

✓ R.C.C. Wyoming - by Phyllis Cox

*Taken from Paper preserved
by Wm. E. G. Jr.*

A tract of nine hundred acres adjoining "Brecknock" was surveyed by James Wills December 24, 1680. ~~In a portion of this tract,~~ On a portion of this tract, June 1, 1856, the village of Wyoming was started. On this date, John T. Jakes was appointed agent for the Delaware Railroad and for the Adams Express^{Co.} When Mr. Jakes arrived to take charge of the offices, there was a mill owned by Wm. F. Kindall and two houses. In this same year Mr. ^{Kindall} built a store and engaged in merchantile business there. In 1857, John Jakes bought this store and continued to operate it for many years.

By 1860, Wyoming had grown into what Thomas Scharf, the noted Delaware historian, spoke of as "quite a respectable village" and was variously called "Camden Station" or "West Camden" as it was being used largely as a freight- shipping point for Camden village which is one mile East of Wyoming. In 1865 the Reverend John J. Pierce of the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania came to "West Camden" for the purpose of laying out the town. They changed the name to Wyoming out of deference to the Reverend Mr. ^{Pierce.} Pierce. On March 20, 1869, Wyoming was incorporated as a town.

The center of the town lay at the intersection of Front Street with the railroad near the original location of the freight office. On the west side of this intersection was Jake's store, which was for years the leading merchantile establishment and in which

was located the post office. Behind the store and running down to the lake was a large garden known as Jake's Park, which was considered quite a showplace and in which visitors were allowed with permission only.

The old mill was destroyed by fire in 1919, but the new structure was built upon the site of the old. The Wyoming Hotel, which was in operation by 1868, still stands at its original location on the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Second St.

According to the Atlas printed in 1868, only twelve years after the founding of the town the following streets had been laid out; Wyoming Avenue (known today as Railroad Avenue), Layton Avenue, Front Street, Second Street, Third Street, Lake Street, Water Street, and Mechanic Avenue,

Scharf, in his History of Delaware, lists the commercial and Professional establishments and secret societies in Wyoming in 1888. There were three general stores, one drugstore, one milliner, one butcher, two blacksmiths, two wheelwrights, one one dealer in lumber and lime, two coal dealers, one shoe shop, one harness maker, one nurseryman, and two physicians.

Of the secret societies in 1888, "The Ancient Order of United Workmen" ~~and~~ ^{he} Lodge No. 8 was instituted with twenty-two members, but gave way to the Rotary and Lions Club. The young ladies also had a hand in the organizations as they started the Round Table Club of Wyoming and Camden in 1899. Their club met on the second floor of the Jendin's Wholesale Grocery Co.

The other secret organization was the General Daniel Woodall Post, No. 11 of the Grand Army of the Republic, instituted in 1884 with ²⁶28 members. It is felt that John T. Jakes' influence helped to bring about the organization of this group of Federal veterans. Mr. Jakes was an ardent supporter of Lincoln and his political party throughout the Civil War, although many families in this area were Southern in background and sympathy.

No history of Wyoming would be complete without some mention of its churches. During the summer of 1856, John Jakes started a subscription to raise money to build a temporary Sunday School. Later it was decided to build a church instead of the Sunday School, in this same year a small plank Church was built and affiliated with Methodist Episcopal denomination. This small plank Church was located on the ^{EAST}West side of Mechanic Avenue on the back of the property belonging to Mrs. George Price. This church was later abandoned and a new structure was erected in 1883.

After the Civil War, a considerable number of Pennsylvanians settled around Wyoming. Many of these were members of the Dutch or German Reformed Church. St. John's Reformed Church was dedicated near the corner of Broad Street and Layton Avenue. the building was sold in 1922, moved onto Camden-Wyoming Avenue, and converted into a double dwelling house.

The earliest school in Wyoming was held in the old plank Church. Mrs. Kate Sterner Brown taught reading, writing, and arithmetic with what a lifelong resident calls a "heavy emphasis on temperance". Later ^m Mrs. Brown kept school in a little plank building on the North side of Second Street which building is now a summer kitchen on the home^v owned by Mrs. Benjamin Hoach. A new schoolhouse was built in 1886 on the East side of Pine St. This school was used until the first section of the present Caesar Rodney was built in 1916.

To complete the history of Wyoming one cannot skip mentioning the commerce^{val life} for which it was most prominently noted. In the earlier, Wyoming has been used throughout the years as a shopping point. Many still remember the long lines of wagons that formerly ^{and the street is waiting turns at the} grew on each side of Railroad Avenue. The large old trees that formerly grew on each side of Railroad Avenue were planted by fruit growers to provide shade for their horses and drivers during the hot summer days.

To dry and process some of the fruit produced on the farms near town, James March and Jacob G. Brown started a factory on the Northeast corner of Third Street and Railroad Avenue. Through subsequent mergers, combinations sales and removals the present Libby McNeil and Libby plant in Wyoming grew out of the small March and Brown firm.

Camden-Wyoming, One, Two, or None

By Ella Mae Forrest

An Undergraduate Paper

Prepared for Doctor R. Cobb

Ed. 4455- Extension

Newark, Del.

The University of Delaware

Feb. 21, 1959

*Later
edited, corrected
and presented*

18 wk. typing course

Camden- Wyoming, ~~One~~ or Two or *three*

The twin communities, Camden-Wyoming are nearly as one, although each is fighting to save its own identity, not only from one another but from Dover. A referendum to incorporate the two towns was defeated approximately five years ago. Nothing has been heard of it since. However, *water and sewer* both communities are served by one fire company and one water system. A plan has been formulated to construct a sewerage system with both towns cooperating to pay for it. The rural division of the Post Office plan to consolidate Camden and Wyoming with the Dover unit. City delivery service *W* would be made possible by this move. The Department is considering acquiring a centrally located site that will serve the two communities.

There are two police and one police car that serve the communities, and whose wages and expenses are shared by both Camden and Wyoming.

A county road is the only division between the two towns. They have grown together side by side. Camden grew along an important highway that has been replaced by a dual highway on the edge of town. Wyoming grew along the railroad that has become a whistle stop. They are centrally located in the seventh district, which consists chiefly of rich farms that produce potatoes, tomatoes, beans, peaches, apples and garden produce. Recently, the land within a three mile radius has greatly increased in real estate value. One farmer, who lives in Camden and has a farm nearby, said he was not so sure his plan to plant an apple orchard, which would not produce for eight years, was as good an idea as putting the pre-

erty up for sale for housing development.

There have been two housing developments west of the community that have stalmated. The four or five others east are continuing to grow towards Dover. Recently, there was a test case of one development that tried to be incorporated with Dover, thereby leaving the seventh district. The case was defeated. Bonds had been issued on which this property had been including in the realestate evaluation. Had they been successful, others probably would have tried to follow suit for one reason or another, such as, lower taxes or better facilities and utilities. The property value of the district would have been lowered if this had happened.

The bonds were for the enlarging of the consolidated school which has an enroalment far in excess of the population of either or both communities. Camden's population is 700 and Wyoming's is 1200. *about 100 of which are negroes over the miles range of each* The school accommodates approximately 2100 from an area of 16 miles. The entire area of Camden-Wyoming is about two square miles. The sewerage system and the 36 new classrooms needed would be financed by bond issued, one by the communities and one by the district.

Taxes are raised primarily through real estate. Since the influx of population has been mainly Air-force personnel, some resentment is felt by realestate owners- chiefly farmers, who are bearing the brunt of added expenses. A few transient can be accredited to the farmers during harvest period. A sales tax would be about the only way to get taxes from this group. A few Air-force people

have purchased their homes in Camden and Wyoming and several have bought houses or built in the district. Quite a few are in trailer-homes. An Airforce Captain, now located at the Dover Airbase was advised, while serving in Alaska and on his tour of duty to the Dover Airbase, to be sure to locate in the Caesar Rodney District (Camden-Wyoming).

The two communities have separate elections. Five members serve on a town council that select their own officers and appoint committees. Each member serves a three year term and may be reelected. There are ^{two} committees, who serve on the water commission, one for each community consisting of two members each. All the above receive a small fee. The consolidated school serving the district is located on the far side of Camden next to Wyoming and the Board of Education is elected by all members of the district.

The industries of Camden and Wyoming are few. Libby's canning factory and Farina Feed Mill along the railroad serve the community farmers. A cement-block industry has asked for a franchise to locate in that vicinity. Each community has its own bank, lumber yard, drug store, hardware-store, service-stations, and independent groceries. There is one wholesale house in Wyoming and a small American Store in Camden. A few small contractors have located in the towns. One active doctor, two semi-retired doctors and a semi-retired dentist serve the communities. Commercial gas and electric are available. There is trash collection furnished free to each community.

Several churches serve the community; Friends, which is being enlarged, two Methodist, two Methodist Episcopal, two Negro Baptist, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Wyoming allows a colored and a white tavern while Camden, ~~being the home of Frances Willard, the founder of the Women's Christian Temperance Union,~~ does not. Community organizations are quite active. They include: Rotary; Lions; Grange; Cub Scouts and Brownies; Odd Fellows; Parent-Teacher Associations; Alumni; plus many women's clubs and church organizations; all of which, excepting the Odd Fellows and the Grange, hold their meetings at the school or church.

Recently a new county road has been widened and blacktopped on the inner edge of the towns to relieve the traffic in the heart of the towns where the main street that runs the length of both communities, a distance of one mile and a half, is too narrow to accommodate the present traffic caused mainly by the travel to and from school. It has been proposed to open the road to the dual highway in order to relieve the congestion. This would require a great deal of added expense since much property would have to be bought. Very little shopping is done in these towns since the parking presents quite a problem and they are so near the larger stores.

This problem, plus the new post office, the need for 36 new classrooms with little ground to further develop, and the sewerage system, are factors that both communities need to agree upon. Since their problems are so related and they are practically bedfellows, one is inclined to consider them as one community. With their spirit and continued livewire cooperation and efforts, there is no doubt that they will be able to solve their problems.

The majority of the people in Camden - Wyoming earn their living through small personal-service business in town, employment in Dover at Latex, stores or business, The State DEpartments , and the growing business section along the dual highway. There are , also, Air-force, politicians, teachers, ^{and} professional people located in Camden- Wyoming. Some farmers, who have farms in the vicinity, live in the towns. A number of retired people, who were born and raised here, are about. A few Country Club type are evident but mostly everyone is just folks who have a deep interest in the activities and welfare of the communities. No great wealth shows in Camden or Wyoming. It is one of those locales where one often finds a native Delarwarean.

highway in order to relieve the congestion. This would require a great deal of added expense since much property would have to be bought. Very little shopping is done in these towns because of the parking problem and the nearness to larger stores. The small business seem to be able to carry on in spite of this problem.

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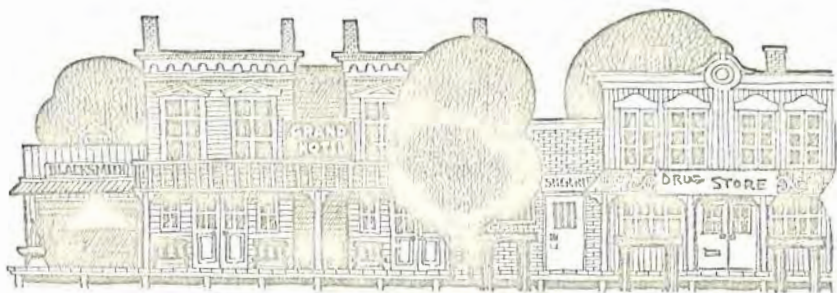
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The industries of Camden and Wyoming are few. Libby's canning factory and Farina Feed Mill along the railroad serve the community farmers. A cement-block industry has asked for a franchise to locate in that vicinity. Small business have contributed in making the towns independent of nearby shopping centers. Each community has its own bank, lumber yard, drug store, hardware-store, service-stations, shoemaker, tailor shop, real estate and insurance office, independent groceries, and small contractors, besides other small business establishments. There is one wholesale house in Wyoming and a small American Store in Camden. One active doctor, two semi-retired doctors, and a semi-retired dentist serve the communities. Commercial gas and electric are available. There is free trash collection furnished by each community.

Several churches are in the community: Friends, which is being enlarged; two Methodist; two Methodist Episcopal; two Negro Baptist; and Jehovah's Witnesses. Wyoming allows a colored and a white tavern, while Camden does not. Community organizations are quite active. They include; Rotary; Lions; Grange; Cub Scouts and Brownies; Odd Fellows; Parent-Teacher Association; Alumni; plus many women's clubs and church organizations; all of which, excepting the Odd Fellows and the Grange, hold their meetings at the school or church.

Last year a new county road was made very wide and blacktopped on the inner edge of the towns to relieve the traffic in the heart of the towns where the main street that runs the length of both communities, a distance of one and a half miles, is too narrow to accommodate the present traffic caused mainly by the travel to and from school. It has been proposed to open the road to the dual

A COLORFUL TOWN IN QUAKER GRAY



EVELYN PEARSON

There are many towns in Delaware with interesting backgrounds. Each has its own outstanding citizens with their colorful family histories. But how and why does a town form in a certain spot on the map? What prompted one man to build there and others to join him? I started looking for reasons in a quiet little town near my home. I've driven through it many times, stopping only for a few groceries, to attend church services, or to visit a school. Occasionally, I had wondered about the old homes hugging its sidewalks, the dignified Friends' Meeting House, the sturdy old Whatcoat Methodist Church on Camden-Wyoming Avenue. Since both religious meeting places are over 100 years old, did religious belief figure strongly in Camden's genesis? Glasses on my nose, pen and pad in hand, I started back through time to get some answers.

To begin at the beginning, there once was a 600 acre tract of land in Delaware with only one house on it. And it remained so for 98 years. Unbelievable, isn't it? The solitary resident, James Wells, lived near the present 237 E. Camden-Wyoming Avenue in 1685 on a tract of land called "Brecknock", which had been

granted to Alexander Humphreys in 1680. Four hundred thirty-six acres of this land went to Colonel John Vining in the mid-eighteenth century. The founding father of Camden, Warner Mifflin, received this acreage from Colonel Vining's estate in 1780. In turn, Warner Mifflin sold 112 acres to his brother, Daniel, in 1783.

Now that we've ploughed through all those dates and acres, we've finally arrived at the most important transaction. The crossroads made by the meeting of the road north to Dover town and the road east to Forest Landing (Lebanon) was located on Daniel Mifflin's land, and it was around these crossroads that the town began to grow.

In the 1780's Camden's nearest neighbor, Dover, was relatively small, having a population of only 500. But it was a growing town, requiring shipping and travel connections with other areas. To accommodate passengers of the stage lines which ran between Lewes and New Castle, and those to the steamboats at Dona Landing (Leipsic-Little Creek) and Short's Landing (Smyrna), two hotels were built at Piccadilly, or the

place more commonly called Mifflin's Crossroads. Daniel Mifflin put up a tavern and a storehouse. By the year 1800, a dozen homes had been built near the crossroads, and several shops had opened for business. Just prior to the turn of the century, the name of "Camden" was finally settled on the town.

By 1818, the town had 70 lots and out-lots. Many of these were created by the division of the large tracts of land purchased by the original settlers. Such names as Hunn, Edmondson, Mifflin, Nock,



Jenkins, Taylor, and Truitt showed up again and again on the new deeds, when land was passed on to children and grandchildren.

Perhaps one of the key factors in Camden's steady growth was the settlement of so many Quaker families in the town. Known for their hard work and honest dealings, the Friends supported their growing community in such occupations as merchants, inn-keepers, carriage makers, tanners, bricklayers, and house carpenters. At the close of the nineteenth century, the town had four grocery stores, one cannery, one saw mill, one lumber yard, one boot and shoe store, two drug stores, two butchers, two undertakers, two flour and feed stores, one stove and tin-ware store, three physicians, and one real estate conveyancer.

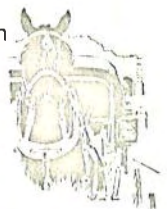
Not only was the retail merchantile business booming, but the town was an important center for the shipping of cord-wood, staves, black oak and Spanish oak timber, grains, and fruit. Most of this shipping activity moved one mile west of town when the Delaware

Railroad opened in 1856.

But even the opening of the railroad proved a boon to George M. Stetson and William Ellison. They opened a canning business in Camden in the same year. Like Jack's bean stalk, their enterprise just grew and grew. Time and again, Stetson and Ellison added on new buildings to house their operations. Then, in 1884, a massive fire destroyed all the buildings, the Ellison home and a neighboring hardware store. A year after the rubble had been cleared away, Stetson and Ellison had rebuilt and opened their doors again.

The arrival of the iron horse also produced a wider market for the Camden area's dairy and farm produce. So the noisy nuisance the Quakers had sought to keep out of their town had some favorable points, too.

Although Camden was primarily a Quaker town, the first chapel in the community was erected by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1791. The wooden structure was built by Dr. Elijah Barratt, the son of Philip Barratt, who donated the land for Delaware's famous Barratt's Chapel near Frederica. Since the building utilized only a portion of the lot in the southwest part of town, the remainder was used as burial ground. This wooden house of worship was torn down after the new brick Whatcoat Church was built in 1856 on Camden-Wyoming Avenue. Ministers for the Methodist Church were supplied from the Dover circuit until 1835, when a separate circuit was established.



One source, Conrad's History of Delaware, states that the Society of Friends actually built a frame

meeting house in 1760, but it was soon destroyed by fire. The Quakers erected the present Friends' Meeting House on Camden-Wyoming Avenue in 1805 or 1806. In the original deed the building lot, donated by Jonathan and Patience Hunn, was described as "lying in or near the village of Camden, on the main road leading from said village to the Poor-house". (Gives one second thoughts, huh?) The building was constructed of brick made from clay found on the premises. The meeting house also served as a school for the Quaker children. Classes were conducted there until 1882, with Alice Cowgill holding the last teacher's position.

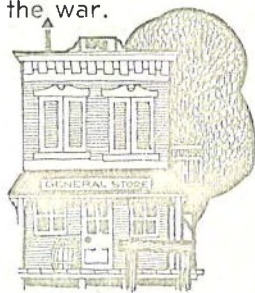
The Friends' Meeting House stands now much as it was first built, minus the horse sheds which once stood on the property. It is the only meeting house open in ~~Delaware~~ today, with approximately 50 Friends attending Sunday services.

Throughout their history, members of the Society of Friends suffered greatly for their attitudes and the stands they took for fair treatment of Indians and Negroes, prison reform, humane treatment of the mentally ill, and even for such a minor (though at the time considered major) offense as not doffing a hat to anyone, no matter what his "station" in life. They did not believe in baptizing their children, paying tithes, attending regular Christian church services, and a few Quaker men and women upset their Puritan neighbors by standing up in the streets and courts and preaching their cause. Persecution drove the Quakers down from the northeastern states to establish their own colonies further south.

The Quakers have a saying: "I have a concern." For them it is not

merely a statement but a way of life. Their concern for the rising friction and subsequent war between the colonies and England set them apart from their neighbors! They may have sympathized with the problems of the other colonists, but they did not view war as a solution. Many of them suffered even at the hands of the colonists since they would not take an oath of allegiance to the new country (Quakers would not swear any oath), causing them to lose government and teaching positions. Many refused to use the continental money, since they believed that they must remain free from using anything which furthered the war.

Kent Co.



Instead of loading a gun, Quakers found less violent ways to promote a peaceful settlement. Warner Mifflin, an ardent pacifist, was appointed by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the winter of '77-'78 to visit General Howe and Washington and impress upon them the desirability of a truce, talks, and discipline of British troops. Without a pass, traveling on foot, Mifflin crossed the English lines and was quickly jailed. But, after several weeks of internment, General Howe heard of this man's mission of peace and summoned him to his headquarters. There Mifflin spoke so sincerely that General Howe agreed to consider a truce, invited Mifflin to dine with him, and offered him safe conduct to General Washington's camp at Valley Forge. But the Quaker refused the General's offer, feeling

that to take advantage of this consequence of war would be against his beliefs. So he left, "respected by the guards who were obliged to take care of a man who wore a flatbrimmed hat, a gray suit without buttons, who wore no powder in his hair, and whose shoes were tied with laces".¹ Congress voted down the truce, but Warner Mifflin had earned the deep respect of both Generals.

Long before the North and South split over the slavery issue, many Friends Meetings had declared such an infringement on human rights abominable in their sight. They strongly recommended that all Friends who were slaveholders should set them free. Warner Mifflin did free his 21 slaves in 1774, setting a precedent. But many Quakers, knowing that freeing their slaves would work a hardship on their comfortable way of life, sidestepped the issue for decades before they finally resolved to be done with that evil practice and free their own black men.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Quakers found that they could not help the Negroes in their usual open fashion. Many of the Friends, including Daniel Mifflin, were strong abolitionists and helped runaway slaves by conducting the Underground Railroad. The Cooper House was one known station, complete with a tunnel to the house next door and bunks in the loft where weary escapees could rest. At night, the Negroes were stealthily moved to Wildcat Manor at Lebanon, where they hid until a ship could pick them up and steal away north to safety in Pennsylvania.

Not all the residents of Camden were against taking up arms and going into battle. A company of 78 men were mustered from Camden and the surrounding area. But church membership, families, and

friendships split over the pro-South or pro-North feelings raging through the community. At the height of this turmoil, a resident Federal General, Daniel Woodall, was pelted with stones when he rode through town in his carriage.

The rhythmic clop-clop of the horses' hooves pulling the carriages of yesteryear has gone from Camden's streets. No more do wagonloads of timber head for the steamboats and William Penn's Philadelphia. The people moving in and out of the homes and stores no longer wear the flatbrimmed hats or gray bonnets seen in a long ago day. The cannery doesn't pack its shining fruit for shipment by the 'iron horse' to points unknown. That intruder, which the Friends deemed too noisy to allow any closer than one mile from their town, was responsible for the birth of another town, Wyoming. But that's another story, another time.

Today the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is seeking to place the crossroads area of Camden on the National Register of Historic Places. Standing on any corner of the crossroads and turning three-quarters round, one can see many of the buildings involved in this project: the Cooper House on North Main Street facing the Daniel Mifflin House, the George Truitt House on South Main Street. (He served as governor of Delaware from 1808-1811). In all, there are 22 properties selected for the National Register of Historic Places. Each building has its own unique history, each family its own special stories, combining to make a pleasant, unpretentious town rich in the history of our state and country.

¹Dover - The First Two Hundred Fifty Years

History of the Meeting

Of all the Quaker Meetings in Kent County, Camden was the last to be established, and is now the only active one. It has absorbed all other Meetings that once flourished in this area. Despite the fact that Camden was founded by a Quaker, Daniel Mifflin who planned a Quaker community, no Meeting House existed until 1805-1806.

Jonathan and Patience Hunn donated the land on which the Meeting stands and the bricks were made from clay which was found on the premises. The front wall is laid in Flemish bond and the sides in Liverpool bond.

There are several unusual features about the Meeting House. The building faces the north while the majority of Friends Meetings for some undetermined reason, face the south. There are no porches and the horse-sheds which are a characteristic sight at many meetings have long been removed. In the burial ground most of the stones are small in keeping with Friends belief of unpretentiousness. There are, however, some new stones of the size found in most cemeteries today.

At the side of the stairway is a panel which can be dropped so that an overflow crowd can be seated on the stairway and yet participate in Meeting. This generally was done for the convenience of servants.

As was the custom elsewhere Friends established a school where a Meeting was built. The Upper floor was used for that purpose here. The Quakers seem to have had the earliest well established schools in the area in fact. A school was conducted here until 1882, the last teacher being Alice Cowgill.

John Hunn, Governor of Delaware 1901-1905, is buried here and there is a marker to Warner Mifflin, an ardent abolitionist who freed all his slaves prior to his death in 1799.

Camden Meeting is said to have replaced Motherkilyn Meeting (sometimes called Murderkill Meeting) which was located near Magnolia and burned in 1760. Duck Creek Meeting (near Smyrna) was the first meeting to be established in Kent County. The date for this meeting is about 1705. Little Creek Meeting was formed as a preparative meeting under Duck Creek and it dates from 1710. The present meeting house was built in 1802 replacing an earlier frame building. Little Creek Meeting was undoubtedly the largest ~~meeting~~ Friends Meeting in Kent County, but it finally ~~was~~ was laid down shortly after the Civil War. A well known Philadelphia architect reported

A Short History of Camden

A 600 acre tract of land known as "Brecknock", which now includes Camden, was warranted to Alexander Humphreys in 1680. The earliest known settler in the present town was a James Wells whose dwelling was situated slightly east of the ^{present} residence of Maxine Howell at 237 E. Camden-Wyoming Avenue. The Wells home was built around 1685. Nearly a century passed before a village began to appear.

In 1783 Daniel Mifflin, formerly of Accomac County, Virginia purchased a 112 acre portion of the Brecknock tract, called Piccadilly. At the junction of the Upper Kings Highway (of which Main Street is now a part) and the road leading from Forest Landing (Lebanon) to the headwaters of the Choptank, Mifflin constructed an inn. This was a coaching and horse changing stop. He also laid out building lots with the vision of a Quaker town before him.

The names Mifflin's Cross Roads and Piccadilly were both used, but by 1788 the name Camden appears on a deed. Many Georgian and Federal period homes are still to be seen scattered about Camden and the surrounding area.

During the Civil War, escaping slaves from the South found friends here among the Quakers who offered their homes as stations on the "Underground Railroad." The abolitionist movement was strong among Quakers. The Hunns, the Lowbers and Cowgills were probably the main families in this area who were involved in assisting escaping slaves, although the Mifflins, Jenkinses, Nocks, Dolbys, Emersons and others, if not actually aiding escaping slaves, gave moral assistance to the cause. One known station in Camden is the Cooper House located at #15 North Main Street. A tunnel is said to have connected this house with the one to the south and the loft over the kitchen held bunks. Here slaves in transit were lodged by day. At night they were moved on, in many cases no doubt, to nearby Wildcat Manor, where they again could be hidden until a ship could be secreted in and out of the St. Jones River. This was just one of the many stages in the slaves flight for freedom.

When the Delaware Railroad was started in the 1850's the original surveys showed that it would come through the then western edge of Camden. The Quakers objected to this rather strenuously and as a consequence the plan was changed and the tracks were laid a mile west of Camden.

in 1963 that the Little Creek Friends Meeting was an extremely well proportioned building. Unfortunately, it is now in disrepair and being used for storage of farm implements.

Camden Meeting has become more active in recent years. In 1959 an annex was added and a parking lot was made. The land was donated by George and Annette Butler. Meeting is held each First-Day from 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock and a First-Day school is also conducted. We welcome visitors at any time.

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Betty Harrington Macdonald

Compiled by Michael Richards
April, 1971

Historical Society highlights Camden's charm

by Ann M. Biter
Staff writer

Sally C. Hollingsworth, president of the newly-formed Camden Historical Society, wants to see that Camden gets the credit it deserves as a charming small town with a lot to offer.

"The history of Camden is really entwined with the history of Kent County," Hollingsworth said. She

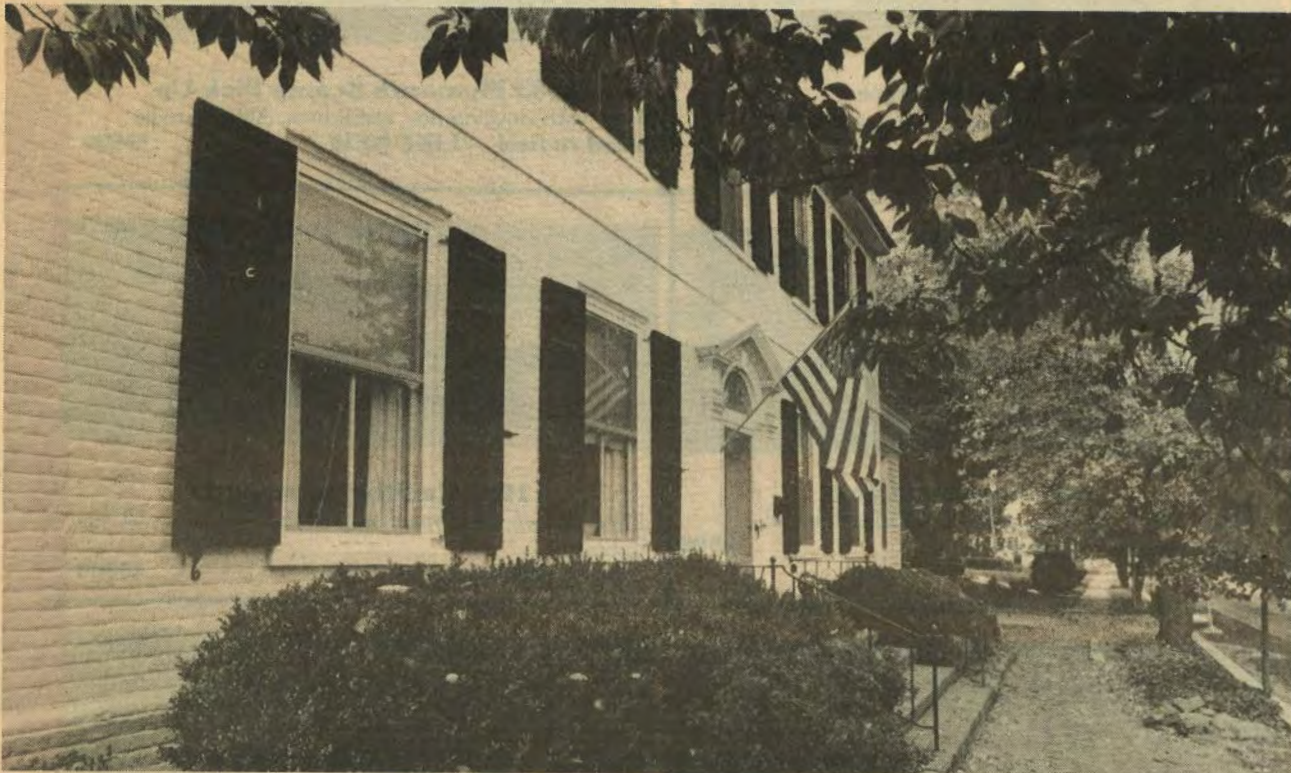
lives in the heart of Camden, in a 200-year-old home on Main St. which she and her husband Chet are lovingly and slowly restoring.

"We're a very new group. We want to get the word out that Camden is here. It's charming, historic, and it was very important commercially in the past. It was a stop on the Underground Railroad, and has a lot of Methodist history," she added.

THE SOCIETY held its first meeting on Oct. 8, to elect officers. Hollingsworth is the president of the group, Susan Farley was elected vice-president, Lee Farley will serve as treasurer, Julia Mullin will act as corresponding secretary, and Bill Confone is the recording secretary. All are Camden residents.

The group can claim about 20 members so far, and

(Please turn to page 11)



GROWTH ISN'T necessarily bad for Camden, said Sally Hollingsworth, but keeping the quiet,

historic/residential feel of the town is important.
Photo by Skip Ruiz.



SALLY HOLLINGSWORTH, president of the newly-formed Camden Historical Society, wants to protect the Camden that she and other residents have developed a fondness for.

Photo by Skip Ruiz.

Historical Society

(Continued from page 10)

Hollingsworth hopes that even more people will become interested and involved as the society becomes better known. "This is generally a fairly young group," she said. "A lot of young families have moved into the area in the last few years, and are restoring the older homes here in town," she is happy to report.

The historical society will, of course, have a strong interest in the town's past, but the present and future will be very important also. "We love the town, but there are definitely aspects of it that can be improved," she said. "We want to be known as more of a spot for inclusion in historical days...several homes were included in last year's Dover Days tour," including her own, she said.

THE NEED for a library in town is also high on the priority list. "We need a well-stocked library that is accessible to everyone," she said. The increased number of children in town poses a question of more firmly enforced speed limits. "The police have been very good about enforcing the twenty-five miles per hour limits, but we have many more young children now than a few years ago," she said.

Hollingsworth said that the society will work closely with the North Murderkill Historical Society, whose area of concern encompasses Camden. The two

groups would like to plan a walking tour, possibly by candlelight, of Camden, and make it an annual event. "Camden is a thirty acre historical district."

Hollingsworth continued, "and we would like to have that boundary extended. There are about a thousand things that we want to do, and we're going to get them all done...maybe," she said.

The new society will be represented for the first time publically when Camden, Wyoming, and the Camden-Wyoming Fire Co. sponsor a Delaware Day Parade, on Sunday, Dec. 7. The society will sell refreshments, and plans to construct a plywood model of the Mifflin house, located next to C & P Fabrics on Main St. "The Mifflin family actually started Camden," Hollingsworth explained. "They sold off lots to build houses. The area was actually developed as a town around the crossroads."

IN ADDITION, the society hopes to provide homeowners with some guidance in restoring their homes. "We hope to have guest speakers at the meetings who can help us with specific aspects of restoring old homes," she said. Stephen Del Sordo of the Bureau of Archeology and Historic Preservation has already addressed the group, and, she added, the state has volunteered the services of an architect to aid homeowners with questions.

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Perhaps most of all, the residents enjoy their small-town atmosphere, and neighbor-to-neighbor relationships. "It's important for us to work with the council and town administration as concerned citizens," she said. "It's wonderful to be in such a small town, because we know everyone. We all attend the town meetings, and have gotten to know the town council very well. And the same with the police department."

BUT IF ATTENTION is called to the quaint town, won't that bring more residents and envoke the feeling of being in a larger area?

Hollingsworth doesn't think so. "Expansion would not impact on Camden. We won't see a change in the historic district. The outer areas of the town will expand, and we can't do anything about it. I am not really worried...after all, we do have a Comprehensive Plan. Growth would be managed, I think. The character of the town doesn't have to change."

The next meeting of the Camden Historical Society will be at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 12 in the Camden Town Hall. Hollingsworth said that any interested residents are invited and encouraged to attend. Anyone who is interested but can't make the meeting is asked to call Hollingsworth at 697-2921 for more information about the group.