



The Forty Acres neighborhood is located within the west-end section of the city of Wilmington, Delaware. This compact neighborhood, with its mixed-use commercial and residential buildings, is often compared to an independent village within the city. This detail, taken from an 1874 map of Wilmington, Delaware, illustrates the Forty Acres area at the upper part of the image, while a portion of Greater Wilmington is visible in the lower part of the picture. (Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)

ON THE COVER: Pictured is an interior scene of Cappeau's Drug Store. This popular neighborhood hangout was once located on the corner of Delaware Avenue and DuPont Street. From left to right, (sitting) Ben Beyea, Dan Dallett, Elise Pruckett, and Jo Bradford; (standing) Helen Kitchell, Peggy Rankin, and Charles S. Kelly enjoy their soda fountain drinks. (Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)

IMAGES
of America
FORTY ACRES

Kara A. Briggs Green



DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES

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INTRODUCTION

Nestled in the west end of Wilmington, the neighborhood of Forty Acres developed during the 19th century from a 40-acre parcel purchase of farmland by Joshua T. Heald. With the assistance of the Wilmington City Railway Company, this entrepreneur introduced streetcar rail lines into Wilmington in 1864. This event prompted the development of the rural location into an urban residential and commercial neighborhood known as Forty Acres. This type of development—the sale of the old family farm in order to make way for the modern suburb—is not new. However, what was different in this case was the purchase and development of farmland into an urban area with close proximity to planned transportation lines. Forty Acres may be considered one of Wilmington's first suburbs. The neighborhood of Forty Acres set the precedent for future Wilmington streetcar suburbs such as Elsmere, Price Run, and Eastlake, all of which were developed by J. T. Heald.

Today Forty Acres is an urban neighborhood located north of Delaware Avenue, south of Riddle Avenue, east of Union Street, and west of DuPont Street. Before Forty Acres existed as an urban neighborhood, with planned streets and a transportation line, a number of milling industries were located in and around the area. Over time, other industries such as brewing, printing, and the trolley car and bus barns supplied mass employment to those of the Forty Acres area. As the Wilmington City Railway Company trolley line opened a means of transportation for Wilmingtonians, enabling travel to and from Forty Acres and downtown Wilmington, development of the neighborhood progressed. These industries, combined with the Wilmington City Railway Company and carbarns, provided jobs and economic stability for many families of Forty Acres. When the Wilmington City Railway Company advanced their technologies to include electric trolley cars, the prototypes were first tested in Forty Acres. Once deemed successful, other electric cars were introduced to all of the city's trolley routes. The further advancement of technology brought a new experiment to Forty Acres carbarns in the form of busses. Each change in technology brought an evolution in existing jobs as well as the demand for new ones. The men of the Forty Acres, who once worked carbarn jobs as blacksmiths shoeing horses, now needed mechanical skills.

Wilmington is a city composed of a variety of neighborhoods defined by churches, parks, and a wide range of ethnicities. It is often described as a city of ethnic neighborhoods each located within specific locations of the city. As many other Wilmington neighborhoods have ethnic associations, so too does Forty Acres. Many Irish Wilmingtonians claim roots in this area. By 1883, about 150 households made up the Forty Acres neighborhood. Though slightly over half the residents were American-born, the community showed a much higher percentage of foreign-born than the rest of Wilmington. Nearly one-third of the people living in Forty Acres were Irish. By this time, the neighborhood was recognized as working-class, surrounded by neighborhoods of middle-class and affluent households. Many of the Forty Acres families were generational, and so the neighborhood continued in popularity well into the 20th century. Today most of Wilmington's original ethnic neighborhoods no longer contain a high number of immigrants, but rather house their descendants. These neighborhoods continue to exist as local communities, and the local community continues to be the prime context for day-to-day life. Traditional communities persist for very traditional reasons that keep people together: historic loyalties; regional concentrations;

and class, ethnic, racial, or religious affinities. These neighborhoods fill a need for cultural roots and identity. The more uniform our world becomes, the more people seek to anchor themselves within a community. Today, despite a true American melting pot of residents, Forty Acres is still perceived as an Irish neighborhood. The residents of this compact city neighborhood understand that what they have is special. They live in an area that is pedestrian friendly, has a variety of shops and services within walking distance, and is a main stop on the city's public bus system. It is a neighborhood where residents look out for one another and care about the condition and upkeep of their community.

A neighborhood is a place of physical structures and institutions within which and with which people exist. Examples of these physical buildings, social areas, and institutions exist throughout Forty Acres. In fact, many of these structures have become landmarks in their own right and therefore are associated with the community of Forty Acres. Among these local landmark buildings is the Gothic Revival St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, built of Brandywine stone. The church and its school mean so much more to local and neighborhood residents than beautiful buildings because of the spirit of service and community that the buildings represent. These buildings are important because the foundation of St. Ann's is not only composed of strong building materials but also of a strong human element that facilitates the care and service of not only the St. Ann's community, but the entire community as well. Another building associated with the community of Forty Acres is Gallucio's Restaurant and Pub. This structure is the last remaining building of the 1865, three-acre John Hartmann and John Fehrenbach Brewery complex that at one time housed approximately 10 buildings. Gallucio's advertises itself as "A Neighborhood Restaurant & Pub" and hosts a variety of events. Another local landmark building is the oldest continuously operating firehouse in the city of Wilmington, known as the Water Witch Fire Engine Company No. 5. This fire station has always been a source of pride in the neighborhood. Last, but certainly not least, of the public structures associated with the Forty Acres neighborhood is the pub known as Kelly's Logan House. This popular city bar and nightspot, whose ownership has passed through generations of the Kelly family since it was first purchased by family patriarch John D. Kelly II in 1889, was first constructed in 1865 by William Wharton Jr. as a hotel. Generations of Kelly family members have promoted this neighborhood bar as a center for Irish social and cultural life. These buildings—the church, the restaurant, the firehouse, and the pub—are elements of the neighborhood and are part of its fabric and community.

Examined separately or as a whole, these buildings constitute a place and exemplify the unique character of that place. The neighborhood of Forty Acres maintains certain characteristics that differentiate this community from other areas of the city of Wilmington. Peppered amongst the residential structures of the neighborhood are a church, a school, various retail shops, diners, a social club, a nursing home, a funeral home, a grocery store, and a gas station. Having these commercial and public-use properties interspersed with residential structures is convenient to residents and results in regular activity on neighborhood walks. For example, a purchase of staples like bread or milk requires only a two-block walk rather than a 5–10-minute car ride to the store. On that walk to the store, opportunities abound for any number of interactions between neighbors and promotion of community.

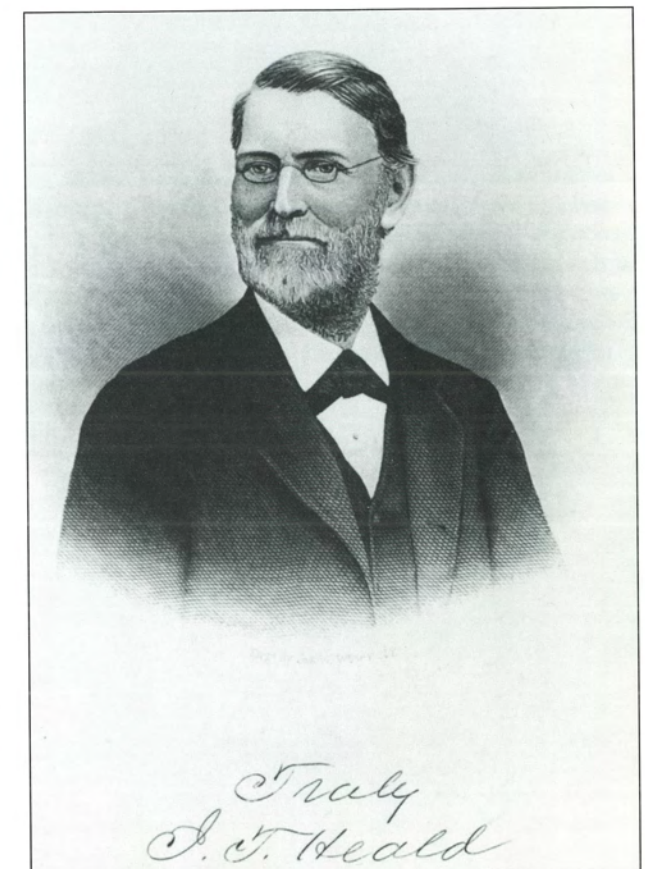
Forty Acres is celebrated for its picturesque charm, its sense of community, and its feeling of home. It is a place where residents take ownership of the neighborhood and work together to make it a better place for the greater good of the community. As one resident, Ober R. Kline, said of the neighborhood, "Forty Acres is a community where neighbors care for one another and look out for one another, share with one another, and help one another. The people that live here and are the real neighbors—you don't have to ask if you're juggling with a mass of packages while fumbling for the keys to get into your house or if you see somebody who is struggling to try and get their car unstuck. They don't have to ask you to come and help; you automatically go and say 'let's give you a hand.'" In Forty Acres, the bank teller might be your neighbor from around the corner. As you leave the bank, you may say "have a nice day" to the guard who is the grandfather of a girl with whom you attended school. You may enter the neighborhood luncheonette and sit

next to the woman who was in the pew just ahead of you at church last Sunday. Forty Acres is a neighborhood community with innumerable relationships connecting people and places across the expanse of time.

One

FROM FARM TO STREETCAR SUBURB

A perceptive real estate entrepreneur, J. T. Heald recognized the expansion of the Wilmington city limits in 1861 to Union Street as a development opportunity. He entered into an agreement with Joseph S. Lovering, owner of the property known as Shallcross Farm, for the purpose of plotting and selling building lots. Heald purchased 40 acres of farmland. It is through this parcel purchase that the neighborhood received its name of "Forty Acres." (Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library.)

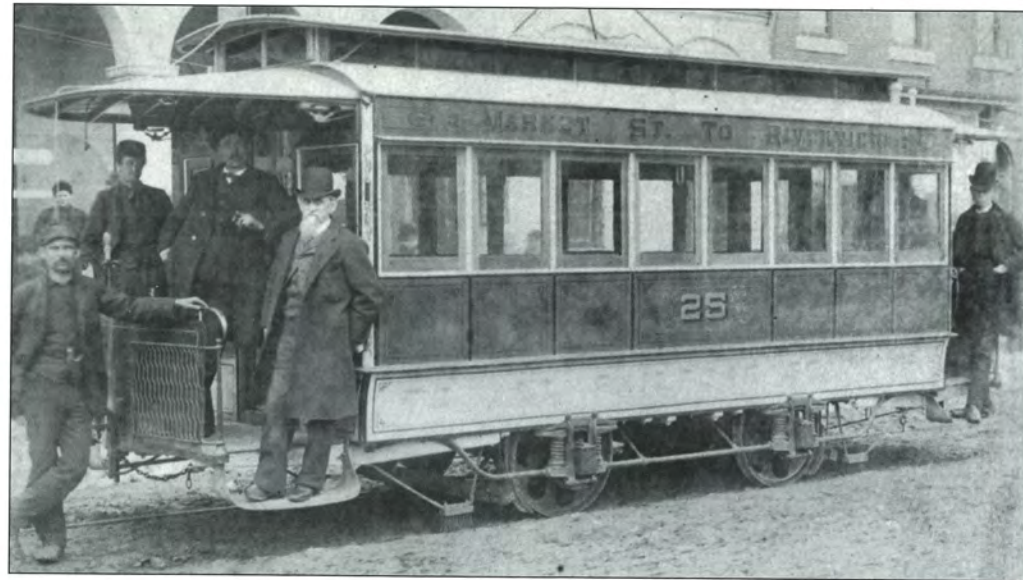




Heald and his partners began to set into motion plans for organizing the Wilmington City Railway Company (WCRC). The WCRC opened for operation with 7 horse-drawn trolley cars and 35 horses in 1864. This photograph of the car barn was taken September 8, 1883. The car barn site was nestled in the city block bordered by Delaware and Gilpin Avenues and Clayton and DuPont Streets. In the beginning, the car barn complex housed a car barn, waiting room, stables, and a blacksmith shop. (Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library.)



In October 1864, the streetcar line extended tracks a little over 1 mile west from Delaware Avenue and DuPont Street to Rising Sun Lane. Soon thereafter, the car barn became additionally known as the Middle Depot, named for its function at the middle of the line from downtown Wilmington to Rising Sun Lane. This c. 1880 print from a glass-plate negative details the intersection of Delaware Avenue and North Union Street. The view, taken from the northwest corner of Delaware Avenue, illustrates the hustle and bustle of these cross streets to be just as busy then—albeit with different vehicles—as today. (Courtesy of Avenue Wines and Spirits.)



Separate images show the No. 23 electric trolley situated outside the Ebbitt Theater at Tenth and Market Streets and the No. 23 trolley on Delaware Avenue with an unidentified driver standing alongside it. The WCRC and carbarns provided jobs and economic stability for many families of Forty Acres. When the WCRC advanced in technology, the prototypes were tested in Forty Acres first. When the WCRC decided to convert horse-drawn trolleys to electric service, the service was first used in Forty Acres. In 1888, the WCRC introduced the first electric car brought into service, a 16-foot car known as Trolley Car No. 25. Once deemed successful, other electric cars were introduced to all of the city's trolley routes. These early electric passenger trolley cars maintained single trucks (four wheels) that ran on tracks and were powered by overhead electric lines. (Both courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)



This 1930s aerial view details one half of the neighborhood. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks divide the neighborhood. Following the tracks from right to left, one may see how closely integrated industrial commercial sites blend with the neighborhood's residential housing. On the right side of the tracks is Frank W. Spark's construction company. The next large building on the same side of the tracks is the Nabisco Building. Just above that building on the opposite side of the railroad tracks, on the corner of Delaware Avenue and DuPont Street, is Kelly's Logan House. In the image detailing the WCRC site, the original brick office buildings are seen in the southeast corner of the lot at Delaware Avenue and Clayton Street, with at least two trolleys sitting in the main yard. This image illustrates exactly how large the WCRC site grew over the years. The carbarns soon consumed the entire city block bounded by Delaware and Gilpin Avenues and DuPont and Clayton Streets. They not only provided jobs for the men of Forty Acres as trolley drivers, mechanics, and office workers but also provided an income for surrounding businesses, such as the neighborhood diners and luncheonettes. (Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library.)





By the 1930s, the smaller carbarn shed (as seen on page 12) was replaced by a structure of grander proportions. This street-level view of one of the carbarns showing a number of trolleys housed within, as well as the two men standing in front of the building, allows for a better indication of the carbarn's true scale. (Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)

Two

THE IRISH AND EARLY NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS

After establishing the WCRC, Heald advertised extensively for people to leave the city for the suburbs, resulting in a housing boom for Forty Acres. The area was especially promising to men like John McKinney and other Irish immigrants, who purchased lots in this new section of the city that would be occupied by many future generations of their families. In 1866, John McKinney (seen here much later in his life) purchased land in Forty Acres where he built a home for himself and members of his extended family. (Courtesy of Cissy Kaiser Briggs.)





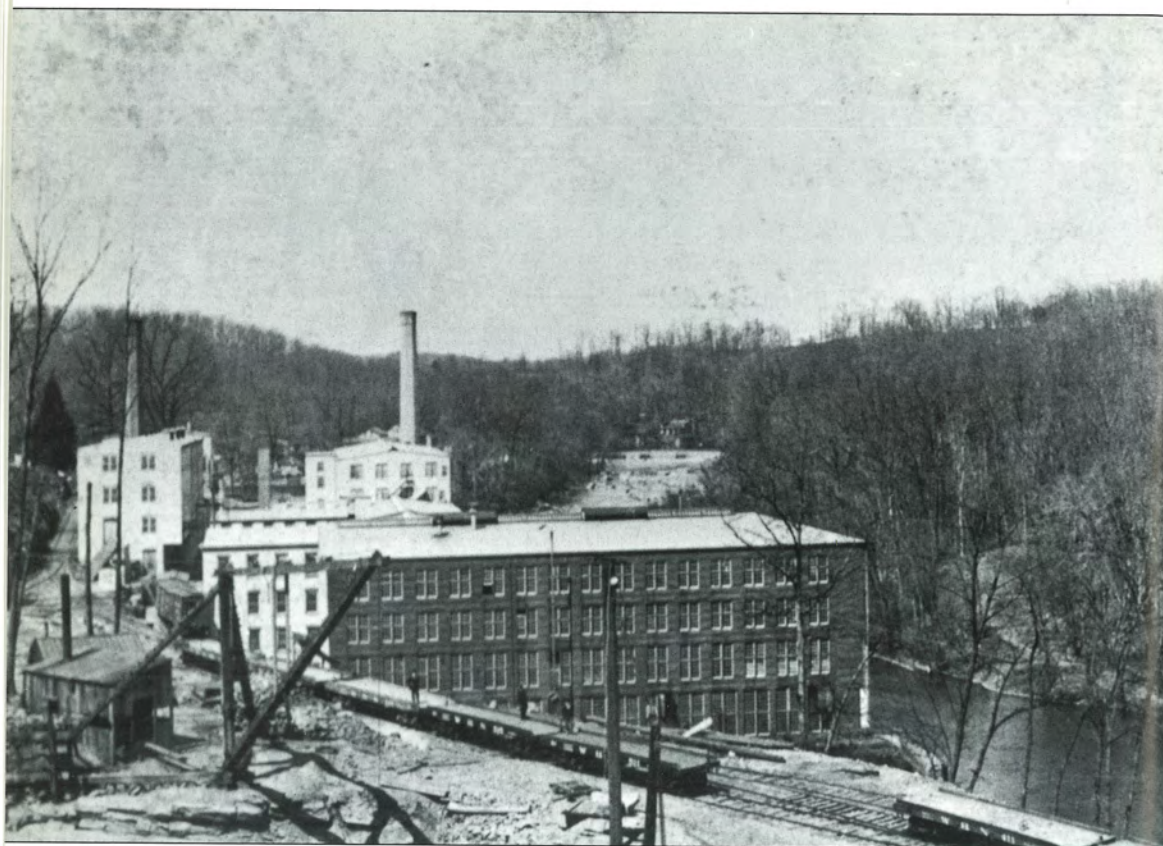
In 1890, James Black and his family posed outside of their home at 1817 Lovering Avenue for a portrait. Their house, although dramatically different in design from the dominating Italianate architecture in the neighborhood, was one of the first erected in Forty Acres. Many years later, at the same address, a husband and wife comfortably sit in rocking chairs under the shade of their small entry porch to have a photograph taken of their home. (Both courtesy of Robert Keller.)



Three INDUSTRY



Employment and industry existed in what would become Forty Acres even before Joshua T. Heald set forth his plans of transforming this area into one of Wilmington's first streetcar suburbs. A series of paper and cotton mills were established along the Brandywine long before the neighborhood streets were laid. Some of these mills employed the men and women of Forty Acres well into the 20th century. Over time, the neighborhood developed as a mixed-use residential and commercial area. Industries other than the mills included a printing company, a brewery, and of course the trolley and bus barns. This c. 1930 aerial survey illustrates the proximity of a number of industries both within and outside of the Forty Acres community. The Hartmann and Fehrenbach Brewery is seen at the lower left, the Riddle Mill complex is visible at bottom center, and the Bancroft Mill is located at the center and far right of the photograph. (Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.)

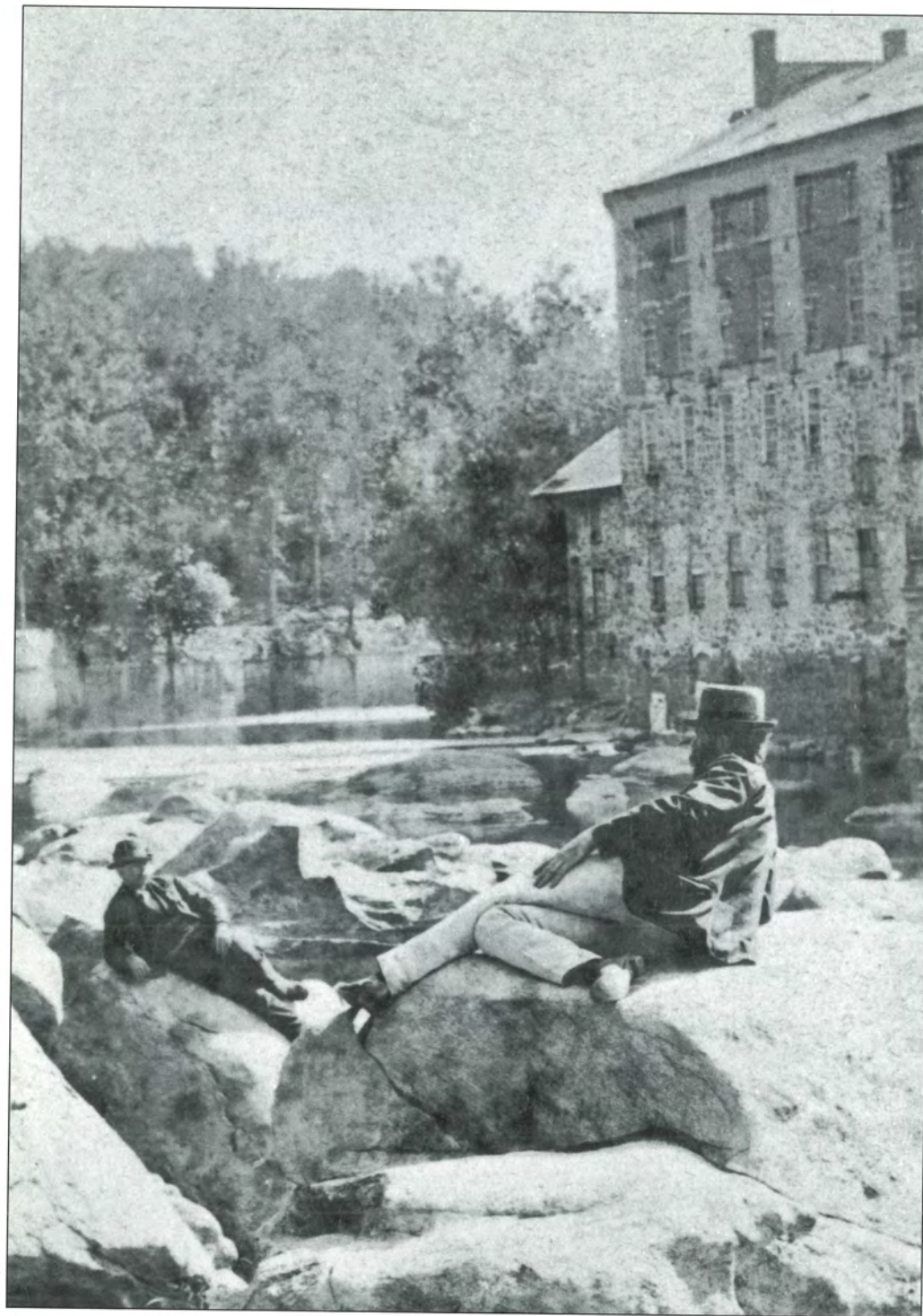


The Bancroft Mills opened in 1831 and had expanded greatly by 1895. By 1930, Bancroft Mills was the single largest cotton finishing works in the world. The mill continued in operation through the 20th century and eventually became known as the Wilmington Piece and Dye Company. The mill closed its doors forever in May 2003. Although a number of plans exist for the old mill site, its fate is unknown. (Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.)

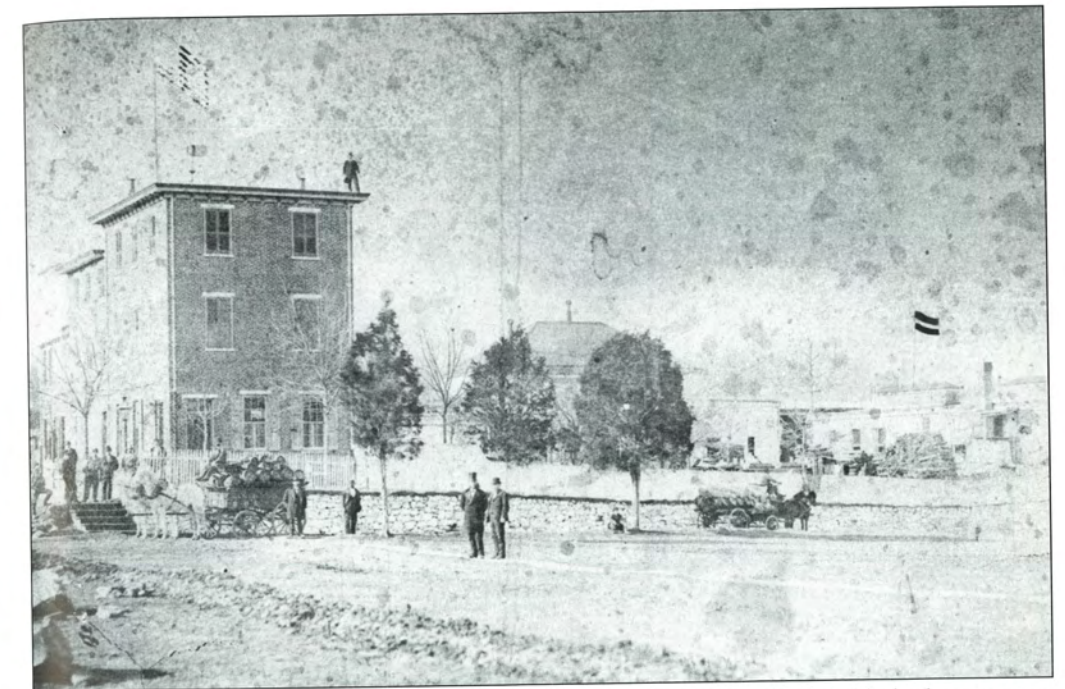


White- and blue-collar workers alike found employment in a wide variety of positions at the Bancroft Mills. These 19th-century images depict both a number of the mill's office workers and its machine shop employees. (Both courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.)





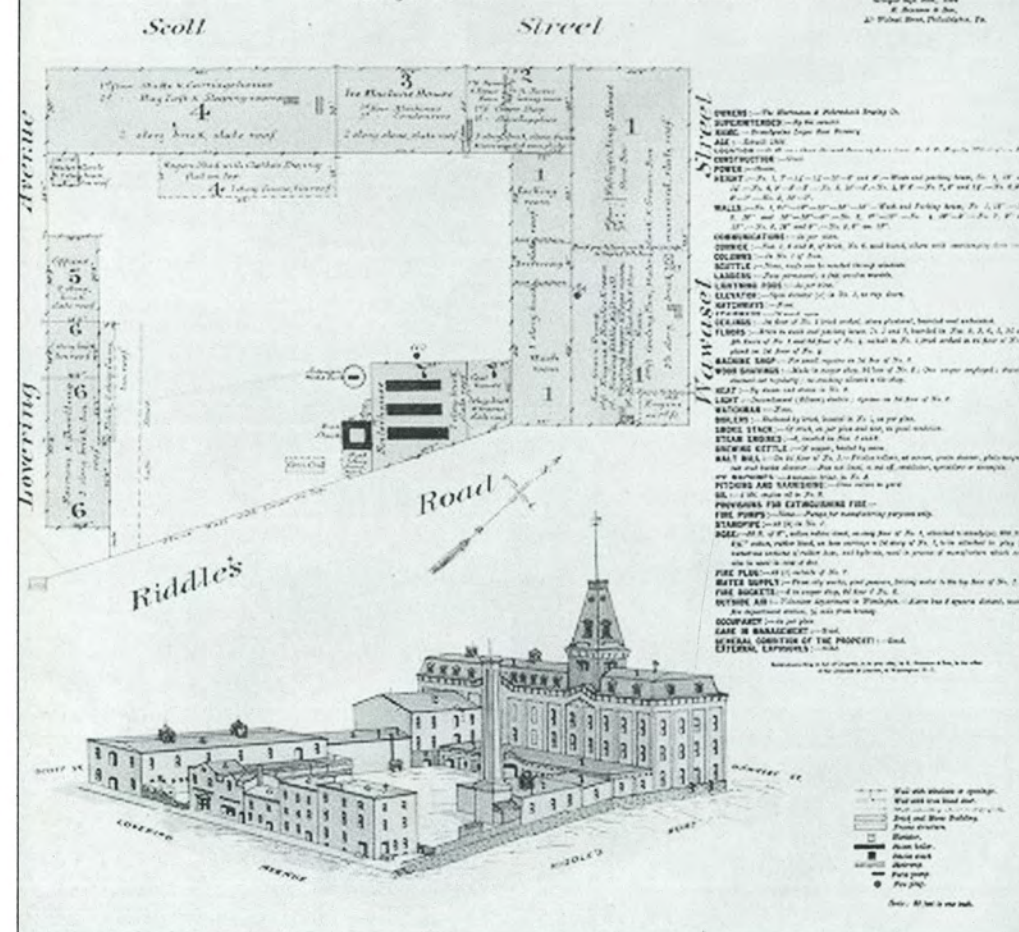
Two men, possibly workers from the nearby Tyre quarry, take a relaxing break to enjoy the warming comforts of the sun while reclining on rocks in the Brandywine Creek. To the west up the creek is Riddle Mill. (Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library.)



By 1885, the brewery expanded the buildings, and Hartmann and Fehrenbach held a high reputation for the quality and purity of its lager, porter, ale, and brown stout. In the fall of 1899, the brewery was awarded top honors from the National Export Exposition of Philadelphia. (Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)

WILMINGTON, DEL. JUL 1 - 1902 189			
Received of the Hartmann & Fehrenbach Brewing Co.			
LAGER BEER			PORTER
10 Boxes	2	4	6
Sam McCormac			

It was possible for individuals, as well as taverns, taprooms, and other drinking establishments, to make purchases from this local neighborhood brewery. Illustrating this example is a receipt dated July 1902, from the Hartmann and Fehrenbach Brewery. The order by Sam McCormac is for 10 boxes of beer. (Courtesy of Morris Library Special Collections, University of Delaware.)



The original Hartmann and Fehrenbach Brewery, built around 1865 at North Scott Street and Lovering Avenue, was situated on an impressive three-acre complex. By 1868, the prolific brewery had the capacity to produce 35,000 barrels annually. (Courtesy of Hagley Museum and Library.)

Four

RECREATION



For most people, some of the grandest memories stem from family and childhood recreational experiences. The neighborhood of Forty Acres, while a small and compact urban area, is surrounded by a bounty of parks and hiking trails and is adjacent to the Brandywine Creek. There are any number of places for families and children to gather together. In this c. 1900 photograph, toddlers James Guthrie (left) and Robert Pierce pose for a picture in the neighborhood park just off Wawaset Street. (Courtesy of Lauren Cardillo and Edie Guthrie.)



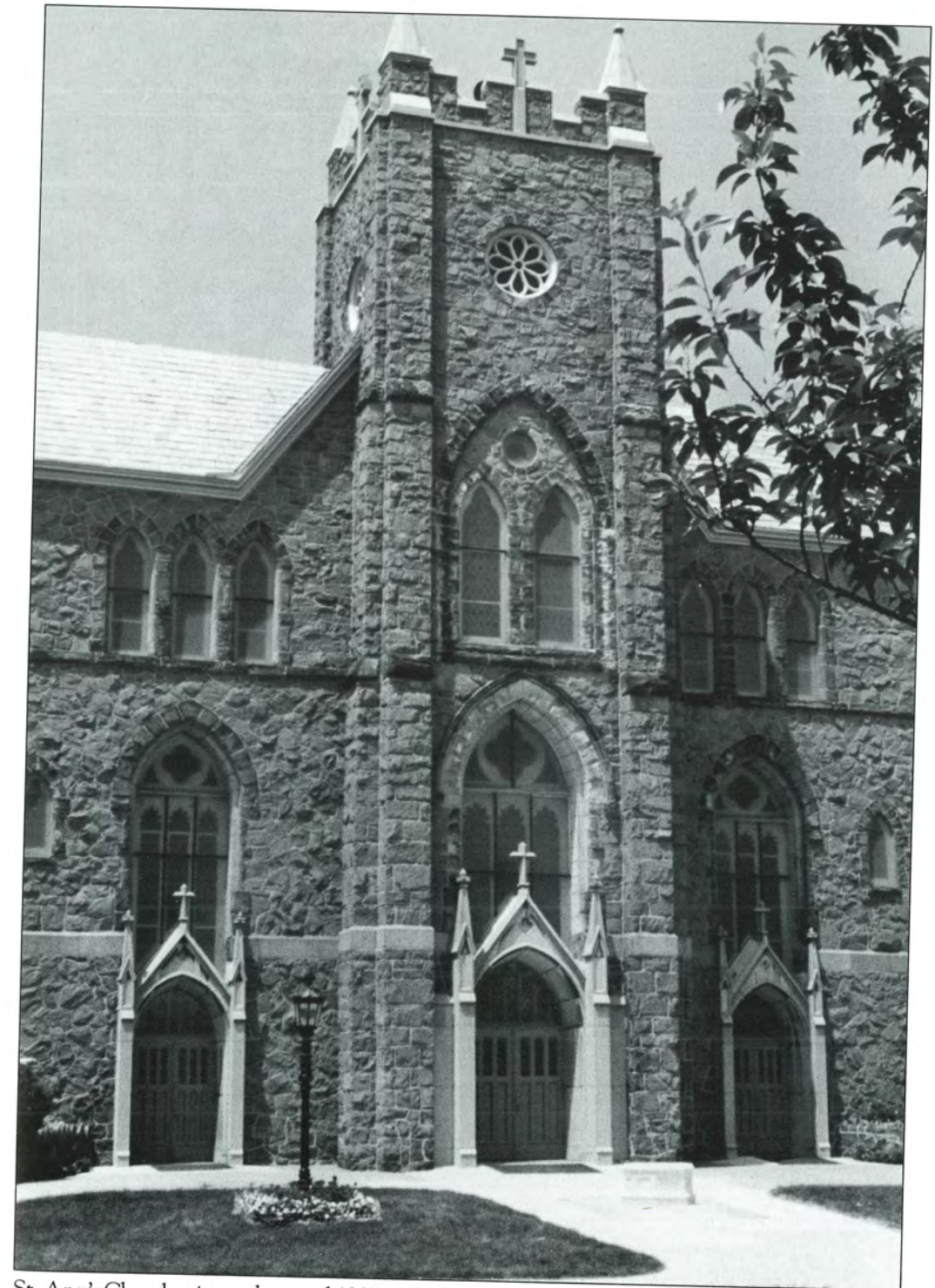
St. Ann's Church is seen as it looked in 1950. The church facade looks much the same as it did after its 1933 renovation. During that time, the front steps were removed, as was the upper church floor, so that the basement floor level became the floor of the church as well as the new entrance level. The upper-level doorways were converted to tracery windows, new entrances were constructed, and a stone wing was added to the rear of the church.



Fr. Edward B. Carley celebrates mass in April 1967 at St. Ann's Church. In this image, Father Carley is shown celebrating post Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) "New Mass," also known as the Mass of Paul VI. This mass is the present ordinary or normal form of the Roman Catholic Rite of the Mass. Serving at the altar and flanking Father Carley are, from left to right, Michael Cook and Bill Lawlor (dark hair). (Courtesy of the Diocesan Archives.)



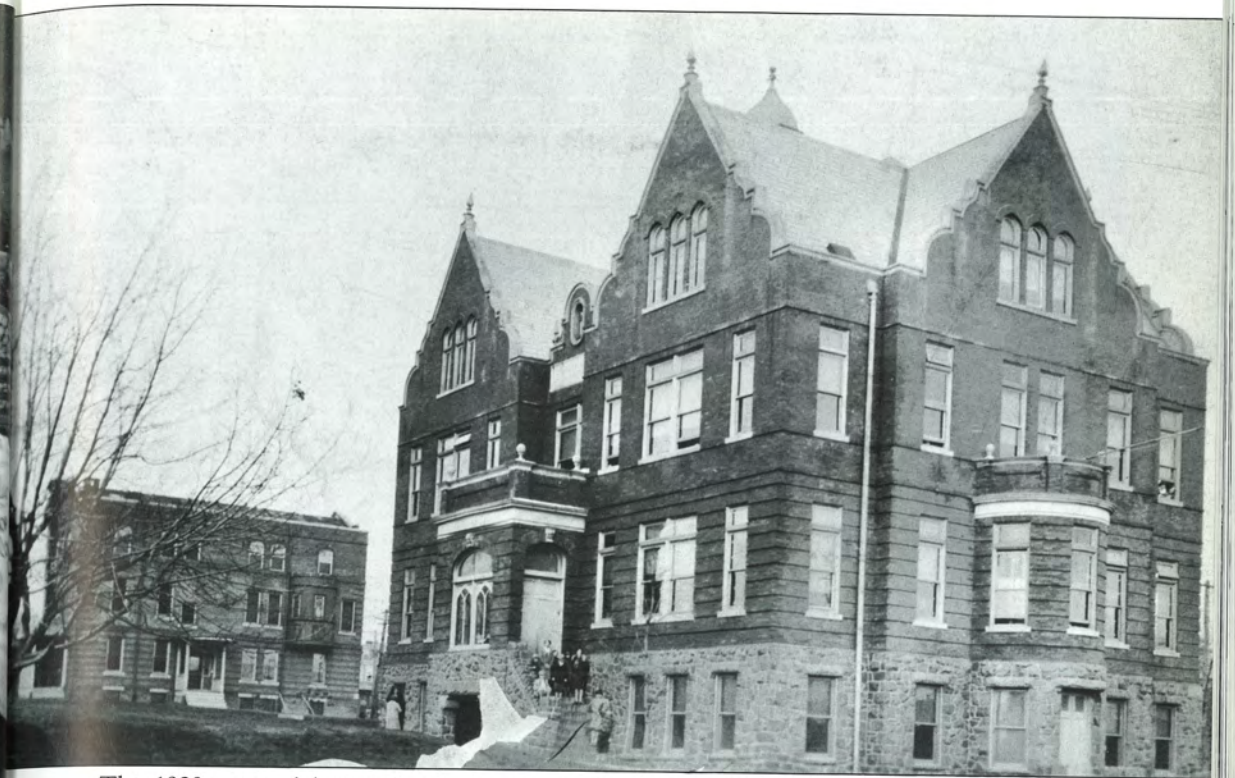
The Reverend Patrick Brady was pastor of Saint Ann's in its centennial year and led the celebrations that commenced in July 1987. It was through the work of Father Brady that Wilmington sculptor Charles Parks was commissioned to create a bronze statue of St. Ann with her daughter, the Virgin Mary. Since the installation of the statue, parishioners and neighborhood residents alike have taken a type of personal ownership of the statue. On any given day, one will notice flowers placed within the blessed mother's hands. (Above, courtesy of the Diocesan Archives; left, courtesy of Helen Doherty.)



St. Ann's Church, pictured around 1987 with the newly installed concrete pillar outside its center doors, awaits the new statue of St. Ann and the Blessed Mother by Wilmington sculptor Charles Parks. (Courtesy of the Diocesan Archives.)



While the Knights of Columbus are a fraternal organization, wives of its members keep an auxiliary group. Pictured here is the Bishop Curtis Council Ladies Auxiliary at a Knights of Columbus convention held at Palumbo's restaurant in Philadelphia. The ladies are, as seated from left to right, Mrs. Jack Bullock (Ruth), Mrs. Charles Kaiser (Nellie), Mrs. Francis Grimes (Elanore), three unidentified, Mrs. Dennis Kelleher, and Mrs. Kane. All others are unidentified. (Courtesy of private collection.)



This 1929 postcard depicts the St. Ann's School, located at Union Street and Shallcross Avenue. The four-story brick building was constructed in 1898. At one time, all of the school's educators belonged to the Sisters of St. Francis. The nuns lived on the fourth floor or attic level of the school until 1910. It was then that the convent, which is visible in the background, was completed to house the sisters. (Courtesy of Cissy Kaiser Briggs.)



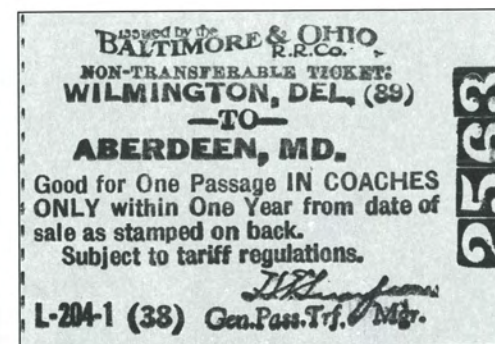
By World War II, the Hartmann and Fehrenbach Brewery was long closed. The majority of the buildings once contained within the three-acre complex were dismantled. In their stead were constructed houses, a trucking company, and this Esso gasoline pump and service station above. In this c. 1946 image, the station was owned and operated by Charles Carr. Today the station no longer pumps gas, but it is still a quality garage for automobile service and repair (below). (Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society and private collection.)



The last remaining buildings of the Hartmann and Fehrenbach Brewery (as seen on page 31) exist today as Gallucio's Italian restaurant and neighborhood bar. Previously known as the Embassy, it was purchased by Jerry Gallucio in December 1970 and continues today as a popular restaurant. (Courtesy of author.)



The B&O passenger railway station was constructed on the northwest corner of Delaware Avenue and DuPont Street in 1884. The ornate Victorian building was used as a place to catch a train for a trip away from home and was also a place to gather, hangout, and people watch. (Above courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society; below courtesy of Jackie Walls.)



William "Billy" Briggs III, with rosary in hand, waits on the upper platform of the B&O station before embarking on a St. Anne's School field trip to Washington, D.C. Below, this late-19th or early-20th-century image of the B&O station gives a better sense of the upper platform. (Right, courtesy of William J. Briggs III; below, courtesy of Delaware Historical Society.)





Delaware Avenue is pictured looking west to DuPont Street. On the left side of the street from left to right are Cappeau's Drug Store, the B&O Railroad station, and the B&O Railroad bridge. Cappeau's was a neighborhood drugstore and soda counter where young people would happily gather after school to talk about the goings-on of the day over root beer floats. (Both courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)



Inside Cappeau's Drug Store, a group of young ladies enjoys an afternoon chat at the counter while drinking cold and delicious soda fountain drinks served by Thomas Cappeau. In the meantime, a group of young people (below) enjoys their drinks sitting around a table. (Both courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)





In 1864, William Wharton Jr. constructed a hotel across the street from the carbarns at the corner of Dupont Street and Delaware Avenue. Wharton named his hotel the Logan House after Civil War hero Gen. John Logan. The hotel maintained a tavern on the first floor and rented rooms on the second and third floors. In later years, the hotel and taproom also maintained a barbershop in a room on its ground floor (lower left of the building). Note the iconic pole at left. (Courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society.)



Ownership of this popular city bar and nightspot has passed through generations of the Kelly family since it was first purchased by family patriarch John D. Kelly II in 1889. Generations of Kelly family members have promoted this neighborhood bar as a center for Irish social and cultural life. Countless drawings, paintings, and photographs of the Logan House, as well as newspaper and magazine articles, are testament to the love Wilmingtonians have for this longtime Forty Acres institution. (Above, courtesy of the Delaware Historical Society; below, courtesy of the author.)

