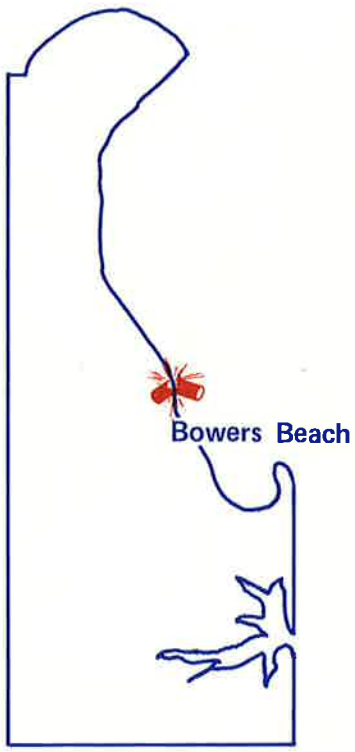
FOURTH of JULY CELEBRATION

IN COMMEMORATION
OF

"BIG THURSDAY"



BOWERS BEACH, DELAWARE
JULY 4th, 1974

BI- CENTENNIAL MUSEUM COMMITTEE
OF
BOWERS BEACH

Edna LeMunyon Jane Boone Margaret Shaver

Helen Byrd Achtenberg Coleman Morris

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GOD BLESS BOWERS BEACH
(Apology to "God Bless America")

While the storm clouds gather,
Far across the sea,
Let us swear allegiance to a
Place that's free:
Let us all be grateful for
A Beach so fair
As we raise our voices in a
Solemn prayer.

God Bless Bowers Beach,
Place that We love,
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with a light
From above:
From the Murderkill to Delaware Bay,
To Jones Creek white with foam,
God Bless Bowers Beach, our Home Sweet Home.
God Bless Bowers Beach, our Home Sweet Home.

HISTORY OF BOWERS BEACH AND BIG THRUSDAY

Bowers Beach was an early settlement of land lying on the Delaware Bay and between the mouths of St. Jones' Creek and Murderkill Creek, and was first known as "Whitwell's Delight" and owned by Francis Whitwell, and later assigned to William Frampton in 1685. After his death, the property was sold to Wm. Bassett in 1686, and in 1750 it passed to John Booth, who died and left it to his daughter, Mary, who married John Sipple, Jr. In August of 1734, part of the tract was sold to John Bowers and since that time has been known as "Bowers Beach".

Prior to 1835 there was no law restricting the gathering of oysters, and after the crops were harvested each year, families gathered oysters to store for the winter. While in the process of this gathering and storing, the families would frolic with a picnic, and farmers came from miles around.

However, in February of 1835, the General Assembly of Delaware enacted a law, that read: "That hereafter no person or persons whatsoever shall be permitted to take or gather oysters within the waters of any of the creeks or ponds in this State at any time between the 15th day of May and the 15th day of August, in this or any year hereafter" and this law continued until 1843, when the Legislate, on the 7th day of February, at the demand of the people, repealed the law. This law continued til 1877, a period of 25 years. The law of inhibition expired on the 10th day of August; the people as a matter of course, went down on the second Thursday in the month, which could not happen sooner than the 8th day, and were thus enabled to obtain their supply of oysters and be at home on Saturday." (Taken from HISTORY OF DELAWARE by J. Thomas Scharf, Published 1888).

"Out of this oyster law grew the custom of keeping "Big Thursday" which has come down to our day. It was a day of recreation, accompanied by the violin and dancing, conviviality and general good cheer. People from all parts of the county participated in the general gayety, without respect to age or sex, quality or condition, renewing old acquaintances, and forming new ones. In 1887 when the writer visited the spot, he found more than three thousand people present". (Taken from HISTORY OF DELAWARE by J. Thomas Scharf).

(Continued on following page)

So Big Thursday at Bowers Beach became a great date in Bowers since 1852, when the oyster law was lifted. People on this day rushed to Bowers to obtain oysters for the coming winter season, and made it a great day of festivity. Even later when the postponing of the oyster season occurred until September 1, made little difference in the gathering of the crowds on the second Thursday in August. In election years, it was a great place for politicians to gather. However, since the beginning of World War II, this gathering and day of festivity has been abandoned.

It is the hope of the Committee and the residents of this community that this tradition can be revived. Therefore, we have prepared the festivities for today and have used the Fourth of July as a day of celebration and the revival of these festivities in memory of "Big Thursday", since the 2nd Thursday in August would prevent many working people from coming and participating in this affair. All proceeds from this day of festivity will be used toward the acquisition of a Maritime Museum to be established on Bowers Beach.

CRABS

LIVE- STEAMED (by the doz. or bu.)

LIVE LOBSTER

CLAMS

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PHONE 834-7645

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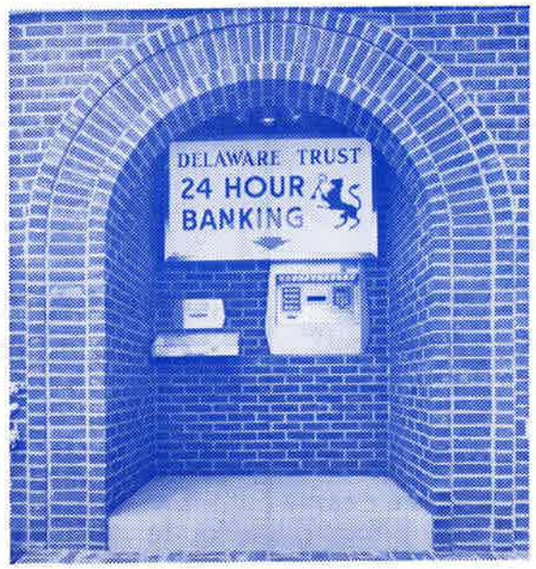
. . . and every other day in between! And that's another good reason to check in with the 'bank where people make the difference.'



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OF

"BIG DOC"

BOWERS BEACH,

DELAWARE

WHEN THE REST OF
THE WORLD IS BUSY

AGNES KNIGHT & FAMILY

RELAX AT

BOWERS BEACH, DEL.

COMPLIMENTS OF

J & R AUTO SALES

RT. 113 & BOWERS BEACH RD.

FREDERICA, DELAWARE

WYATT'S WHARF

BOWERS BEACH, DEL.

BAIT - ICE & TACKLE

BOAT RAMP - PARTY BOATS

COMPLIMENTS OF

"PABST BLUE RIBBON BEER"

My thanks to the people of Bowers Beach for their support of the Bowers Ball Team and the Bi-Centennial Museum Committee of Bowers Beach.

"Mickey Effinger"

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LEAVES PIER DAILY
7 A.M. - RETURNS 3 P.M.

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PROGRAM OF THE DAY
RETURN OF "BIG THURSDAY"
JULY 4, 1974
BOWERS BEACH, DELAWARE

Parade - 11:30 a.m.
Welcome . . . . . Mayor Philip Tuthill
Dedication of Flag Pole & Historical Marker
(Flag Pole donated by Senator William M. Murphy, Jr.)
Introduction of Guests of Honor and Awarding
of Prizes . . . . . Ed Miller (Master of Ceremonies)

******

OPEN HOUSE at Church for Visit & History - 12 to 2 p.m.
DINNER at Firehouse (see menu on separate page) - 1 to 4 p.m.

Beginning at 2 p.m. booths in Park will be open with food, bake table, games, etc. (Activities for children) and Country music for all.

VISIT THE DOCKS from 2:15 to 3:30 or 4 and see the fishing boats arrive with the day's catch!

Stop and see BOAT BUILDING in progress at Captain Earl's (Davidson Ave.) - the oldest boat builder in Kent County.

Drawing for BIGGEST FISH (Fisherman's Contest Award)
by CAPTAIN COLEMAN . . . . . 4 p.m.

ANN SPARKLIN, author of the books BIG THURSDAY and LILLIE JO will be at a booth in the Park. Stop by to visit and chat with her during the afternoon.

Gail and Dug Montgomery of Dover will be in the lobby at Heartbreak Hotel with their DELAWARE DISCOVERED SERIES with old photos and post cards, steamer tickets, etc. on display. STOP by and see them and buy a Bi-Centennial Plate of Delaware.

50-50 Drawing in Park at 6 p.m.

Country music in Park with "FAREWELL TO ALL"

DINNER MENU

(SERVED AT FIRE HOUSE 1 - 4)

Tomato Juice

Fried Chicken or Pan-Fried Fish

Potato Salad — Cole Slaw

Green Beans — Beets

Rolls — Corn Muffins

Coffee or Ice Tea

Fruit Cobbler

Chairman - Joan Fields
Co-Chairman - Beverley Tuthill

$3.00 adults
$1.50 children

PHONE 335-9884
335-5715

J P'S TACKLE SHOP

FISH - BAIT - CRABS
OYSTERS IN SEASON

HEAD BOAT - CAPT. POTTER
TWIN DIESELS
ACCOM. FOR LADIES

BOWERS BEACH, DEL.

BEST WISHES

GENE BOOKHAMMER

LT. GOVERNOR

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AND

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YOUR BEST STOP BEFORE LAUNCH

BAIT TACKLE ICE FISHERMAN'S SNACKS

LOOK FOR US ON RT. 113

(JUST NORTH OF BOWERS BEACH TURNOFF)

"THE GATEWAY TO THE DELAWARE BAY"

DONOVAN'S DOCK

THE DOCK SPOT RESTAURANT

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COCKTAILS

FRESH FISH

HEADBOAT PARTY BOATS

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Councilwoman . . . . . Margaret Shaver

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Bi-Centennial Museum Committee of Bowers Beach wants to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone that donated food, time, and effort, or helped in any way to make this day and project a success.

We are deeply grateful to Town Officials, Fire Company members and Auxiliary members, as well as the Church members, that helped us and also loaned us the use of their facilities. Without everyone's participation and individual help, this day could not have been a success.

We are also appreciative of all ad contributors, and the Teen-Age Council.

To everyone, we say a "BIG THANK-YOU".

DELAWARE STATE FLAG



DELAWARE STATE SONG

OUR DELAWARE

Oh the hills of dear New Castle, and the smiling vales between,
When the corn is all in tassel, And the meadow lands are green,
Where the cattle crop the clover, And its breath is in the air,
While the sun is shining over, Our Beloved Delaware.

CHORUS

Our, our Delaware! Our beloved Delaware!
For the sun is shining over our beloved Delaware,
Oh! our Delaware! Our beloved Delaware!
Here's the loyal son that pledges, Faith to good old Delaware.

Where the wheat fields break and billow, In the peaceful land of Kent,
Where the toiler seeks his pillow, With the blessings of content;
Where the bloom that tints the peaches, Cheeks of merry maidens share,
And the woodland chorus preaches A rejoicing Delaware.

Dear old Sussex visions linger, Of the holly and the pine,
Of Henlopen's jeweled finger, Flashing out across the brine;
Of the gardens and the hedges, And the welcome waiting there,
For the loyal son that pledges Faith to good old Delaware.

PROPOSED "STATE" STANZA

From New Castle's rolling meadows, Through the fair rich fields of Kent,
To the Sussex shores hear echoes, Of the pledge we now present;
Liberty and Independence, We will guard with loyal care,
And hold fast to freedom's presence, In our home state, Delaware.