran church services. With the coming of Pastor Eric Björk in 1697, a church was built on the north bank of the Christina River. On Trinity Sunday, June 4, 1699, this new church was consecrated as Björk described: "God graciously favored us with a bright and beautiful day for our first entrance into our new church..."

During the pastorate of Andrea Hesselius in 1714, those who had received God's gift of singing in the congregation were exhorted to praise their God and sing out. Those who hadn't were politely discouraged from making a "discord" with their harsh and untrained voices.

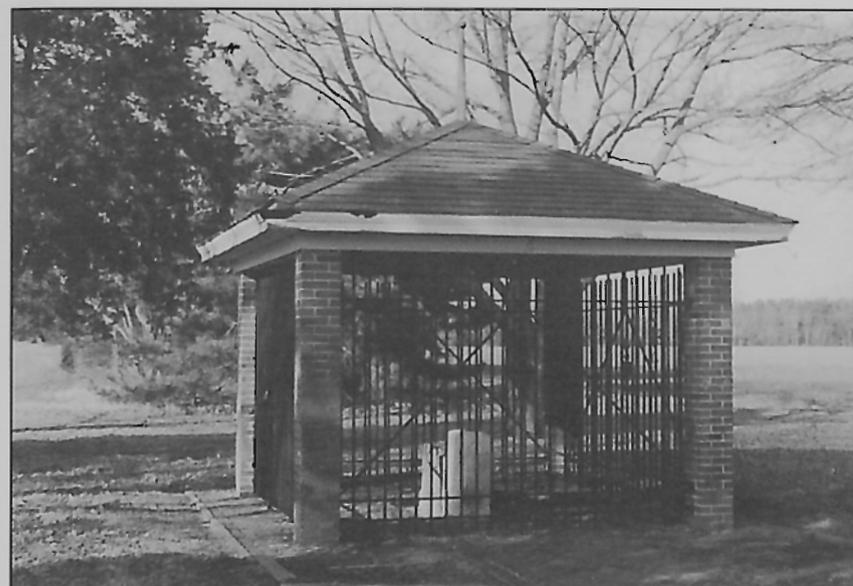
As Wilmington grew, Swedish influence waned. In time English services replaced those in Swedish as members came to be associated with the Episcopal Church. By 1830 the congregation moved uptown and in 1891 present-day Trinity Chapel was erected at Adams Street and Delaware Avenue. Old Swedes, the Mother Church, still stands and in her cemetery lie the remains of many of Wilmington's most prominent of yesteryear.



#### 4. Pollack Archaeological Site

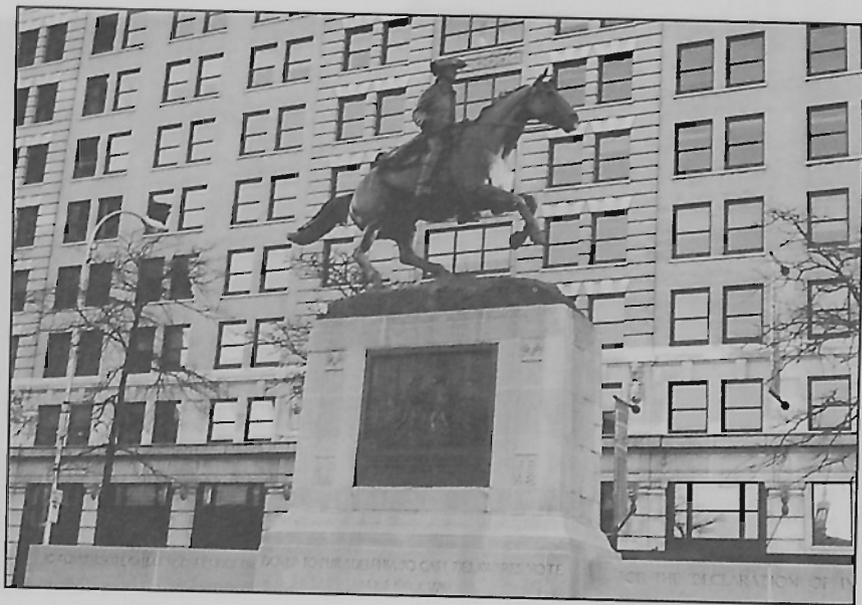
In the early 1990's highway engineers excavating for the new state road SR 1 near Smyrna uncovered remnants of the farm of one hapless Richard Whitehart, formerly an indentured servant who emigrated long ago from Maryland. The Pollack site, now a wetlands area shown here between the Leipsic River and Alston Branch, dates from 1681, a time when perhaps less than 100 settlers lived in Kent County between Milford and Smyrna. Poor Whitehart! As with many others, he struggled all his life to survive finding relief only in sweet death's embrace.

The Whitehart plantation was an extraordinary find but what ensued in the same neighborhood was an even bigger discovery. Pits of flora and fauna were uncovered which date to 18 million years ago when this part of Delaware was a subtropical area very much like coastal Georgia and Florida are today. Scattered barrier islands and small estuaries dotted the coastline. Bones of giant turtles and reptiles along with those of sharks and snakes were found in the strata of submerged lands. Soil formations here indicate that huge stands of timber of long ago grew right up to the shoreline of freshwater lakes and backwater areas.



#### 5. Mason and Dixon

If one looks at a 1775 map of the Delmarva Peninsula, one can see that Maryland encompasses almost all except for the coastal areas of present day Delaware. For decades the Lords Baltimore who settled Maryland claimed land here which impinged on other British claims. Among these were William Penn's in Delaware then known as the Lower Three Counties (of Pennsylvania) on the Delaware River. As more settlers came to the area, both sides nearly came to blows when one Lord Baltimore made advances on New Castle and Lewes. Finally, an agreement was made in 1732 to settle the matter once and for all, but various obstacles prevented any substantial progress until 1764. That was the year two skilled British surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon came along. They placed the marker shown here in the middle of the Delmarva Peninsula west of Delmar and measured a line directly north to Pennsylvania. This line intersected with one that ran eastward to Fenwick. Overnight much of what had been Maryland became Delaware. Establishing this line was one of the last things King George III, Parliament, and the colonies agreed upon before war broke out in the Revolution.



## 6. Rodney's Ride to Philadelphia

Here, with the backdrop of the Du Pont Building in Wilmington, Caesar Rodney's equestrian statue commemorates the ride he made July 1-2 from Dover to Philadelphia to vote for independence in 1776. It is precisely 73 miles from Dover Green to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, give or take a crook or bend in the road, and it was a rigorous undertaking. Rodney was almost 48 years old, was debilitated by asthma and suffered with facial cancer, the latter killing him in 1784.

With Thomas McKean voting for and George Read voting against, the former summoned Rodney to come quickly and break the tie.

One question has always remained. Did Rodney go by horse or horse and carriage? All he wrote of that date was that he "...arrived in Congress (tho detained by Thunder and Rain)..." Later McKean wrote Rodney's nephew, Caesar A., that he met him "...at the State-house door, in his boots & spurs..." Still later the ubiquitous Allan McLane wrote Caesar A. that "...he (Caesar) alighted from his Carrage at the State house and was met on the Steps by his colague Thos. M'Kean..." Perhaps we will never know how he arrived. What's important is that he did in time to break the deadlock.



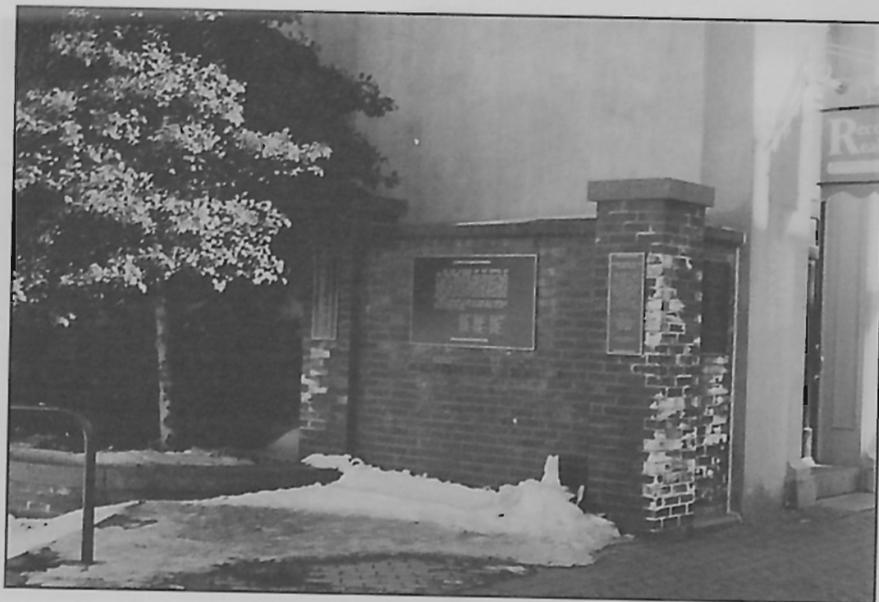
## 7. Colonel John Haslet and the Battle of Princeton

John Haslet of Milford was colonel of the Delaware Regiment during the first year of the Revolution. The regiment was no longer in the field when Washington made his surprise attack on the Hessians in Trenton Christmas night, 1776. Enlistments had expired. Haslet was one of the few Delawareans on the scene as the attack got underway that morning at 3 A.M.

Despite having Washington's permission to superintend recruiting at home, Haslet had delayed his return. A few days later on January 3, 1777 on this field at Princeton he fell dead from a bullet in his head. Caesar Rodney, his best friend, later said "...in Haslet We know we Lost a Brave, open, Honest, Sensible Man, One Who loved his Country's more than his private Interest."

Less than 2 months after Haslet's death his wife Jemima died of inflammation of the lungs leaving five orphaned children, one of whom, Joseph, later became Governor of Delaware (1811 - 1814; 1822).

Clearly, Haslet is one of Delaware's least known and most under appreciated heroes. Having been buried at first in a Philadelphia church yard, his remains were removed in 1843 to the grounds of the State Museum in Dover.



## 8. The First State

If our nation lasts 1,000 years, no one will ever be able to alter the fact that little old Delaware was the first state in the union of these 50 United States of America. Depicted here is a memorial to that event dedicated December 7, 1987 on South State Street in Dover. That was the 200th anniversary of Delaware's being the first state to agree to and to adopt one of the greatest documents of all mankind--the US Constitution.

Richard Bassett, Gunning Bedford, Jr., Jacob Broom, John Dickinson, and George Read were our delegates that met with others that summer of 1787 in Philadelphia. Realizing that the Articles of Confederation were wholly inadequate to a new nation, the above named persons, "in order to form a more perfect union", signed their names with others to the great document on September 17. Then, for it to become effective two thirds of the states meeting in special state conventions had to ratify it.

Pennsylvania's convention met first while Delaware's met at the Golden Fleece Tavern near here on the Dover Green on Monday, December 3. By Friday, December 7, while Pennsylvania deliberated still, Delaware's 30 statewide delegates unanimously adopted the document.

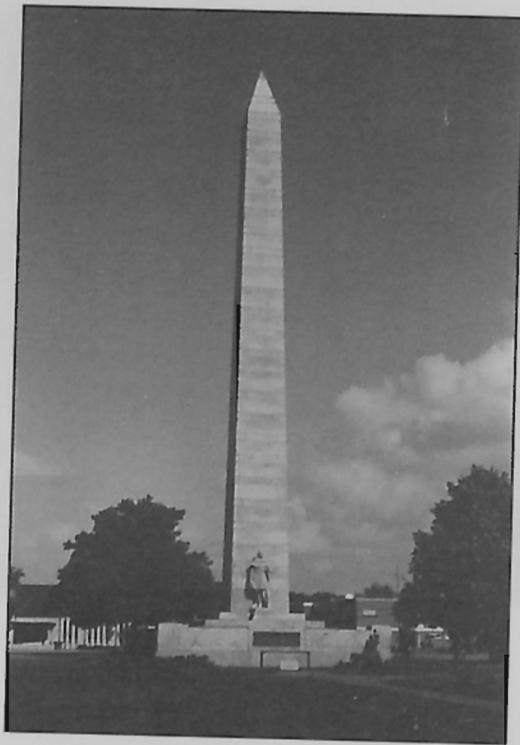


## 9. Cheney Clow

This slight eminence just off Route 300 west of Kenton near the Maryland line is supposedly where Cheney Clow's "fort" once stood. Here in April 1778 Clow led a group of Tories before they were subdued by Whig forces and compelled to disperse. Word was, they were supposed to march on the legislature in Dover and shut down the government.

Clow and his followers roamed the countryside stirring up trouble with impunity, eluding capture, and fraternizing with British agents for four more years. Finally, troops under Colonel Charles Pope surrounded Clow's house (or fort) and took him into custody. During the melee Joseph Moore, a member of the posse was killed. An attempt to blame Clow did not hold and he was declared innocent but placed under such a high bail he could not win his freedom.

In May 1783 he was indicted for murder but languished in prison for four more years while succeeding governors dilly dallied about what to do with him. With his family pleading for his release, the execution was finally carried out with his wife taking possession of her husband's remains, the whereabouts of which remain unknown to this day.



#### 10. Last Days of Robert Kirkwood

After the Revolution Captain Robert Kirkwood returned to Newark and married Sarah England, the daughter of a neighboring farmer. They kept store in Odessa until his wife died in 1787. It was then he moved to the Ohio Territory. He was granted 2,000 acres of land there from the State of Virginia for his services in the Revolution.

In 1791 Kirkwood was commissioned captain in a regiment under General Arthur St. Clair whose task was to tame the marauding Indians roaming the Northwest Territory menacing settlers at the time.

Shown here is a monument on the banks of the upper Wabash River near the Indiana border at Fort Recovery, Ohio. In the early hours of November 4, 1791 Indians ambushed St. Clair's troops as the US Army suffered one of its worst defeats. Kirkwood was among the fallen whose remains lie here in a mass grave. Sad ending for one who survived 33 battles during the Revolution fighting for his state and the birth of this nation. His reward from his home State of Delaware? The little hamlet of St. Georges Station, now known as Kirkwood, was named for him as was a much maligned highway between Wilmington and Newark.



#### 11. Woodland Ferry

On February 2, 1793 the Delaware General Assembly granted Betty and Isaac Cannon the right to maintain a ferry for 14 years across the Nanticoke River below Seaford. Upon Betty's death in 1828 the ferry reverted to her sons Isaac and Jacob.

The Cannon Brothers owned 4,573 acres of land, stores, warehouses and a large number of slaves. They branched out into banking and money lending but their business methods of usury and foreclosures alienated almost the entire neighborhood. In 1843 Owen O'Day, a disgruntled client, shot and killed Jacob. Less than a month later Isaac, 73, died.

Cannon Hall, built by Jacob about 1820, still stands across the road from the ferry. It is said that he never lived in it because the woman to whom he was engaged jilted him at the last minute. The house stood empty for over 20 years. In time the ferry became the property of Sussex County, and by 1882 the site came to be known as Woodland.

Until 1930 even passengers were expected to help pole the ferry across, but today a steel cable guides a diesel engine ferry over 500 feet of water in about 3 minutes.



## 12. Conflagration in New Castle

Shown here is the George Read, II (1765-1836) House on the Strand in New Castle completed in 1801. Just to the left south of the structure is a lovely garden designed by Robert Buist of Philadelphia in 1846.

Where this garden is now was once located the home of Read's father, George Read the Signer (1733-1798) and one of the state's first US Senators. It was destroyed in a fire while the son's house escaped the same fate. On an afternoon in April, 1824, a fire broke out in James Riddle's stable filled with combustible materials, and flames quickly spread to an adjoining lumber yard. Soon the strong wind blowing up the street engulfed some 15 to 20 houses and stores causing about \$200,000 damage. Had it not been for the timely aid of fire companies from Wilmington the damage could have been much worse. Unfortunately the home of the elder Read was one of those destroyed, and it was never replaced.

The following October after the fire Read, II and his wife welcomed the Marquis de La Fayette to this house when he visited New Castle.

In 1966 the Philip Laird Family donated the Read House to the Historical Society of Delaware.



## 13. No Rest for the Weary

Shown here amidst a golf course community which has sprung up around it just south of Summit is what's left of the home of Governor Joshua Clayton (1789-1796). Known as Locust Grove in Clayton's day and in the latter days the Dickey Farm, Clayton, a physician by profession, first inhabited this dwelling in 1773.

After serving as Delaware's chief executive Clayton was appointed US Senator in 1798. Philadelphia was still the nation's capital at the time, and that summer the city experienced yet another yellow fever outbreak, purportedly the cause of Clayton's death. He was only 54.

Clayton's remains have had a rather unusual fate in that they have been buried three times. When he died, he was buried here on the farm at Locust Grove. When his wife died in 1821, both his and her remains were removed to Bethel Cemetery along the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal just into Maryland. Then in 1965 when the canal was widened, the Claytons' remains were moved again to higher ground in the same cemetery.

The Claytons have been most obliging with these disturbances and patiently wait for the next move that might be forthcoming.



14. Caesar A. Rodney, The Signer's Nephew

Nephew of Caesar Rodney the Signer, Rodney served in Congress and was appointed US Attorney General by President Thomas Jefferson in 1807. Later President Monroe appointed him minister to Argentina to investigate the propriety of recognizing the independence from Spain of these newly formed republics in South America.

After a difficult voyage Rodney finally arrived in Buenos Aires in November, 1823 with his baggage and 11 of his 12 children. If that wasn't enough, he also brought his personal library with him.

The following May he was feted at a dinner where he was to give the last speech of his life. He died the next month and was buried in the English cemetery there, all traces of the grave having been lost.

Rodney's wife Susan returned to Wilmington with her children to Cool Spring, the Rodney mansion that fronted on Franklin Street. Today, Cool Spring Reservoir sits on the site. She died in August, 1839 and her remains lie here at the lower end of Wilmington-Brandywine Cemetery, thousands of miles away from those of her husband's. Consigned to separation for all eternity, reunion of the two awaits the great Judgment Day.

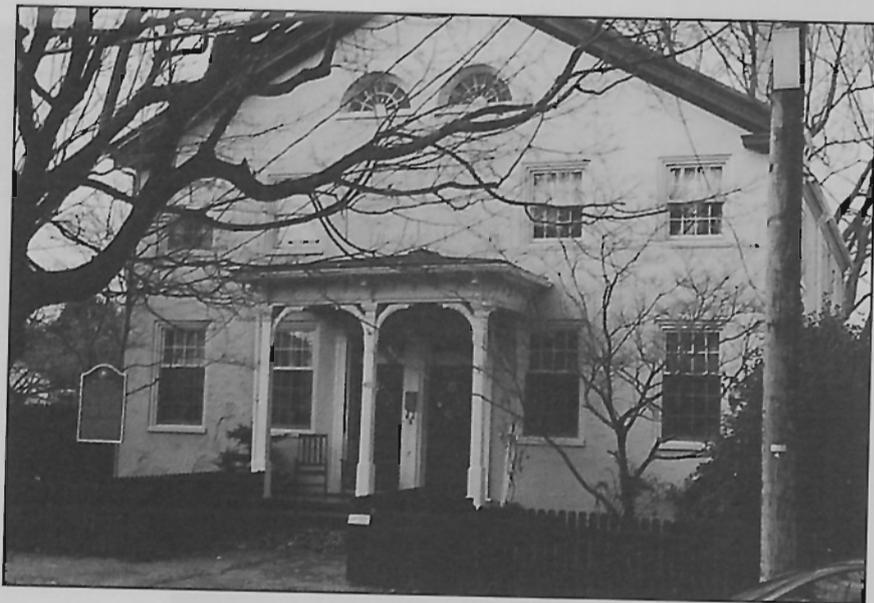


15. Notorious Patty Cannon

One of the stories of Delaware lore that probably will never die is that of the evil Patty Cannon, slave trader of Reliance, the little hamlet on the Maryland line shown here just west of Seaford.

Legend has it that Patty's house, long since gone, stood here astride the Delaware-Maryland border with brass tacks running down the middle of the living room. When Maryland authorities came to fetch her for her nefarious deeds, she stepped to the Delaware side and vice versa.

On April 1, 1829 a farmer ploughing in a field came upon the grave of a slave trader from the south who had done business with Patty many years before. Other graves were found and Patty was hauled off to Georgetown jail to await trial for suspected murder, but she cheated the law and took poison dying on May 11. She was buried in the jail yard at Race and Market Streets. Years later a new jail was built out toward Route 113 and the bodies were removed to Potter's Field near the new jail. During the exhumations somebody made off with Patty's skull and for years it hung on a nail in a farmer's barn. Then in 1961 this same skull turned up in the Dover Library where it occasionally goes on display.



#### 16. The Old Collector

Here on Mt. Vernon Street in Smyrna is a home once occupied by yet another unsung patriot of Delaware, Allen McLane (1746-1829). He was a most extraordinary Revolutionary War hero and what's more, he didn't mind telling people which caused many to find him insufferable.

McLane was born in Philadelphia and settled in Smyrna about 1770. When the Revolution came, he was one of the first to join up and saw action in every major engagement from Long Island to Virginia. While Washington was at Valley Forge, it was McLane who headed a guerrilla group that harassed British pickets incessantly while the main body of the enemy occupied Philadelphia in the winter of 1777-1778. Another time he was even credited with saving the Marquis de La Fayette from British ambush.

After the war he was elected to the Delaware General Assembly serving as Speaker of the House in 1791. Before President Washington left office, he rewarded the old hero by naming him Collector of the Port of Wilmington, a plum McLane managed to hold on to despite political enemies for 32 years.

In one of his last acts in his illustrious career, he managed at 83 to get to Washington to see Andrew Jackson sworn in as President.



#### 17. Peach Mansions

Amid the boxwood in Middletown, this was the home of Governor John Cochran (1875-1879). Many such houses were built and supported by the immense fortunes made (and lost) in the production of peaches in the post Civil War period. In 1875, the year he was inaugurated governor, 35 railroad cars with 530 baskets to a car were being shipped daily to markets from the Middletown area!

Isaac Reeves first brought trees from New Jersey in the 1830's and Major Philip Reybold of Delaware City made a fortune as everybody seemed to get into the act. Peach orchards dotted the countryside, but the growers were also at the mercy of the railroad. Often during harvest time there were not enough refrigerated cars. In 1893, 30,000 baskets of peaches went to waste in Milford for lack of transportation. Also, railroads gouged farmers by charging exorbitant rates for such penny ante business (in the railroad's eyes) relative to the longer more profitable lines elsewhere.

From Middletown peach growing moved downstate until the boom burst with disease, but Cochran Grange is testament to the good times that once were.



### 18. Octagonal School

Shown here with its boys' and girls' outhouses in the background is the Octagonal School. Erected as the Pleasant Hill Academy at Cowgill's Corner south of Leipsic in 1836, this district #12 schoolhouse had 87 students and was, in its time, one of the finest schools in Kent County. Inside were 2 circles of desks: the outer circle of boys faced the wall; the inner circle of girls faced the center---all within reach of the teacher's hickory stick!

Some 133 such districts were established in 1829, the first major attempt at a public school system in Delaware. The plans were drawn up by an immigrant from Massachusetts who had gone to Harvard named Willard Hall. Settling in Dover as a lawyer, he served in Delaware's General Assembly, the US Congress and almost half a century as a federal judge.

While Hall gets the credit for being the father of public education in the state, his philosophy was somewhat eccentric. He did not believe in schools for training teachers. He felt teaching was strictly for the young and only for a short period while the "freshness of youth" lasted. Then "something better" should be looked for as a living. Hall also fiercely defended local district autonomy and eschewed a centralized state tax system to support the schools.



### 19. Buena Vista

Shown here just off Rte 13 near New Castle is what was once the home of John M. Clayton, one of the two most famous citizens Delaware has produced. Buena Vista was completed in 1846 and named for General Zachary Taylor's victory in the Mexican War. Clayton was state leader of the Whig Party, a US Senator and served as US Secretary of State under President Taylor.

Despite his political prominence and success Clayton suffered immense tragedy in his personal life. In 1822 he married Sally Anne Fisher, granddaughter of Governor George Truitt (1808-1811). Not quite 3 years later Sally Anne was dead barely 2 weeks after the birth of their second son. Clayton never remarried. In 1849 this son Charles died and 2 years later James the first son also died. By 1856 the haunting emptiness of Buena Vista proved too much and he moved back to Dover where he and Sally Anne first lived even though she had been dead 30 years. Two months later Clayton himself was dead.

Clayton's great nephew, Clayton Douglass Buck, Governor of Delaware (1929-1937), was born and died in this house. It was donated to the state in the 1960's by the Buck Family.



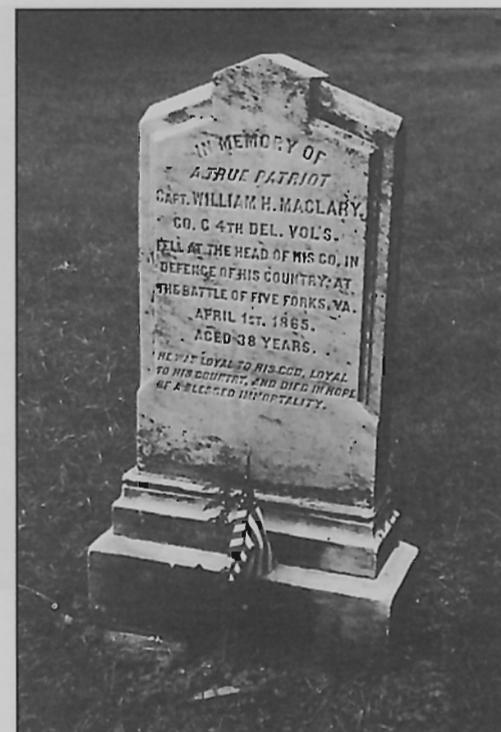
## 20. Gone With The Wind

"A. Reed, April 5, 1861" is what the inscription says on this stone at the corner of Fleming's Landing and Deakynesville Roads in Thoroughfare Neck in lower New Castle County.

Who was "A. Reed"? Presuming it was a male, did he live nearby? Was he a young kid or an older person? Why did he inscribe his name on this stone? What happened to him?

Asking these questions about Reed are about as perplexing as those dealing with the little hamlet of Deakynesville (Dee-kine) which existed just down the road years ago. Today there is no trace of any such place but in 1868 it was depicted on the Pomeroy and Beers Delaware map as a flourishing community. There were lots of Deakynes, some Staats's, a Lattomus, a Fenimore among others but no "A. Reed". There was even a store, a school, and the little place even had its own post office. Nearby once also was Collins Beach, a summer resort which was in its heyday around the Civil War. The resort with its 4 story 40 room Hygenia Hotel became history when a massive hurricane struck there in October, 1878.

Such is the passage of time when all returneth to the soil.



## 21. Captain MaClary

Here in this secluded corner on Front Street in Leipsic lie the remains of Captain William H. MaClary of the 4th Delaware Infantry Regiment, USA. At the outset of the Civil War, he entered service at Camp du Pont in Greenville September 1, 1861. Later joining the 4th at Brandywine Springs, the regiment was fully organized by September of the next year. Most of the men were from New Castle and Kent Counties with Company C containing a large number of prisoners from Fort Delaware who had taken the oath.

Guarding the du Pont powder mills for two months, the regiment moved on to Arlington Heights below Alexandria, Virginia. It wasn't until May 1864, that the 4th saw actual combat and that was in the battle of Bethesda Church outside Richmond on June 2. Heavy losses were sustained as MaClary's unit moved with Grant's army on the siege of Petersburg.

With the fall of Richmond and the war coming quickly to an end, MaClary's outfit was attached to the 5th Corps and was by now so decimated it was down to 63 men. Maclary assumed command of the regiment and on April 1, just 8 days before Lee's and Grant's meeting at Appomattox, he was killed at Five Forks, Virginia at the age of 38.

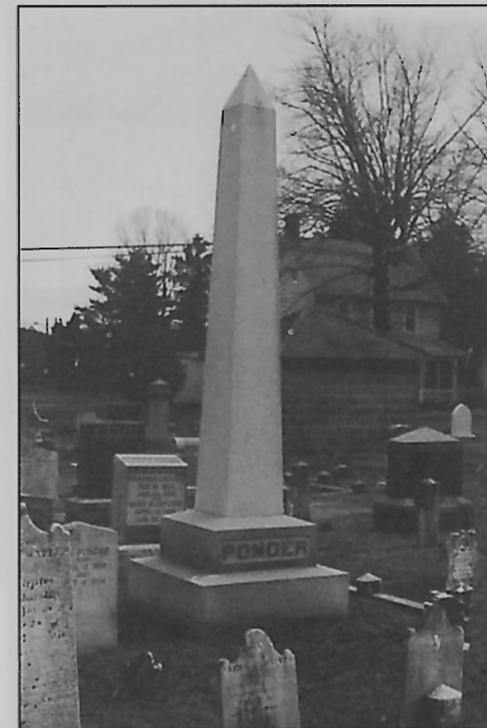


## 22. And Then There Were None

When Delawareans think of Custer's Last Stand, they think in terms of an unfortunate incident that happened long ago, far away, and to someone else. But they wouldn't be entirely right. It was long ago and far away but there was a Delawarean who was killed that day June 25, 1876 along with Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Little Bighorn River in the Montana Territory. He was Corporal Eugene L. Cooper of Wilmington who was using the alias of George C. Morris.

Cooper was born in Georgetown July 4, 1851 to Benjamin and Hannah Cooper. Later the Coopers moved to Wilmington where Eugene grew to maturity and became a carriage maker. On October 26, 1872 he joined the cavalry in Philadelphia and went west to become a member of the legendary 7th Cavalry.

Leaving Fort Abraham Lincoln, North Dakota Territory, Cooper followed the horse soldiers into the pages of history. A member of Captain Miles Keogh's Company I, he succumbed along with his comrades whose graves are pictured here. Most of the remains of Keogh's troop were found later in a buffalo wallow, some of which were certainly those of Cooper.



## 23. "His Word His Bond"

Here in the middle of Goshen Cemetery in Milton is an obelisk dedicated to the memory of Governor James Ponder (1871-1875). On the monument is the inscription "His Word His Bond", an epithet that recalls another time, another place when people were particularly known by the company and promises they kept.

Ponder was an exemplar of the successful downstate farmer in the 19th Century. Money and family prominence were carried on from one generation to the next through intermarriage and social intermingling. Ponder's wife was a Waples, another prominent downstate name.

Sometimes these good old boy relationships caused not a few problems. Ponder's sister Anna married US Senator Willard Saulsbury (1859-1871). When Saulsbury retired from the US Senate, Governor Ponder named him Chancellor of Delaware. The appointment raised eyebrows on two broad fronts. Firstly, Saulsbury was his brother-in-law; and secondly, Saulsbury's penchant for alcohol was well known.

Fortunately, despite these apprehensions, Saulsbury did a reputable job in the post.



#### 24. Whose Remains Are They Really?

The trouble started almost from the beginning. When Caesar Rodney The Signer died in 1784 his grave was poorly marked in the family burial ground at Byfield, the ancestral plantation east of what was to become the Dover Air Force Base. His brother Thomas was appointed judge in the Mississippi Territory and never returned to live in Dover. Caesar's nephew, Caesar A. Rodney, died and was buried in Buenos Aires in 1824. In sum, Rodney's left the Dover area and the family burial ground at Byfield lay neglected for years and ultimately became lost.

In 1884 Chief Justice Joseph Comegys and other well-meaning citizens of Dover disinterred what they thought were Caesar's remains and reinterred them in Christ Church Cemetery shown here. Despite the questions about the remains in some people's minds, this massive gravestone was eventually placed over the site.

Almost a century passed before archaeological studies indicated upwards of 14 graves in the old Rodney burial ground, one presumably of Caesar whose remains just might still lie where they were placed that Monday morning, June 28, 1784. Future studies are pending.

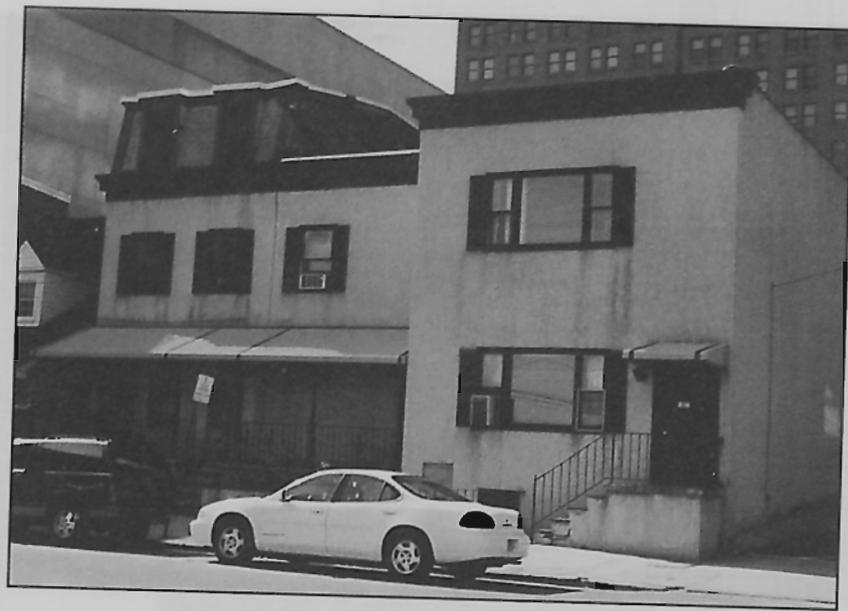


#### 25. Country Cemetery

Characteristic of rural areas particularly downstate are these family cemeteries like this one shown here in a field just off the Sharptown Road west of Laurel. This one dates from around 1890. Traveling the byways and back roads, these little solitary clumps of trees, briars, and undergrowth in fields seen from the road most often signify some ancient family burial ground.

Why families would bury their loved ones in such seemingly out of the way places is questionable. Did they assume the land would always be in the family? Or realizing their mortality, did they simply want to consecrate the spot where they were born, married, raised their families and died?

Whatever the reason for such remote burial places, they remain as testaments to people who once were. At least here are tombstones indicating a burial. No one knows how many burials were conducted without any tombstones at all. Each new spring planting brings the farmer's plow closer to these little clumps in the field as they shrink in size. Old tombstones long since displaced will eventually be laid aside and piled atop each other at the edge of somebody's future lawn. Then, the little cemeteries, from whence the souls long ago fled the earth, will be no more.



26. The Monday Club, Inc.

The Monday Club, Inc. started in Wilmington in 1876 when black men would stop in at a hotel on Front and French Streets for small talk and a few drinks on Monday--their day off. These men of substance, good character, and established reputations worked as butlers, cooks, coachmen, janitors and chauffeurs for wealthy people who lived in and around the city. Acting as an employment agency, experienced members taught others how to serve large dinners and prepare attractive foods for parties.

In time the club moved uptown and purchased this property pictured here at 913-917 French Street, having received its charter from the State of Delaware in 1896. Today the Monday Club, Inc. counts its some 85 members from all economic levels of society. Prospective members must still be people of good standing in the community, introduced by a club member and voted up or down. Now a social club, the members provide financial assistance and human services to all worthy causes.

Long time member, the late State Senator Herman M. Holloway, Sr. (1963-1994) often held court here sounding out his ideas and proposals with members before presenting them on the Senate floor in Dover.



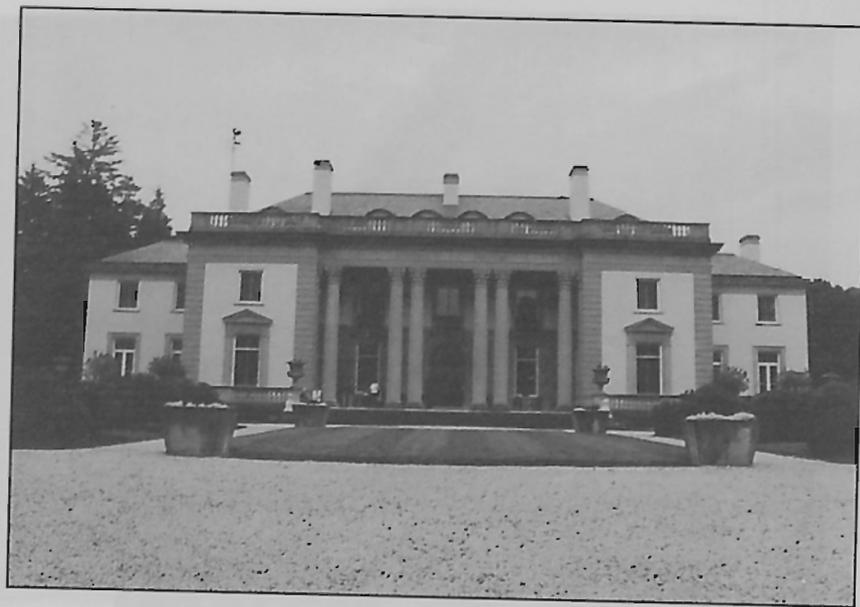
27. Chocolate Candy Murders

John Dunning of Middletown worked in the San Francisco office of the Associated Press as a foreign correspondent. He had married Elizabeth, the daughter of former Congressman John Pennington of Dover. At first she lived in California with her husband but soon returned to her parents' house in Dover at #20 The Green with their daughter Mary.

Monday, August 8, 1898 a mail package containing chocolates arrived in Dover from an unknown person. Two people who partook of the not so tantalizing looking candies were Elizabeth and her older sister Ida. Within 4 days both were dead from arsenic poisoning.

John, alone in San Francisco, made the acquaintance of one Cordelia Bodkin, an estranged woman and together they plunged into the depths of debauchery, dissipation, and degradation. When John wanted to break it off, Cordelia couldn't stand it and decided to get him where it hurt the most--his family. She poisoned them with candy sent through the mail!

Cordelia, barely escaping the noose, was finally brought to justice in California and adjudged guilty. She is pictured here in San Quentin prison where she died of melancholia March 7, 1910 at the age of 56.



## 28. Nemours

Named after the ancestral place in France, this is the home Alfred I. du Pont had constructed for his wife Alicia in 1910. Du Pont, along with his cousins Pierre Samuel, II and T. Coleman, helped save the Du Pont Company from being sold to its competitors in 1902. In a bold move these three bought the company themselves and kept it in the family.

During World War I gunpowder sales to Allies made the company millions of dollars but success did not come without pain and misery among the troika.

Alfred became somewhat of a pariah among many family members when he committed the unpardonable sin of divorcing his wife Bessie in 1906 and remarrying. Then came the coup de grace when he was ousted from the company---the one he helped save!

Despite his tribulations Alfred, as with his cousins, made massive contributions to Delaware and its citizens. He made payments out of his own pockets to Delaware's senior citizens thus presaging the social security system later adopted as a nationwide program by the federal government. Even though he has been dead since 1935 his legacy still lives on with the Alfred I. du Pont Institute for Children in Wilmington.



## 29. Delaware Welcomes President Harding

Soon after Warren Harding was inaugurated President in March, 1921, Dr. Walter L. Grier, Vice-President of the L. D. Caulk Company in Milford invited him to come to Delaware. The purpose of his visit was to accept initiation into an exclusive order of the Masons, the Tall Cedars of Lebanon. Saturday, June 9, 1923 was the day chosen for the visit as President Harding was feted at the Du Pont Hotel in Wilmington. From there the motorcade wound its way through Elsmere and Newark. At Cooch's Bridge, Edward W. Cooch, later Lieutenant-Governor of Delaware, asked his three year old son Edward (Ned) if he wouldn't like to shake hands with the President. Putting his hands behind him, the little Cooch boy demurred and stepped back muttering: "Neddy doesn't want to". The motorcade continued on down through Dover and finally to Milford.

Rogers Funeral Home on Milford's Lakeview Avenue shown here was the home of Dr. Grier where a buffet was served Harding and 300 people that evening. After ceremonies in the Plaza Theater, Harding left near midnight for Lewes where his yacht Mayflower took him to Washington. This one fine day was Delaware's brush with history for Warren Harding died suddenly in office in San Francisco that very August 2.



### 30. Granogue

High on an eminence north of Wilmington within sight of Pennsylvania is the estate of Granogue. The mansion amidst 500 acres was built for Irénée du Pont, Sr. (1876-1963) in 1923.

Granogue is a byproduct of munition sales by the Du Pont company in World War I that brought enormous wealth to a lot of people on the Brandywine and Irénée was one of them. It also speaks the successful transition under his leadership (1919-1926) and that of his brothers Pierre S., II and Lamont who took turns heading the company as it grew from munitions maker to chemical giant from 1915 to World War II.

Retiring at the age of 49, Irénée and his wife Irene reared 8 daughters and one son. Granogue was the scene of many dinners, dances and fun times. Popular Fourth of July fireworks displays were eagerly awaited but were sadly discontinued in 1954. Irénée was almost 87 when he died in December, 1963, just about the time the Castro regime confiscated his second beloved home Xanadu in Cuba. At his death his entire estate was valued at \$200 million.

Irénée "Brip", Jr. and his wife Barbara live at Granogue today. He was the last family member to hold an executive position in the company.



### 31. Cape Henlopen Lighthouse

One of the great tragedies of Delaware history occurred when the lighthouse fell into the sea at Cape Henlopen on April 13, 1926. Pictured here being restored during the winter of 1999-2000 is its sister lighthouse a couple of years older and still standing on Sandy Hook, NJ.

Cape Henlopen Lighthouse was built ca. 1766 while we were still subjects of King George III. Located on a 35 foot high dune 1/4 mile from the sea, erosion was so relentless that by October 1, 1924 the government abandoned the light. With only 8 feet of solid earth remaining between its base and the edge of the sand cliff in September 1925, Governor Robert Robinson appointed a committee to save the lighthouse. Everett Johnson, Newark Post editor and former Secretary of State under Governor John Townsend, became the outspoken chairman of the committee.

After the darkened beacon tumbled into the sea, the Lighthouse Commission in Washington reminded all it had recommended annually to Delaware officials since 1910 that the lighthouse be preserved. Conversely, Delawareans brought out the old saw of blaming Washington red tape.

No matter now. The Cape Henlopen Lighthouse was gone forever.



### 32. Mary Wilson Thompson and the CCC

For years people, particularly those downstate, tried to do something about the mosquito menace that came each summer. Farmers could hardly work in the fields. In town one answer to the problem was having a "mosquito parlor"---a screened-in porch. Another more complicated one was building a fire with chips or corncobs and laying on green leaves the smoke from which left such a pungent odor that it often drove off not only mosquitos but people as well.

Then Greenville grand dame socialite Mrs. Henry B. Thompson (nee Mary Wilson) came to Rehoboth in 1927 and built her summer home Mon Plaisir on Park Avenue (shown here--notice the extensive "mosquito parlor") and was beset instantly with the ubiquitous mosquito!

Mrs. Thompson rarely met an obstacle she couldn't overcome. When the General Assembly wouldn't put up money for ditching and drying out the mosquito breeding grounds, she teamed up with Governor C. Douglass Buck in 1933 and induced the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to start the job by setting up two camps, one in Lewes and the other at Slaughter Beach. It was the beginning of the end of the "skeeter" menace.

**DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES**



### 33. Indian River Inlet

For as long as anyone could remember an inlet leading out of the Indian River in Sussex into the ocean had always been a sometime thing---sometimes open, sometimes closed; it shifted here, then there. All during the 19th Century shipments of goods by local fishermen and merchants to and from Philadelphia had to be made on the highest tides.

Many people felt the situation worsened in 1890 when the Assawoman Canal was dug and drained waters southward. So too was the sentiment in 1913 when the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal sucked waters from Rehoboth Bay which would seemingly have gone out an inlet. Then, after a dry spell in the 1920's the Indian River Inlet closed entirely. The seafood industry died while the mosquito population exploded in the closed off marshes.

Just before being elected US Senator in 1928 former Governor John G. Townsend attempted to force an opening out to the ocean with 2,200 lbs. of dynamite. After a marvelous explosion, water began running to the ocean but it soon filled up again with sand.

First bridged in 1934, another structure washed away in 1948, and a permanent one was established in 1965 over the now free flow to the ocean.



#### 34. The Mary G. Farr

During the 19th Century, there was a flurry of shipbuilding in Milton on the Broadkill River shown here. One particular ship, the Mary G. Farr, was built in 1863. Over 129 feet long, it equaled the height of a 10-12 story building and was a 2 masted schooner of 330 tons.

For twenty years the Farr plied the Atlantic Coast with John Conwell, part owner, as her captain. On New Year's Eve, 1885, the Farr set sail from Baltimore for Providence, Rhode Island with a cargo of corn. About a week later she ran into a 3 day winter storm off New Jersey. Amidst howling wind and driving snow, the Farr caught fire and smashed into the surf. Next morning all was quiet as flotsam littered the beach. Of the crew of seven, only Captain Conwell's and steward William D. Warren's bodies were recovered from the beach near the town of Spring Lake.

Almost 44 years later in November, 1929, the sheriff of Cape May County was patrolling the beaches during Prohibition days. Finding a bottle about to be filled with illegal hooch, he discovered a note inside: "Aboard the Mary G. Farr. Fire gaining in the hold. Can no longer ride out gale. About to take to long boat. God help us all."

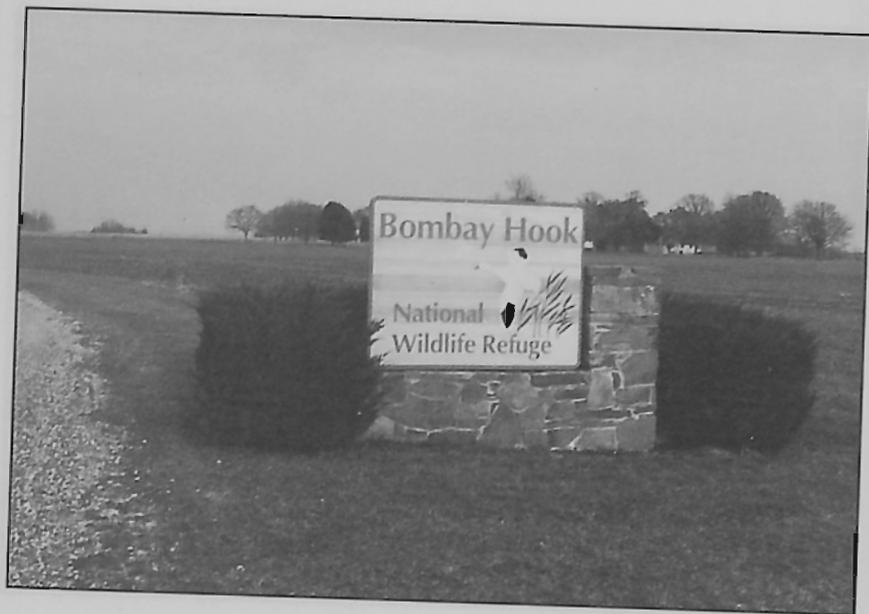


#### 35. Harold McMahon

Harold McMahon of Oyster Bay, N. Y. was a US Army reservist who flew planes across the country for his employer Skyloft, Inc. On Saturday night, August 19, 1933 he was flying a Lockheed Vega over the Delaware Bay. Having left an airport on Long Island, N. Y. earlier in the day, McMahon landed at Atlantic City, N. J. where he rested then took off on a heading for Washington, our nation's capitol.

By the time McMahon reached the Delaware shore he experienced very foul weather and turbulence. Something happened to his plane over a very remote marsh area east of Leipsic. One eyewitness said he saw an explosion as the plane came down in flames on the farm of the Carey Brothers, Henry, Earl, and John. McMahon did not survive as his body and the plane wreckage began to sink almost immediately in the bog.

Accessible only by boat, the weather became steadily worse. By Wednesday the 23rd the whole East Coast was hit by a cross between a Caribbean hurricane and a northeaster, the worst gale some said, in almost 40 years. Rescue became impossible. McMahon's final resting place and that of his plane are marked by this barely visible monument shown here in the marsh.



### 36. Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge

Bombay Hook in Kent County is first mentioned in 1675 when a tract of land there was granted to Peter Bayard of Bohemia Manor, who agreed to pay the Duke of York a quitrent of six bushels of wheat annually.

This 14,000 acre marvel of serenity is right under our noses east of Smyrna, and most poor souls in the state don't even know it exists. To those willing to be seduced by the wiles of nature, Bombay Hook is a catharsis that provides an antidote to today's stressful world. It was established in 1935 as a link in the chain of waterfowl refuges that extend from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Here a 12 mile round trip tour in one's car (or by foot) includes stops at a salt marsh, freshwater ponds, and upland woods. Enroute it is possible to see ducks, geese, shorebirds, falcons, hawks, and even perhaps eagles.

Leaving their wintering grounds in South America, migratory birds head north toward Delaware Bay in early May to take advantage of the spawning horseshoe crabs whose eggs are a critical food source for many species of shorebirds. Once sated they continue on their trek to the Arctic feeding grounds. The refuge is easily accessible off Route 9 and is one of Delaware's best kept secrets.



### 37. Fort Christina

The Tercentenary celebration of the landing of the Swedes on June 18, 1938 at the foot of 7th Street was plagued with problems right from the beginning. It had rained all night in Wilmington, and despite the inclement weather, the park area was jammed with some 2,000 spectators by 9:30 next morning. Then the Wilson Line's City of Pennsylvania came up the Christina and unloaded 2,000 more people from Philadelphia in an area that was becoming a sea of mud and water. The Kungsholm, the yacht that brought Crown Prince Gustav Adolf, Crown Princess Louise, and Prince Bertil from Gotheborg, Sweden, was delayed because of Atlantic storms. Ceremonies were to begin at 10 A.M. but because the rains continued to fall, delays kept people seeking shelter.

Crown Prince Gustav was ill with kidney stones aboard ship and it fell to Prince Bertil to present this monument, still standing, to President Franklin Roosevelt in the name of the people of the United States. FDR had been in Wilmington just the year before for the wedding of his and Eleanor's son James, Jr. to Ethel du Pont. Both times it rained incessantly, and on this occasion a month's rain had fallen on northern Delaware in one day's time.



### 38. St. Georges

This proud little hamlet, once known as Quinquenium, was in existence as early as the 17th Century. Serving as a stage stop for years, St. Georges became even more important when the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal opened in 1829 even though the railroad passed it by shortly before the Civil War.

With the coming of the auto, traffic became such a problem by 1924 a highway patrolman was needed on weekends at the bridge over the canal. Two years later a lift bridge helped alleviate traffic problems. Neighbors often went by foot back and forth across the bridge to pay social calls and do their business but that was about to change forever.

On January 10, 1939, the west bound 395 ton freighter SS Waukegan rammed and completely destroyed the 13 year old lift bridge. Now neighbors were a world apart, and it remained so for three years until the present day span was opened in January, 1942. Instead of simply walking across the bridge, one had to get on the new span and travel 1.7 miles just to get to the other side of town! At this writing (2000) if the 1942 bridge is completely replaced by the new one over the canal on SR 1, St. Georgians will be compelled to travel 6 miles to see their neighbors.

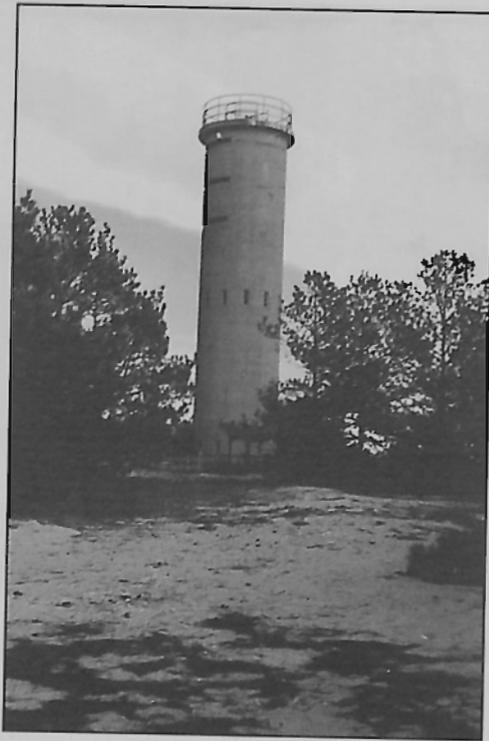


### 39. Seaford Nylon Plant

In yet another example of largess bestowed upon the State of Delaware by the Du Pont Company, the latter chose in 1938 to build a plant in Seaford to manufacture newly discovered nylon. The endeavor provided welcomed relief in this job-starved area downstate where heretofore, one of the few ways of earning money was making holly wreaths for the holiday season that might bring 3-6 cents a wreath. In addition the next year the company bought 153 acres in Seaford to build homes for workers for the new plant.

Nor did the company's efforts benefit Seaford alone. Some of the 850 workers who produced the first nylon fibers shortly before Christmas, 1939, came from as far away as Pocomoke City and Cambridge, Maryland. In 1969 the nylon plant reached its highest level of employment with 3,400 workers.

Without question nylon has been the biggest money-maker Du Pont ever had. Ironically, its discoverer Wallace Carothers could take little solace in his work. Considering himself a failure, he took his own life in 1937. He had no idea how much he had helped so many people get out of the Depression particularly downstate. His name should be known everywhere.



40. Sentinels On The Beach

As war clouds thickened in Europe in the spring of 1941, the Federal Government announced that all traffic was being barred from Cape Henlopen. By August some 1,000 acres in the area had been cordoned off to build a military base. Curiously named for Lt. Gen. Nelson A. Miles, last commanding general of the US Army and someone who probably never set foot in Delaware, the base became known as Fort Miles.

Massive gun emplacements were constructed at strategic points around the Delaware Bay. Erected at about the same time, this 75 foot high firetower shown here in Cape Henlopen State Park is one of several that today still dot the shoreline along Delaware's beaches. Their purpose was to direct artillery fire on any enemy ships that might enter Delaware Bay.

Since the towers now stand as silent sentinels, some people have sought to purchase them for summer homes but the state has wisely declined. Instead this particular one pictured above was renovated in the 1980's as a tourist observation tower. If one can negotiate the 112 steps inside and given clear weather, the view from the top is spectacular especially in the direction of Cape May, New Jersey.

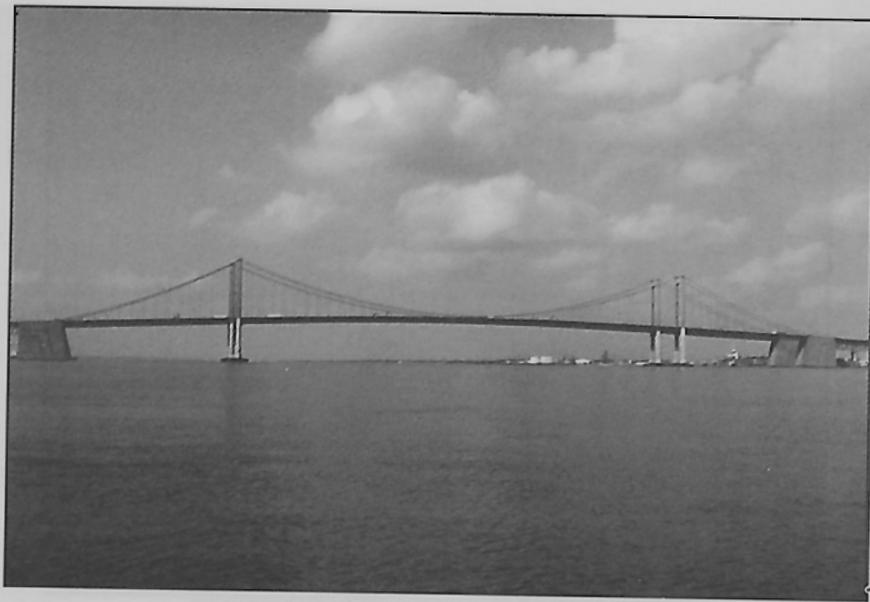


41. USS Indianapolis

Shown here is the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis. After delivering the warhead for the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, she sailed off without escort toward Leyte Gulf for maneuvers. The crew totaled 1,196 including four young men from Delaware: Signalman 3rd Class Anthony G. Daniello, Radioman 3rd Class Harry T. Hickey, Machinist Mate 1st Class William G. Rue all from Wilmington, and Seaman 1st Class James A. Tull from Laurel.

On the night of July 30, 1945, a Japanese submarine plowed two torpedoes into the Indy sinking her within 12 minutes. Still, about 900 men made it into the water before the ship sank. Nobody knew the Indy had sunk for all radio contact was destroyed instantly with the explosions.

By dawn next day, the survivors floated alone on the quiet but endless sea. That's when the shark attacks began. Almost five days later a mere 317 survivors were pulled from the sea after having been discovered accidentally by a patrol plane. Of our four young men, Daniello, Hickey, Rue, and Tull, only Hickey's body was recovered. Buried at sea, his remains were weighted down with a naval shell as it passed into the deep. Such are the sacrifices that we the living too soon and too often forget.



#### 42. Delaware Memorial Bridge

As early as 1724 an irregular ferry operated on the Delaware River between Pennsville, New Jersey and New Castle, but it wasn't for another 200 years that a permanent ferry was established between the two points in 1925. In another five years Wilmington business leaders urged our congressional delegation to pursue efforts to build a bridge across the river. A decade passed before highway officials made tests for one, but war clouds abroad put a halt to any further such serious endeavors.

At war's end partisan bickering in Dover was overcome as a bond issue was raised to build a bridge. Strong sentiment prevailed to name it after President Roosevelt, but Republican Governor Walter Bacon would have none of it.

On the night of August 15, 1951, the steamer Washington made the last sailing from New Castle to Pennsville at 11:30 P.M. Next day the \$46 million Delaware Memorial Bridge was opened to traffic.

Seventeen years later on September 12, 1968 Vice President Hubert Humphrey campaigning against Richard Nixon for the Presidency helped dedicate the 2nd span.



#### 43. Delmarva Camp

Here 2 miles north of Laurel among the tall trees stands what is left of Delmarva Camp founded in 1879. While religious revival services were held in winter by a pot-bellied stove in a nearby country church, warm weather brought on camp meeting time during the first two weeks of August when services were held in the open air. People came to socialize and "get right with the Lord". Alas, by the summer of 1987 the television set and couch had stolen the souls of many God-fearing folk, and the camp closed for lack of attendance.

This decaying tabernacle wherein nightly revival services were held once stood amidst a ring of some 50 cottages. Sermons, hymn singing, laying on of hands, and personal testimonies were all conducted over a public address system which could be heard by all the old-timers in their screened-in porches. Between the cottages and this tabernacle was a promenade where the younger folks could walk with their sweethearts.

Despite this spiritual ecstasy with incantations of "Amen, brother" and "Praise the Lord", the Devil was never far away with his evil ways. Attendants were hired to make sure the young ones did not stray from the promenade into the back seats of cars behind the cottages.



#### 44. Bill Billings Alumni Stadium

Regarded as one of the greatest phenomena ever to visit the Delaware football sports scene, William D. "Bill" Billings was a product of Catawba College in North Carolina. In the 9 years prior to Billings's coming to Middletown, the Cavaliers had won 14, lost 54, and tied 3 games. They had never won more than 3 games a season during that period. In short, the team was a doormat for others. Then things changed abruptly in 1962.

Jimmy Johnson, superintendent of Middletown Schools and product of East Carolina College, went south and visited Billings, the football coach about whom he had heard great things at Edenton, NC. The tall lanky Johnson hovered over the diminutive Billings and asked: "Son, can you win some games for us up in Delaware?" Billings nonchalantly looked up and answered: "Sir, I can win games anywhere!" Billings packed his bags.

That fall of 1962, Billings's Cavaliers defeated Caesar Rodney High School 19-6 and went on to compile a record of 53 straight wins over the next 5 seasons. Nothing is forever for ironically, on the night of November 17, 1967, the winning streak ended here at the hands of the Newark High School Yellowjackets with the same score with which it started, 19-6.



#### 45. Captain Ted Freeman

Ted Freeman had always wanted to fly. In Lewes High School he saved his money to pay for airplane rides at the old Rehoboth Airport where he had a job after school. At age 16 he earned his pilot's license.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1953 and later from the University of Michigan with aeronautical engineering degrees, he was accepted into the astronaut program. Assigned to the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, Texas, he called his mom and dad and proudly told them of his acceptance. "He was just thrilled to death," said Mrs. Freeman.

Saturday morning, October 31, 1964, Ted prepared to land his T/38 jet trainer. Two miles from the runway a large snow goose smashed his canopy sending debris into both engines causing a flame out. Ted veered his plane to avoid some buildings then plummeted to earth from only 300 feet.

His ejection seat was found with his parachute just barely opened. He died of a fractured skull and injuries to the body. So it was with Delaware's first astronaut. This highway in Lewes to the ferry depot is named for Captain Theodore C. Freeman, the boy who loved to fly.



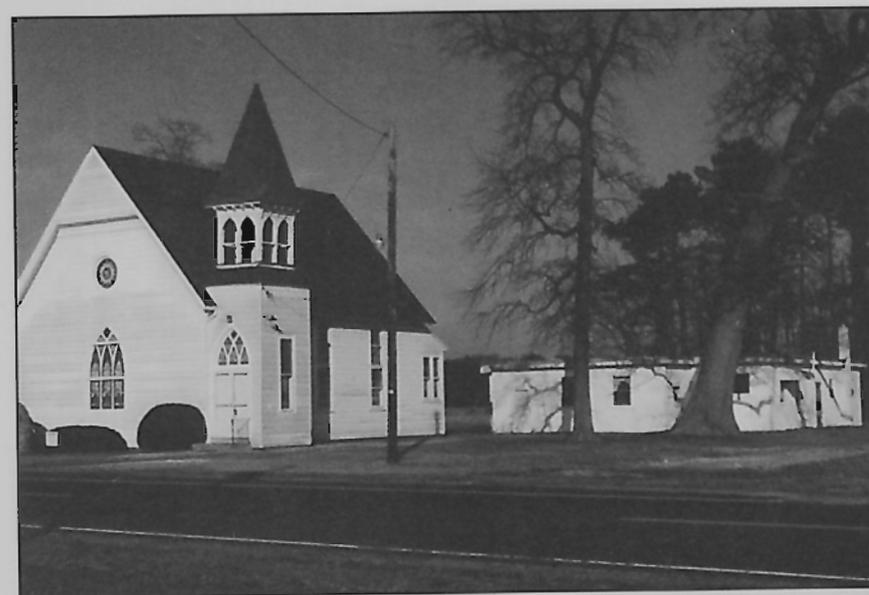
#### 46. Delmar, The End of the Line

Shown here is the very bottom of the state at Delmar where once throve a bustling community which owed its genesis to the Delaware Railroad when it reached here from Wilmington in 1859.

For decades firemen, brakemen, dispatchers, and crossing guards spent lifetimes at this railhead as one generation of railroaders passed over to the next. All the while giant behemoths labored and hissed steam back and forth in the yards during the day while others' whistles trailed off into the night.

Railroading was at its height here from 1887-1920. Except for the extraordinary passenger and freight activity during World War II, railroads fell steadily into decline thereafter. Autos and airplanes superseded railroading as a way of life faded into the pages of history. On December 31, 1965, the last passenger train was seen on these rails. In time bankruptcies and dwindling business compelled the railroads even to eliminate tracks leaving just the one shown here.

Now the Avenue movie theater that once served the little town "too big for one state", has long since closed and is hardly distinguishable on the street across from where once stood a proud bustling railroad station.



#### 47. Mt. Hermon Methodist Church

Mt. Hermon, located at Columbia, a little crossroads west of Laurel and Delmar, is one of the many churches that still dot the downstate countryside. Unfortunately, they are as doomed as the once busy little shopping areas were in the now vacant commercial centers in our small towns. Every season congregations seem to become smaller.

Little churches such as Mt. Hermon which dates from 1880 long served as religious and social gathering places when horse drawn carriages arrived, rain or shine, with whole families prepared for Sunday sermons. Oldsters met and spoke of serious matters such as the Bible and farming. Children gamboled about after services until mothers admonished them for such activities in their Sunday best, or because it was the Lord's Day.

Fellowship halls such as depicted here alongside the church once served bountiful meals with chicken, dumpling, and oyster suppers every autumn. Held to raise money to buy a new stove or redecorate the church, they too became a thing of the past when the older ladies just couldn't keep up with it anymore. It was too much work. Sadly, as they died off, the younger crowd was loath to make the same onerous commitment.



#### 48. Whipping Post

Shown here just off Georgetown's Circle is the old Sussex whipping post not far away from a facsimile of the pillory. Once all three counties prominently displayed and used them since the year 1717. While the pillory was abolished in 1905 (the last state to do so), the continued use of the whipping post evoked criticism from around the country and indeed the world picturing the state as a primitive backwater.

In 1912 a burglar and horse thief received 30 lashes one Saturday morning and another 30 the following Saturday. The sentencing set off a furious national debate about our continued use of the whipping post. A resolution was even introduced in the US House to ban Delaware whippings as cruel and unusual punishment on the basis of the 8th Amendment. Delaware's US Rep. Franklin Brockson basically told the body to mind its own business. In 1935 a picture of a whipping was made public in a Philadelphia newspaper and was taken up by others around the country. Delaware's General Assembly passed a bill making it illegal to photograph such events.

Finally on July 6, 1972, Governor Russell Peterson signed a bill revising the Delaware Code and abolishing the controversial whipping post.



#### 49. Nutter Marvel Museum

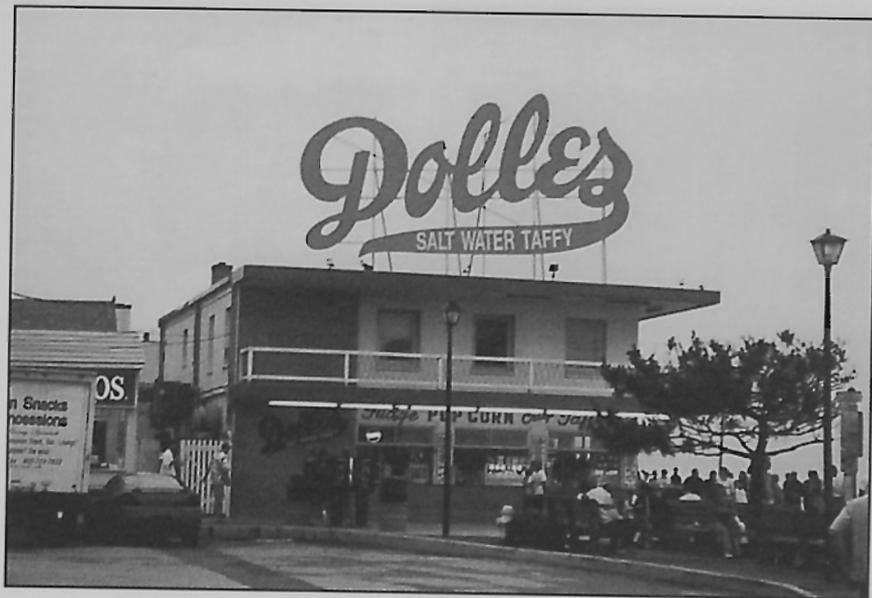
Nutter David Marvel was a Georgetown businessman and civic leader who served one term in the Delaware House of Representatives in 1948.

Marvel had a hobby of collecting items found mostly on and around the farm of yesteryear, the centerpiece of which is an array of 21 horse-drawn carriages and wagons. Among such, for example, is a glass sided hearse shown here that came from a funeral home in Millsboro. There's also a milk wagon from the long defunct Hollybrook Dairy in Laurel.

Stretched out over 10 buildings on a 3 acre plot, a visitor can find the one room Ellis Grove School and the Epworth Methodist church of 1890. Though both were originally located out in the country near Laurel, they were brought here intact and placed within this compound.

Every two years after elections carriages from the Marvel collection on Return Day transport modern day politicians around Georgetown's Circle. With winners and losers seated in the same carriages, the former guffaw and preen while the latter grin and bear it.

When Marvel died in 1988 at the age of 86, he left a legacy behind to the Historical Society of Georgetown that will fascinate people for years.



## 50. Dolle's Popcorn and Salt Water Taffy

Pictured here is one of the most familiar sights in all Delaware--Dolle's on the boardwalk at Rehoboth. A trip to the beach (not the shore, as they say in Jersey!) is simply incomplete unless a box of caramel popcorn or salt water taffy is brought home to prove you've been to the beach, particularly Dolle's.

Rehoboth began in 1872 when Lorenzo Dow Martin sold off some of his land. The next year the Rehoboth Beach Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church began laying out lots to "...establish a resort with religious influences, including a yearly camp meeting."

Six years later the Junction and Breakwater Railroad reached Rehoboth from Lewes making the beach area more accessible to more people. For the first time during the summer of 1882 beachgoers did not have to trudge through the hot sand. A boardwalk was built between the Bright House and the Douglass House, Rehoboth's two hotels. That same summer young lady bathers complained of the resort being long on mosquitoes and short on available men as women guests at the hotels outnumbered men 4 to 1. Pity!

Since it opened on July 4, 1927, Dolle's has lured beach visitors and caused many to forget the diet they were on for just one day (psych!).

## Acknowledgements

In this endeavor as with others in the past, I am indebted to my wife Adele for her patience and good humor as we traveled to various corners of the state. Whether it was some ancient cemetery or some backwater place that no one has been to in years, she was always there quietly needlepointing or reading her book as I gathered these little nuggets of information for this book. The other great contribution she made was her editing of the manuscript with her expertise in sentence structure and writing. She taught English in the public school system for 30 years and is, in effect, a grammarian of the old school. I am so lucky! As the late entertainer George Gobel was used to saying: "You can't hardly get them no more!" This does not mean, however, there are no mistakes in the text. I hope there are none but if there are, it is my responsibility, not hers.

I would like to thank Joe Ford of near Kenton for carting me around in his pickup one afternoon to show me about where Cheney Clow's fort was and how close the Maryland line was to his property.

I must have gone down to the Woodland Ferry 3 or 4 times before I could actually get a picture of the ferry in operation. It was in drydock for so long being repaired and I, along with many other people in the area, are grateful the Department of Transportation finally got it into the water.

The Archives people in Dover arranged to have someone go out to the Octagonal School House near Leipsic with me. Interest in the place has dwindled in recent years and that coupled with the scarcity of funds has made it difficult to maintain a person there all the time.

I'm grateful to Ned Davis of Dover for digging up the story of the chocolate candy murders years ago when he was a newspaper reporter.

I must mention Ned Cooch and how lucky I was to hear how when he was 3 years old he met (or as was the case, chose not to meet) President Harding that day his party stopped by the Cooch House in 1923.

Adele and I were bowled over the day we, out of the blue, called Irénée du Pont at Granogue to ask permission to go up and take a picture of his home. We were impressed with how gracious and approachable he is. When we arrived, this gentleman of leisure was working on his motorcycles! Then he gave us a demonstration of his massive Aeolein organ! How chivalrous he was with my wife helping her over the grounds as I tried to get a good shot of the house.

I'd like to thank Harry W. Lynch, Jr. of Wilmington for allowing me in Rehoboth to take a picture of his beach house that was once owned by Mrs. Mary Thompson.

Horace Pugh of Leipsic provided me with perhaps my greatest

adventure in doing the book. After many tries to catch up with this very busy man who has a towing service in Dover, we finally came together. I had asked him to take me out to the marshes east of Leipsic so I could get a picture of the monument to Harold McMahon and his plane that crashed there in August 1933.

I almost ruined a pair of good shoes walking around trying to get close to the spot. Further, I did not imagine how remote and swampy it is out there. Horace took us out in a jeep so dilapidated that he had to cool down the overheating engine with a hose before we even got started. I thought that in itself was an ominous sign. Then we drove about a mile over a barely discernible road through grass taller than the jeep! I wore long sleeves and trousers because he warned me about the mosquitoes and green heads. I brought a spray can for the former but Horace said that as far as the latter were concerned, the spray wouldn't touch them. Fortunately we did not see any green heads but the mosquitoes at times came in swarms, and at one point I did swallow one before the spray got it as I momentarily gagged.

Once we arrived on the scene I took several shots but couldn't get closer than 100 yards. Horace's biggest mistake that day was cutting off the jeep's engine when we arrived in the area because then it really overheated as the sizzling steam rose in the air. As the sun sank slowly in the west and light was diminishing, Horace almost wore that battery down as he cranked and cranked the starter. I thought to myself: "How am I going to get out of this mess? We could be here all night. Suppose the mosquitoes and green heads join forces and do a Custer's Last Stand on us." Through Horace's sheer determination and a fairly strong battery, the engine finally started. Needless to say, I was greatly relieved.

I am deeply indebted to Mary Jane Cooper of Gastonia, N.C. for the interview she gave me in 1998. Her brother Harry Hickey was the only one of the 4 Delawareans whose body was retrieved after the USS Indianapolis was sunk at the end of World War II.

Finally, I must not overlook my friend Hazel Brittingham of Lewes for providing information on Captain Theodore Freeman, Delaware's first astronaut.