

**DELAWARE**  
*Trust & Company*



**BELMONT HALL**  
*Smyrna, Delaware*

*(See Reverse Side For Legend)*

**1968**

**OCTOBER**

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**NOVEMBER**

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**DECEMBER**

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## BELMONT HALL

*Smyrna, Delaware*

The official call to the December 1787 State Convention—the one which ratified the Federal Constitution and earned the “First State” title for Delaware—came from the mind, pen, and perhaps the residence of President Thomas Collins, distinguished citizen and then-owner of Belmont Hall.

This stately, three-story mansion at the end of a tree-bordered lane along U. S. Route 13, half a mile south of Smyrna, has a two-part architectural chronology. The Georgian main portion was constructed of brick brought from England in 1753 while the two parallel rear wings, obviously of earlier design, are believed to be of late 17th Century origin matching a main structure destroyed by fire.

A 1684 William Penn deed gave the original 600-acre site to Henry Pearman who proudly termed it “Pearman’s Choice”. Collins, whose multi-sided public service career was marked with considerable distinction, chose to build a residence which, by his era’s standards, was luxurious and imposing. He personally chartered the design which today still marks the hall as a splendid example of colonial craftsmanship. The five-bay front is centered by a gabled door with handmade English fittings. The balustraded captain’s walk is, by tradition, the spot from which a sentry fell, wounded by guns of British soldiers stealing up Duck Creek which crosses the property. The house at one time was barricaded and quartered colonial militia; the State Council met there at least once.

Collins was elected eighth President (Governor) of Delaware State in 1786 after a career which included the judiciary, state senator and Assembly Speaker. His Revolutionary military service was with the rank of brigadier general. It was as President that he issued the summons to the 1787 Convention; he died in office two years later.

Belmont Hall is also unusual because it has remained in direct family ownership. Possession has passed through generations to the present occupant, Mrs. Cummins E. (Marjorie) Speakman, well known in civic and historic/cultural groups. The home’s handsome exterior is matched by exceptionally fine furnishings and original appointments which, like the house, reflect the pride and care of the owners. It bears a Historic Heritage Building plaque.

*Delaware Trust Company gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of:*

The Rev. Richard S. Bailey, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware  
John V. Hollingsworth, Fairville, Pa.  
Harold V. Lang, Wilmington  
Joseph E. Nesbitt, Wilmington  
Mrs. Cummins E. Speakman, Smyrna  
Wilmington Institute Free Library

*Other reference sources included:*

Eberlein & Hubbard: “*Historic Homes and Houses of Delaware*”

Scharf: “*History of Delaware*”

*Artist: Harrison Von Duyke*

*Printer: C. L. Story Co.*

*Printed on 65 pound Curtis Colophon Cover*

#32 [Map case pr. #15]