

202. AVENUR METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 1777--., Railroad Ave., Milford.

Organized 1777 as society of Methodists. Infernal services were held in the home of Reynear Williams until 1789 when a frame structure was erected . Additions made 1790-1800. In 1840 it was replaced by a one story brick structure. Exact site is uncertain but it is thought to have been at North and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sts., present church dedicated 1871. A one story brick structure with steeple and bell. First settled clergyman, Rev. William Ratecliff, 1789-90. See: Theodore Townsend "Historical Sketch of Church", in Conference Manual, (Milford, 1890); article in Wilmington Evening Journal, Dec. 18, 1926.

Minutes, 1845--., 11 vols., Register, 1852--., 12 vols.; Financial, 1914--., 2 vols.; Sunday School, 1827--., 12 vols.; in possession of pastor, Rev. Frank Person. Ladies' Aid Society, 1926--., 1 vol.; in possession of M. Haswell Pierce. Copy of tombstone inscriptions in old cemetery on North St. prepared by Historical Records Survey 1938, in State Archives. Records of

had been made to the church in March, 1856, Rev. Mr. Kennedy resigned his position as stated supply. The church remained vacant until November, 1857, when Rev. John W. Mears, of Philadelphia was elected pastor. During the first year of his pastorate, thirteen members were added to the church. He resigned February 15, 1860, and November 14, 1860, Rev. J. Garland Harned succeeded to the pastorate and was installed. He resigned September 20, 1863. Then the Rev. L. P. Bowen, a licentiate, was received as stated supply, and entered upon his duties January 24, 1864. At this time there were thirty-four members. He resigned January 28, 1866, and was succeeded by Rev. John F. Severance. At the same time Colonel Henry B. Fiddeman, Henry J. Hall and Jacob Y. Foulk, were elected ruling elders. Mr. Severance was succeeded by Rev. Richard A. Mallery, July 12, 1868, who died June 9, 1875, and after an interval of a year, Rev. A. A. Dinsmore was elected pastor. Messrs. James B. Gilchrist and Edwin Hopkins were elected to the eldership. Mr. Dinsmore closed his labors as pastor in November, 1875, and was succeeded by Charles F. Boynton, who began his pastorate February 1, 1876. He resigned in January, 1879, and the pulpit was supplied by Rev. S. K. Schofield until February 1880, when Rev. H. L. Bunstein became pastor and continues as such to date, September, 1887. During his pastorate, William Marshall, M.D., John B. Smith and William A. Humes were elected ruling elders. There are at present on the roll of membership two hundred and ten names.

Mr. Bunstein was born in Easton, Pennsylvania, August 18, 1844, graduated at Lafayette College in 1864 and at Union Theological Seminary in 1872. He was pastor of Clinton Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, from 1872 to 1876, of Beech Creek Presbyterian Church 1877-1880, and was called to Milford in November 1879.

★ *Methodist Episcopal Church at Milford.*—October 18, 1787, Francis Asbury, in his journal, says: "I had divine aid in preaching at Milford, the house was open and the day was cold." December 3, 1787, Joseph Oliver deeded to Nathaniel Smithers, Jr., Joseph Aydelott, William Ward, Elias Shockley, Thomas Ross, Reynear Williams, William Beauchamp, John Taylor and David Beauchamp, a lot containing fourteen thousand four hundred square feet "for the use and express purpose of building a preaching house or church thereon for the only proper use and benefit of the religious society of people called Methodists." Tuesday, October 22, 1789, Asbury says: "Rode to Milford; we had a great move and noble shouting." Rev. Mr. Whatcoat was presiding elder here then. Milford Circuit first appears in the minutes of the Methodist Church in 1789, Thomas Jackson and William Ratcliffe, preachers, Richard Whatcoat, Presiding Elder. The circuit must have embraced a large amount of territory, as the membership reported is eight hundred and seventy-nine whites and two hundred and thirty-six colored. The early records of

Milford Church are not to be found, but from the recollection of the oldest inhabitants it appears that Samuel Draper, Julia Adkins, George S. Adkins, Henry Hudson and wife, Walker Sipple and wife, Lowder Layton and wife, John R. Draper and wife, Jabez Crocker and wife, Wesley Collins and wife, Benjamin Henderson and wife, were prominent members. Revs. James Bateman, Levi Starks, George Taylor, John D. Onins and Charles Carsner, are remembered. The latter had a great revival in 1837 which was kept up night and day, and one hundred and thirty-seven members were added to the church. Daniel Godwin, Molton Rickards, George Adkins, Wesley Collins and Samuel Draper are remembered as class leaders. In 1855, during Rev. William Annear's ministration, there was a great revival, and many joined the church. There was another great revival in 1874, during Rev. D. C. Ridgway's pastorate, and some three hundred joined the church, ninety of whom were from the Sunday-school. The first Methodist church, which stood nearly opposite where the present church stands, was sold at public sale for \$49.50. In 1840 the second church was built on the site of the present church. Among the most prominent subscribers to the erection of this church were Rev. Truston P. McColley, John M. Darby, Peter F. Causey, John Rickards, William N. W. Dorsey, Samuel Draper, G. S. & W. Adkins, John Wallace and family, Daniel C. Godwin, James R. Mitchell, Charles T. Fleming, Henderson Collins, Purnell Hall, Henry May, Elias Smithers, George Primrose, Clement Clark, Jesse Sherwood, Beniah Watson, James H. Deputy. This second church and lot cost \$4428.35. The present church was erected in 1871, at a cost of \$19,000. William T. Vauls, Joseph S. Truitt, James H. Deputy, William Welsh and Peter F. Causey, were committee. A party of nine gentlemen bought the old church and converted it into a public hall. The parsonage was rebuilt at a cost of \$4000, in 1883. A chapel has recently been built in South Milford through the instrumentality of Peter F. Causey, John C. Hall and Joshua Spencer, at a cost of \$2000, for Sunday-school purposes. The Baptists have recently organized a church in the town.

Reverend Jonathan Spencer Willis, son of William Barnaby Willis and Mary Spencer, was born in Talbot County, Maryland. His father served as sheriff of Talbot County, was a member of the Maryland Legislature four terms and was a very successful agriculturalist. Oxford John Willis, his grandfather, was custom-house officer at Oxford, Maryland, for a period of forty years, when that place was a leading port of entry and before Baltimore developed into a commercial town. Oxford John Willis was the grandson of John Willis, the grandson of Sir Richard Willis, who came to Virginia early in her colonial history, with the Fairfaxes and others who took up large estates in Virginia. The subject of this sketch is of the eighth generation in direct line of descent from Sir Richard Willis. Mary Spencer, his

who realized the real need of religious instruction for the young people of these rather isolated districts. The school were usually opened in the district schoolhouse and the teachings were of an undenominational character.

A Sunday School of this type was started in the schoolhouse at Church Hill, west of Milford, in 1876. It had a prosperous existence for many years. The last superintendent was Stephen Golan Armour. The school was closed in 1897.

✧ **Avenue Methodist Church (M.E.)** at Milford. In 1777, Methodist meetings were held in the home of Reynear Williams by the Rev. John Cooper. During the year 1778, Bishop Francis Asbury preached three times at these services. On Dec. 3, 1787, a lot of land on North St., in Milford, was donated to the Methodist Society by Joseph Oliver, the founder of Milford. On this lot, a frame church was built and a graveyard was laid out. This is the present Methodist Cemetery where former Governor Peter F. Causey is buried. The oldest tombstone that the writer could find is that of Simon Miller who died on Sept. 3, 1795. The church stood in about the center of the present cemetery and faced west. Before the building was entirely completed a funeral sermon was preached in it by the Rev. Wm. Jessup. The first illumination was by candles which were replaced later with sperm-oil lamps. In 1789, the church was in charge of the Rev. Thomas Jackson and Wm. Radcliff with the Rev. Richard Whatcoat as Presiding Elder. In a report to the Conference that year, 879 white members and 236 colored members were reported in the circuit. In 1790, the frame church was fully completed with a gallery for the colored members. In 1796, Wm. Colbert, in his diary, stated that the circuit extended from Frederica to Georgetown to Lewes and included 32 preaching places. In 1800, an addition was built to the church and it continued in use for 42 years. The Methodist Conference was held here in 1821. On Jan. 5, 1827, a Sunday School was organized by Mrs. Samuel Draper.

In 1842, a brick church was built at 3rd and North Sts. This is the present St. Paul's M. E. Church, colored. Philadelphia Conference met here on Apr. 1, 1845. In 1852, the church was made a station although Cedar Neck Church continued to be associated with it until 1869.

In 1871, the brick church was built on Railroad Ave., now Church Ave. There was considerable controversy before the final selection of the present site. Some members claimed that the site was on the edge of the town, that it was low and marshy and surrounded by stables and pig-pens. They also accused those favoring the site of using unfair means to attain their end. Those favoring the site claimed that it was central, high ground and perfectly suitable as a church site.

The work of building the new church progressed gradually and by the end of 1872 the basement and lecture-room were completed. A farewell memorial service was held in the old church on Dec. 29, 1872. The first service in the new church was held in the lecture-room on Jan. 5, 1873, a very stormy day. The services were in charge of the Revs. Jacob Todd and S. W. Thomas. The church bell, a gift of Captain Henry W. Laws, was placed in position on Jan. 25, 1873.

On Apr. 3, 1874, a group headed by Nathan Pratt purchased the old church at 3rd and North Sts. They converted it into a playhouse which they named "Music Hall." It was popularly known as the "Opera House." Musical and dramatic productions were booked and appeared there. Two rooms were equipped as school-rooms by the Academy and at least one music teacher had his studio in the building.

In 1882, Messrs. Isaac Truitt, Alex Pullen and Burr conducted experiments in conserving fruits in the building. The building was sold to St. Paul's M. E. Church, colored, on Sept. 14, 1889.

The construction work on the new church on Railroad Ave. was resumed in March, 1876. The church was completed and was dedicated on Mar. 3, 1877. The services were in charge of the Rev. Dr. R. L. Dashiell who preached both morning and evening. At this time the name "Avenue" was selected.

After extensive improvements, a rededication service was held on Dec. 22, 1889. The morning service was led by the Rev. Dr. George E. Reed, Pres. of Dickinson College. The Hon. W. F. Causey led the afternoon exercises and the Rev. T. E. Terry preached in the evening. A new organ was installed in March, 1901. Methodist Conferences have been held here a number of times.

The ground was broken for the present stone church on Feb. 12, 1939, by Governor Richard C. McMullen. The corner-stone was laid on Mar. 19, 1939. With the erection of the stone church, the spire on the former brick church, one of the most outstanding in Delaware, was removed, much to the chagrin of many residents of Milford. The church was incorporated as Avenue Methodist Church on Nov. 3, 1939. The new church was dedicated on Dec. 24, 1939, by Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, assisted by Dist. Supt. Dr. W. A. Hearn and the Rev. Frank Herson, the pastor. The organ, a gift of Mrs. George H. Hall in memory of her husband, was dedicated at the evening service by Dr. Hearn.

Included in the church establishment are the auditorium, Friendship Chapel, various Sunday School rooms, dining-room and kitchen. The memorial windows were reset in the new church. A window, executed by Tiffany, in memory of Wm. F. and Anna P. Causey, was presented by their daughter, Mrs. Wm. Aldrich. The brick church will be used as a social-hall and it is proposed to veneer it with stone to conform to the new church.

★ Christ P. E. Church at Milford. The first Episcopalian services in lower Kent County are believed to have been held west of Milford, in 1704, by the Rev. Thomas Crawford, a missionary of the Church of England. On Feb. 12, 1755, Joseph and Isaac Mason sold to a board of trustees for thirty shillings, an acre of land on the south side of Pemberton's Savannah. This land was located at Church Hill, three miles west of Milford, and was to be used as a site for a church of the Church of England. It was officially known as "Christ Church of Mispillion." The church was popularly known as "Savannah Church" because of the swamp or savannah beside the church. Two wings were added to the building in 1761.

In 1773, the Rev. Sydenham Thorne arrived and took up his residence near Church Hill. When Christ Church was built in Milford the little church at Church Hill was abandoned as was the little burial-ground beside the church. In this graveyard many of the early pioneers of that section were buried including Jehu Davis, a former Governor of Delaware. This graveyard suffered the fate of many such sacred spots when the interest in those buried there had disappeared. Today the bodies of these neglected dead lie beneath the concrete highway with nothing to mark the spot.

One of the few memorials and the last one to survive was over the grave of John S. Asparagus who was born in 1781 and who died in 1847. It consisted of a recumbent slab 4 ft. by 8 ft. and about 4 inches thick. It was first broken when an ox-team became unmanageable and trampled over the stone. Later, small boys would break off pieces to be used as bases in their ball games. Finally, only a small section remained and it was removed to a nearby woods.



Staff photo / Greg Layton

Pictured are the Rev. Priscilla Maxham; the Rev. Earle Baker; state Sen. Gary F. Simpson, R-Milford; Tom Summers, a representative of the Delaware Public Archives, which created the marker; and Ralph Prettyman, the congregation member who led the effort to receive the marker.

## Sign of the times

Staff report

Members of Avenue United Methodist Church celebrated the installation of an historical marker at the church's cemetery on North Street. The centuries-old cemetery is the resting place of Gov. Peter F. Causey, Milford's most-noted governor; Gen. A.T. Torbert, a Civil War general; and other Milford notables.

Mr. Prettyman gave members of the congregation a history lesson about the site. "This site, as a 120 X 120-foot lot, was first purchased in 1787, for the use of the Methodists to worship their Lord," he said.

By 1790, a church building 30 X 35 feet in size had been erected where both African-Americans and whites worshiped together. By 1800, the congregation had grown such that a 22-foot addition was made. Sometime between 1800 and 1821 additional land adjacent to the churchyard was purchased expanding the width of the lot to 262 feet.

The first building and lot served the congregation until 1842. Burials in the surrounding churchyard had begun to take place almost immediately after 1790.

After 1842, the church building was removed and the lot was used exclusively for interments.

"Today we know that there are nearly 400 people interred in this cemetery. Most have tombstones to tell us who they were but there are also many unmarked graves here."

"Many of the people buried here carried the same surnames as many in our congregation today. Among those same surnames are the following: Abbott, Adams, Adkins, Burton, Cannon, Clark, Collins, Davis, Draper, Fisher, Godwin, Greer, Hazzard, Hudson, Layton, Lofland, McColley, Mitchell, Prettyman, Sharp, Shockley, Sipple, Smith, White, Williams."

"People who were at many different stages in life when they departed lie here — There are infants, children, parents, husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters. Among the earliest interments here are those of Jacob Davis who died at 4-years-of-age in 1794 and that of his sister, Mary, who died in 1795 at one-year-of-age."

"One of those who lived to be among the oldest of those

interred here was Annie Draper McClelland, who was born in 1850, and departed in 1942, at 92 years of age."

"Elias Shockley, one of the original trustees lies here. He was born in 1733 and departed in 1813."

"Ann T. Yoe Draper, daughter of the Rev. Benjamin Yoe, and wife of Samuel Draper is buried here. In 1827, she helped to start the first Methodist Sunday School classes in North Milford along with Rachel Draper, who started Sunday School classes in South Milford and who is also interred here."

"Former Methodist preachers lie here: The Rev. John Collins, who was pastor of our church in 1811; Nehemiah Davis, who I believe was an exhorter; the Rev. Thomas R. Hammersley; the Rev. Trusten P. McColley; the Rev. Benjamin Yoe."

"Delaware Governor Peter F. Causey helped to start a Sunday School class later in 1858 in South Milford. He was very active and supportive of the Methodist church. He is interred here."

"We also have veterans of several wars here — most prominent among them was Union Civil War General Alfred T. A. Torbert. He was born in 1833, the son of a Georgetown-area Methodist preacher. He was a graduate of the U. S. Military Academy and became a Union general. Among the places he saw action were Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. After the Civil war, he was also a U.S. diplomat and consul until 1878."

"However, clearly in the eyes of God, all folks buried in our church cemetery had equal value and worth. He loved them all the same — just as he does with each and every one of us today. We stand here on Holy ground — our Lord was worshiped here, the remains of his saints are interred here, testaments to their lives are recorded here, and we here today, over 200 years later, are those who continue the Methodist movement begun at this place in 1787."

in the Spirit. The team of lay and clergy persons from United Methodist churches in various parts of the country will share with others their own experience of walking with Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Persons interested in participating in this 13+ hour seminar should call the Lincoln Church for reservations at 302-422-7269. Cost is \$10 for adults, \$15 per couple. Scholarships are available. Nursery care will be provided. Lincoln Church is located on

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## SENIOR CENTER

Shirley P. Reich

Come and join us for coffee and donuts (courtesy of the Donut Connection) at 9:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

Our Thrift and Gift Shops are opened Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. to the public.

*Milford Chronicle*  
*Oct 25 2000*  
**Thursday**  
10 a.m. Band practice with Dorothy Mende - Aquatics - 10:30 a.m. Chorus practice with Clara Lafontaine - Bowling with Karen - 1 p.m. Rummikub - Canasta - Scrap booking with Karen and "Merrymakers" to Heritage at Milford - 2 p.m. Exercise class with Bayhealth.

**Friday**  
8:30 a.m. Assemble the P.A.N. - Center Newspaper - 9:30 a.m. Special Dart trip - 10 a.m. Walk at Milford Skating Center - Movie to be announced - 10:30 a.m. Peer sharing group with Ruth Ann Beideman and Gini Sherman - 1 p.m. Bingo with Bea Hurd - Grocery Shopping - Oil paint Lessons with Delores Cabbage and Tai Chi Alumni.

**Monday**  
9 a.m. Quilting - Oil painting - 10 a.m. Pepsteppers Practice with Hilda Maloney - Weigh-Ins - Walk

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**Life is a Ser...**

It seems that life is divided into dif of us will go through. A typical exam He or she starts by going through t tary school, high school, and then force. The next stage may occur raising a family. Eventually, one settle into a retirement commun stage should be better than the on the past, but profit from all through life. The final stage sh we know Jesus as our Savior. our life here on earth, we can the words that Jesus told the n cross: "Today you will be with n

*I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen*

**The following merchants urge you**  
**House of Worship th**

<p><b>WM V. SIPPLE</b> Monuments since 1869 Milford, DE <b>422-4214</b></p>	<p><b>BENNIE'S Ice Cream and Donut Parlor</b> Harrington, DE</p>
<p><b>Hughes' "Delaware Maid" Scrapple</b> Felton, Delaware <b>284-4370</b></p>	<p><b>MARVEL AGENCY</b> 15 N. Walnut St. Milford, DE <b>422-9626</b></p>

Going Beyond the Expect

First M. P. Church, Milford, Del.





New First M. P. Church, Milford, Delaware.







METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH, MILFORD, DEL.





GRAY'S NEW MAP  
OF  
**MILLFORD**  
( KENT COUNTY, )  
AND  
**SOUTH MILLFORD**  
( SUSSEX COUNTY )  
DELAWARE

1877

Scale: 15 Rods = One Inch.

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MSM  
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Millford, Del. 1877

SEP. 1904  
MILFORD  
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2

Cemetery

Cemetery

Cemetery

ST. PAUL'S  
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CHURCH

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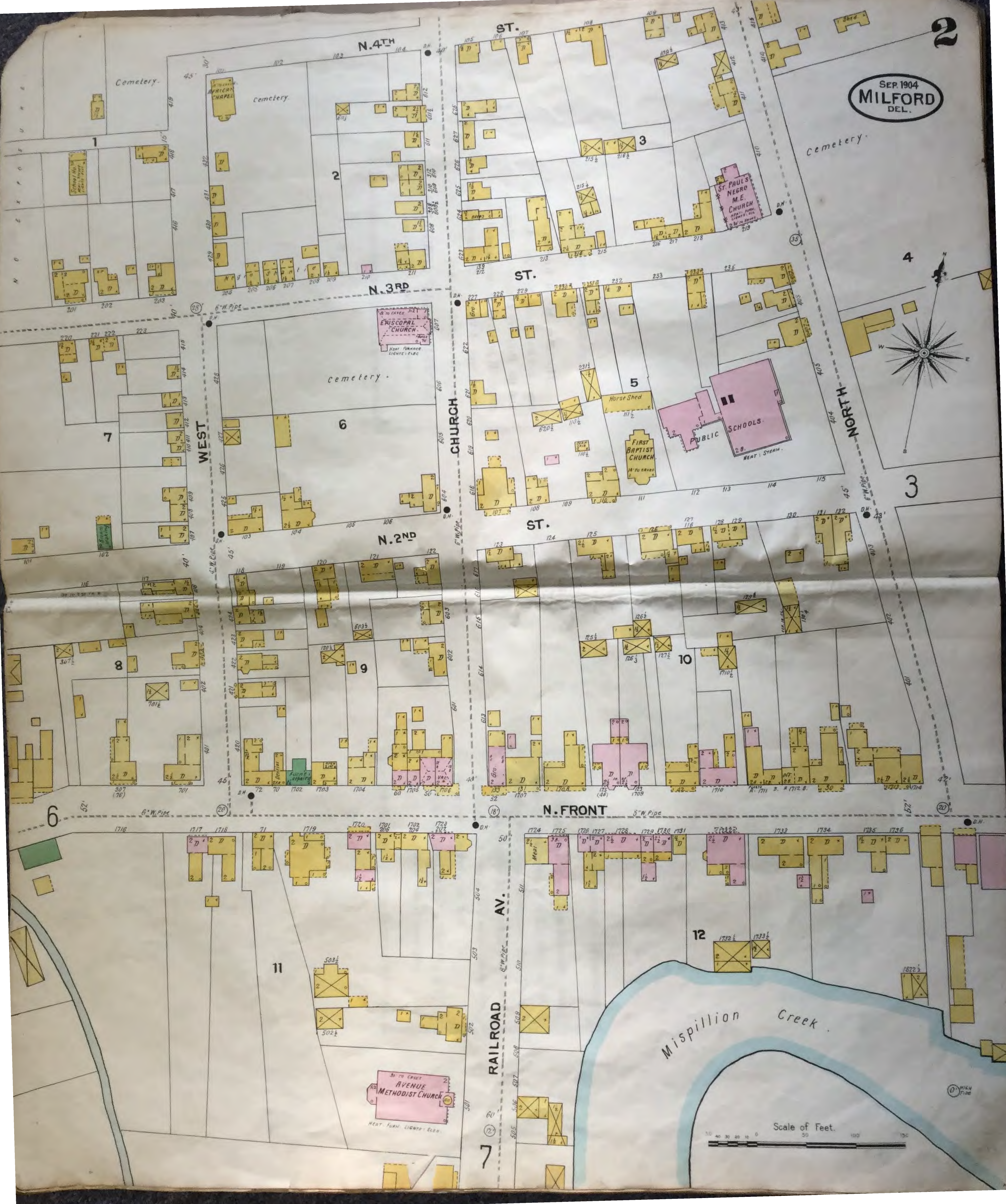
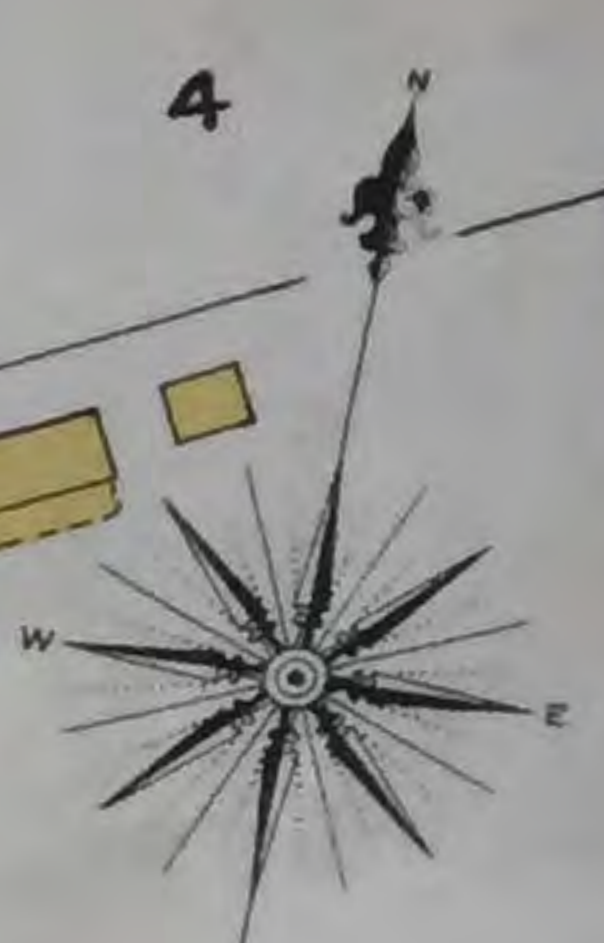
FIRST  
BAPTIST  
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N. FRONT

Mispillion Creek

AVENUE  
METHODIST CHURCH

Scale of Feet



MILFORD DELAWARE AND

MILFORD AREA AFTER 1776.

Land records study of Upper Sussex  
and Lower Kent Co. Delaware

By: E. Dallas Hitchens & E. Millis Hurley

*E. Dallas Hitchens*

*E. Millis Hurley*

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DELAWARE STATE ARCHIVES

## MILFORD AND THE MILFORD DELAWARE AREA AFTER 1776

By Beers' map of 1868, the area we have been covering on this block had been divided into five lots. No owner is shown for the second lot going north from Second Street, which we have followed as the Purnal Hall lot, but the third lot going north is shown as Mrs. Hall's. As mentioned above we suspect that these two lots, one Hall's and the other the Ann Coulter lot, had become the property of Purnal Hall, and now in 1868 were the property of Mrs. Hall, the widow of Purnal. On Figure 16, these are 18 and 19.

By Beers' map, the fourth lot going north, the old Ebenezer Evans lot appears to have been divided into four lots. The lower part of the lot facing on North Street which we last had in the hands of William Abbott in 1863 was still his in 1868, but the corner lot part of the old Evans lot had been divided into two lots facing North Street. They appear to have had a frontage of only about 30 feet on North Street and were still owned by T. P. McColley. On Figure 16, these two lots were a division of number 21.

The fourth lot carved out of the old Ebenezer Evans lot ran back of the lots which faced on North Street and fronted on Third Street. This lot was still owned by T. P. McColley in 1868. On Figure 16, this is lot number 22.

### NORTH STREET WEST SIDE BETWEEN THIRD - FOURTH

We believe that originally there were four lots in this block and the fourth lot going north from Third Street was covered under Fourth Street. This is the lot at the southwest corner of Fourth and North. Hence we will be concerned with the three remaining lots.

On January 1, 1795, John Crompton bought the first lot going north from Third Street, the lot at the northwest corner of Third and North. Joseph Oliver, senior sold him the 120 foot square lot for five shillings and the usual three pounds ground rent per year. North Street in this deed was called High Street.<sup>778</sup> Just as First Street was sometimes called Front, North Street was sometimes called High. The above John Crompton lot is the present day location of the Second Methodist Church, 1842, now Saint Paul's Methodist Church. On Figure 16, this is number 23.

The John Crompton lot remained his property for eleven years, but then changed hands four times in a relative short period of time. On March 25, 1806, it was signed over to Jonathan Collins. Within six months, on September 16, 1806, Collins deeded it to William Lofland. In less than three months Lofland sold to Robert Hicks, negro; (sometimes spelled Hix.) the date was December 12, 1806. Within five months, on April 28, 1807, Hicks sold to Nathan Huff. Huff held on somewhat longer, selling three years later on September 8, 1810 to John Mitchell. In 1815 it was still in the hands of Mitchell. Since we found no information on the sale price in any of these transactions we had no indication that a house had been built on this lot, but because it changed hands so frequently it is likely that it remained a vacant lot; at least up to the time it was acquired by John Mitchell. John Mitchell kept the lot for six years, selling on February 29, 1816 to Captain Thomas Parke.<sup>779</sup> Again, no selling price was given.

A great amount of time was spent in trying to find out what happened to this lot from 1816 to about 1872. We know that the Methodists acquired it between these dates to build their second church, moving from the old Methodist cemetery lot. Then before 1872 sold it to build their third

## MILFORD AND THE MILFORD DELAWARE AREA AFTER 1776

church on what is today Church Avenue, and approximately the same site as their fourth church. However, we found no record of a Captain Thomas Parke transfer, or a Methodist receipt or a sale by the Methodists. We know that both McColley and Causey later controlled much of the property in this area. It is a guess that one of these two men or an equally prosperous Milford resident got the property and made an outright gift of it to the Methodists without benefit of recorded deed.

We could find no more pertinent information on a Captain Thomas Parke in the Milford area, except for the ownership of a lot in the West Street area. However, in 1783, we found a Thomas Parke in Duck Creek Hundred, -"Practioner of Physics"; in other words a Doctor.<sup>780</sup> This was not likely the same Thomas Parke. It would be very unusual for a man to be both a Captain and a Doctor. Then there was a Thomas Parke listed as a merchant, living at Duck Creek Cross Roads.<sup>781</sup> It was probably this same Thomas Parke that bought a tract of land on the Dover River in 1790, who was listed as a Kent Countian,<sup>782</sup> and lastly, in 1791 a Thomas Parks bought a lot on the Dover Square from Purnal Lofland and his wife,<sup>783</sup> and this was very likely the Thomas Parke who owned the lot at the northwest corner of Third and North. Although, no deed of transfer from Parke could be found, a deed of 1819 for the transfer of another property in this area indicated that in 1819, it had become the lot of Elias Paynter and must have been acquired direct from Captain Thomas Parke or through a sheriff sale of his property. On Figure 16 this is lot number 23.

The second lot going north from Third Street was the property of Elias Shockley. Hence it was likely an unsold lot while held by Joseph Oliver, senior and his son Samuel Oliver and became Shockley's when he bought the village from Samuel Oliver. By 1819, Shockley had already built "a dwelling house and other improvements" on the lot and was renting it to Jabez Cropper. He sold it to Jabez Cropper for \$400 in 1819. The lot had a 60 foot frontage on North Street and was 137 feet deep. The other improvements were outhouses, barns and stables.<sup>784</sup> On Figure 16, this is number 24.

We could find no record of the sale of the third lot going north from Third Street, but we believe that from the will of Thomas Collins written in 1825, this lot had early become the property of Thomas Collins. One clause of the will reveals that the lot ran from North Street, -"it being Street and paralleling it on the north was an alley running from North to Church Street, -"it being an alley Joseph Oliver laid out, but afterwards let me have it."<sup>785</sup> It is this quote which indicates that Collins secured the lot from Joseph Oliver before his death in 1807. On Figure 16, this is number 25. The above discussed lot ran from North to Church, and we believe that it was only the part that fronted on North Street that Collins got from Joseph Oliver before 1807. For the portion fronting on Church Street, we believe that Collins bought from Elias Shockley after 1813.<sup>786</sup>

Although Collins made his will in 1825 it was not probated until 1832, indicating his death occurred 1831-1832. The eastern part of the dwelling house on this lot and the eastern part of the lot fronting on North Street were willed to Sally (Sarah) Clift, wife of John Clift and daughter of Thomas Collins. The part of the house that went to Sally Clift was from a partition in the two story part -"from the ground floor to the garret". There was a shed adjoining built by John Clift.<sup>787</sup> Since the shed had been added by John Clift, it would seem that John and Sally Clift had already been living in this part of the house fronting on North Street.

The only other special bequest made by Thomas Collins was to Sophia Collins, widow of Thomas Collins, junior, and that was a house and lot on which she lived -"on the east side of the road to my son Edward Collins line, she paying the annual ground rent of \$3.60". Upon her death this

A TRICENTENNIAL VIEW OF MILFORD

# MILFORD

Milford, Kent Co. Del.  
Scale, 20 Rods to the Inch.

References.  
Lot 371 Mrs Davis  
2 C.S. Watson  
3 J.H. Jump



## SOUTH MILFORD

F174  
M6  
T69

As far as is known, the first meeting of Methodists was held here in 1777 in a private home, a practice that was continued for the next decade. In December of 1787, the then Methodist Society purchased land on North Street from Joseph Oliver and constructed a frame church building that was completed in 1790. This building was surrounded by a cemetery that eventually provided still well marked burial sites for many of Milford's most historic figures.

In 1842, a brick church was built on the corner of Third and North Streets to better serve the needs of a growing congregation. This was eventually replaced by a larger edifice on what was then Railroad Avenue (now Church Avenue). Begun in 1871, this church was not completed until March of 1877. The name "Avenue" was adopted. Extensive improvements were made in 1889.

Ground was broken in February of 1939 for the present Avenue United Methodist Church with dedication occurring the following December. A social hall and educational wing were added in 1954.

During the summer of 1910, a group of Methodists, seeking to establish another church in South Milford began tent meetings on S.E. Front Street and in the following October organized the Methodist Protestant Church of Milford. In November, the Rev. L.A. Bennett, who with the Rev. J.L. Nichols had earlier conducted the tent meetings, was named the first full-time minister, and, following purchase of a lot at Front and Franklin Streets, a temporary tabernacle was constructed.

In January 1911, plans were made for the building of a permanent church with corner stone placement taking place on September 3 of the same year. On May 19, 1912, the new home of the Methodist Protestant congregation — a beautiful white block and marble edifice, with seating capacity of 1100 — was dedicated. In 1939, the name of the church was changed to "Calvary Methodist".

In the spring of 1949 the Calvary Methodist Church was remodeled with addition of a new kitchen and expansion of Fellowship Hall and Sunday School facilities.

On March 3, 1951, fire destroyed the entire church complex. The congregation, however, immediately began planning a new church on the site with construction begun in late October of the following year. While the church was being rebuilt, the congregation held services in the high school auditorium and in the Avenue Methodist Church.

The new building was dedicated on March 7, 1954 and further expanded with addition of a new educational building in 1967. Today's Calvary United Methodist Church has one of the largest and most active congregations in the area.

The brick church at Third and North Streets still serves as a church being the home of the St. Paul's United Methodists, a black congregation.

The first African Methodist Episcopal Church in Milford was organized in 1859 and acquired its first church building in 1892. In 1937, the congregation now known as Bethel A.M.E., built a new church at 205 N.W. Fourth Street which has continued as its place of worship.

Area Baptists organized in 1873, established Milford's first Baptist witness in 1874, and constructed their first church here on N.W. Second Street in 1875. This building continued as the First Baptist Church of Milford until 1962 when a new larger church was constructed on Old Shawnee Road just outside the city's limits. This has since been expanded on several occasions.

Other Baptist churches in the area include a Southern Baptist Church at Lynch Heights, on Delaware Rte. 113, just north of Milford, and a Faith Independent Baptist Church, also on Rte. 113 but near the southern boundary of the city. Also the Mt. Enom Baptist Church at 46 West Street.

Up until 1910, the spiritual needs of the few Catholics living in the Milford area were served by priests from the Holy Cross Parish in Dover with services being held once a month at various places in the area. However, this was rectified in 1910 when St. John's, the first Catholic Church in lower Kent County, was built on Maple Avenue.

Nearly 44 years later, a growing St. John's Parish built a large modern brick edifice at the corner of Seabury Avenue and School Place which was dedicated on November 25, 1954, and continues to serve the needs of a growing parish.

Another church that began with a very small group of worshippers and has experienced unusual growth is the Church of God which held its initial meetings here on the second floor of a small store on Montgomery Street in 1934, later acquiring a small building of its own on N. Washington Street.

By 1953, the once small congregation had outgrown its previous quarters, resulting in the construction, that year, of a handsome new house of worship at 500 N. Walnut St. This edifice was expanded by addition of a Christian Education building in 1960.

Although there had been Lutherans in the area for many years, they did not formally organize as a local congregation, until February of 1956 when, as the Reformation Lutheran Church of Milford, they began holding regular services, first in the I.O.O.F. Building and later at the Grange Hall.

As a result of steady growth, the Lutheran congregation decided to build a "home" of its own; with the result that a handsome brick church was built at 613 Lakeview Avenue with dedication being accomplished on September 16, 1962.

In recent years, the First Church of Christ, Scientists, which was formerly based in a small Christian Scientist reading room, downtown, has built a new house of worship at 900 S. Walnut Street.

Other congregations having comparatively new church buildings include the Church of Nazarene on Salevan Place, near the intersection of Tenth Street and U.S. Rte. 113; the Lighthouse Christian Center, on Del. Rte. 14, a short distance from Milford's western boundary; the First United Pentecostal Church of Milford, also on Rte. 14.

Other small Milford churches include Aldersgate Wesleyan at 406 Marshall Street; Pilgrim Wesleyan on S.E. Front Street; the Bible Presbyterian Church on N.W. Second Street; the Mount Siani Tabernacle, 318 Church Avenue; and the Jesus Love Temple in the former Schine Theatre building, downtown.

Nearby small communities, such as Houston and Lincoln, which are generally considered part of the "Milford area," are apparently included in the Chamber of Commerce total.

Regardless of denomination, age or size, the many churches of the area serve well the spiritual needs of their congregation.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS OF THE MILFORD AREA by David S. Hugg

Although education in the earliest days of our country was, unfortunately, available to only a few, Milford has apparently had "schools" of one type or another from the time of the community's founding.

According to research done by Jane Herson in compiling information for the Schools Section of the Milford Historical Society's "A History of Milford, Delaware," there was a small "Select School" here as early as 1777 when the Rev. Alex Huston apparently supplemented his meager salary as pastor of the area's first Presbyterian Church by conducting classes, presumably in a meeting house located on the King's Highway near what was known as Three Runs.

Other religious groups, notably the Methodists, whose first small frame church on North Street included a school room, and the Quakers, who had a small meeting room-school on Quaker Lane off today's U.S. Rte. 113, apparently operated small schools in the 1790's.



# **Milford Through The Years**

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF MILFORD, DELAWARE

Published by  
Milford Historical Society

DELAWARE STATE ARCHIVES



St. John's R. C. Church, Milford, Del.

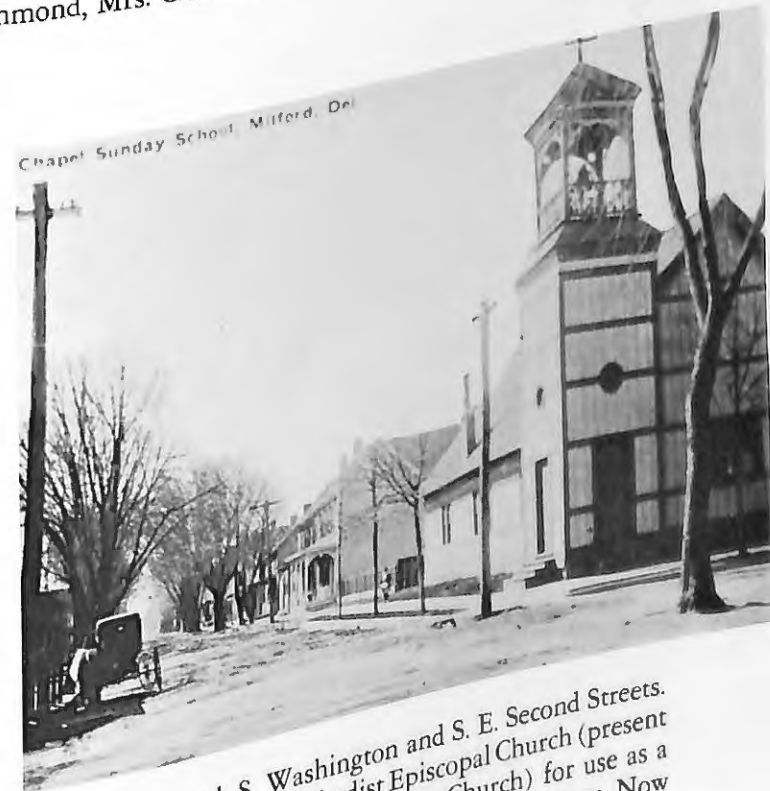
St. John's Roman Catholic Church, Peabody (now Maple) Avenue. This building was moved from the site after construction of the present building and its dedication on November 25, 1954.



Ground Breaking Ceremony in 1951 for an addition to the building of Avenue United Methodist Church. L. to r., front row: Dr. T. C. Mulligan, District Superintendent, Mr. J. Roland Messick, Mr. I. D. Short, Dr. O. V. James, Mr. M. Haswell Pierce, Mr. William V. Sipple, Jr., Mr. Brown P. Thawley, Rev. Roy G. Tawes, Pastor; back row: Rev. Fred Marvel, William D. Kimmel, Jr., Miss Anna Prettyman, Mrs. Kelly, Mr. Garrett L. Grier, Mr. Clayton Emory, Mr. Edgar Isaacs, Jr., Miss Elizabeth Hammond, Mrs. Charles Varney.



Ground Breaking for present Avenue United Methodist Church building circa 1939. (L. to r.) Gov. Richard C. McMullen, Dr. G. Layton Grier, Dr. Frank Herson, Pastor, Mr. G. Roland Messick, Mr. I. D. Short.



Chapel, S. Washington and S. E. Second Streets. Built by the Methodist Episcopal Church (present Avenue United Methodist Church) for use as a Sunday School and other church meetings. Now owned by Milford JayCees.



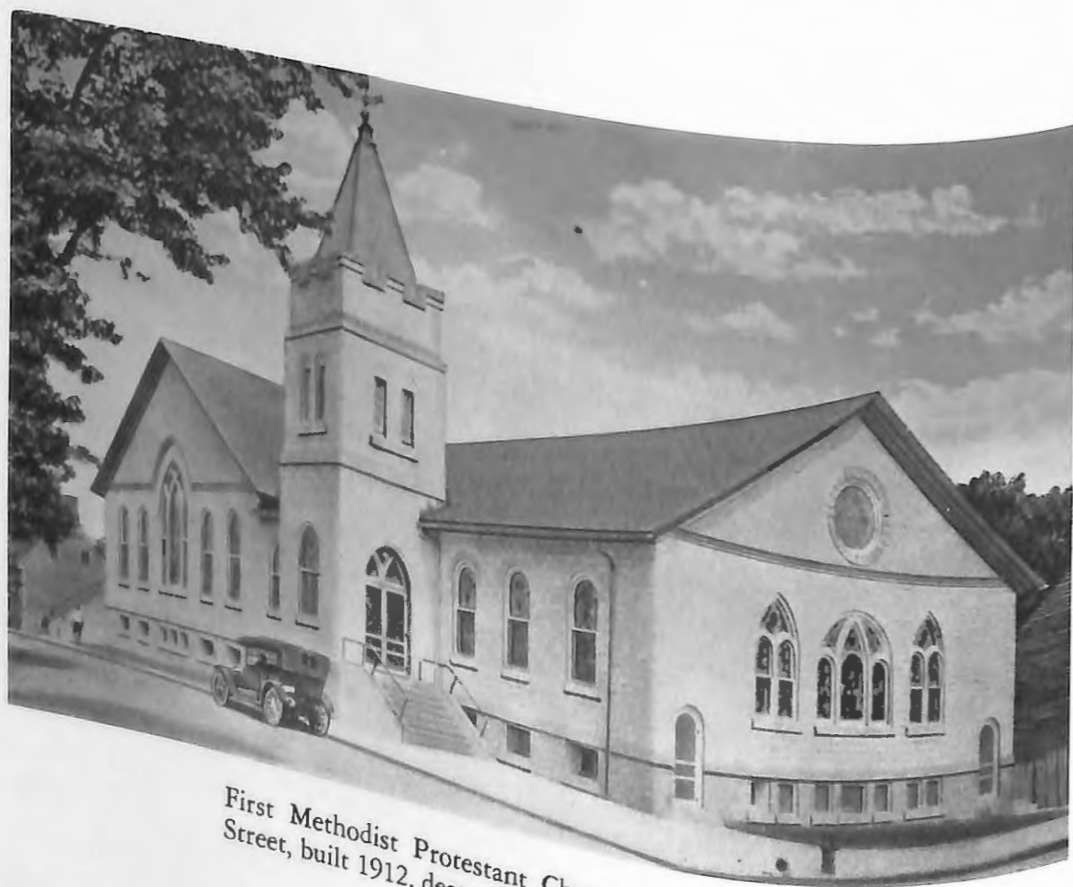
Methodist Episcopal Church, Church Avenue in 1917.



First Presbyterian Church shown before it was enlarged by the addition to the front in 1954. The church was built in 1850.



First Baptist Church, N. W. Second Street, replaced by a new building on Old Shawnee Road.



First Methodist Protestant Church, S. E. Front Street, built 1912, destroyed by fire March 3, 1951.

St. Paul's Church. Second building for the congregation of present Avenue United Methodist Church, later used as a town hall and as a conserve factory. Now it is again a house of worship for the congregation of St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

