

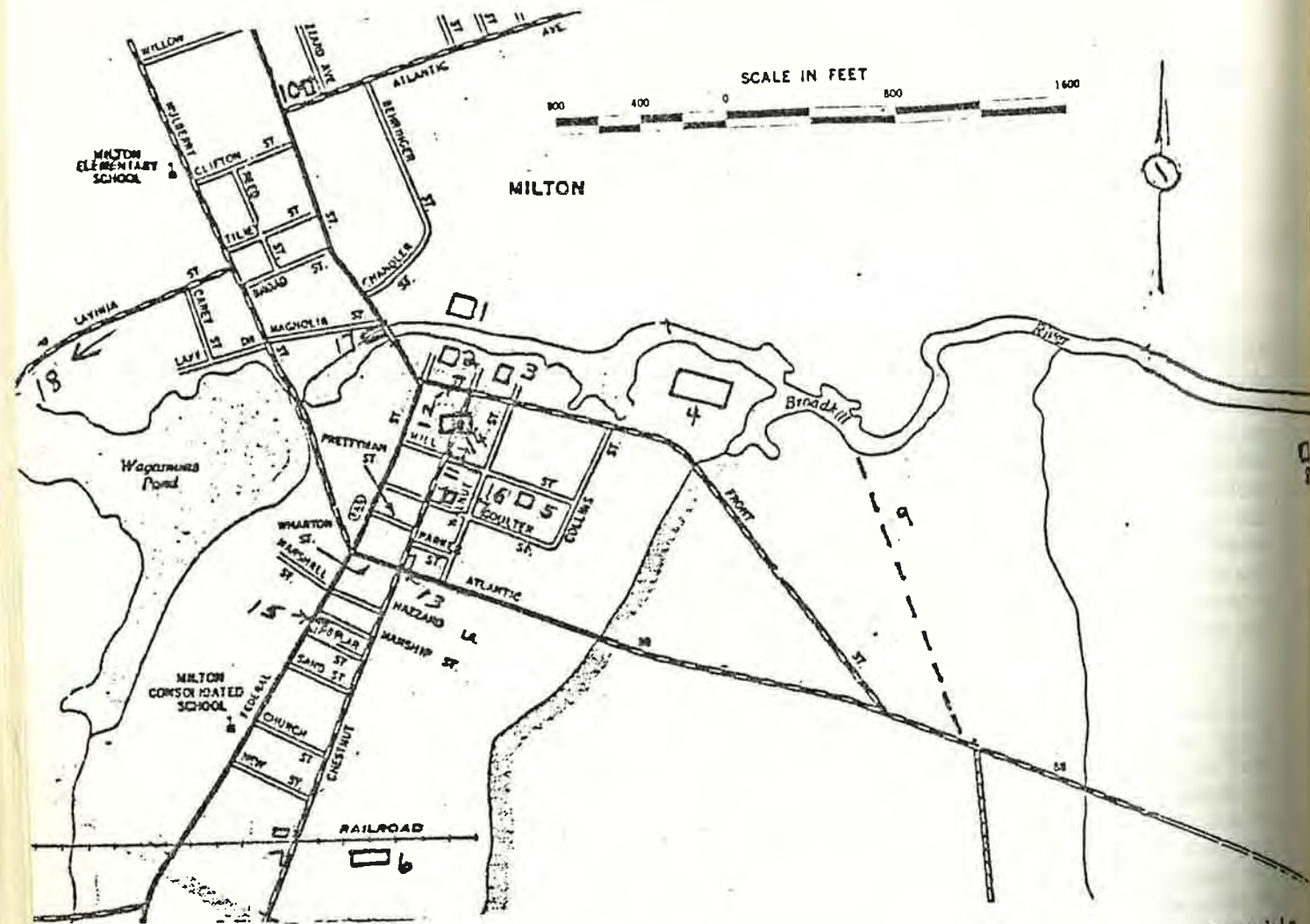
MILTON'S FIRST CENTURY

1807-1907

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DELAWARE STATE ARCHIVES

LOCATION OF PLACES MENTIONED IN THIS BOOK



KEY

1. Cannery at Chandler's wharf, built for J. B. Counselman in 1893; 1900 fire; rebuilt 1902 and operated thereafter by A.F. Anderson.
- 2: Royal Packing Company
3. Probable site of Broadkill Packing Co. (Faucett & Co.) at or near site of J. C. Atkins & Son's wharf
4. Goodwin Bros. & Conwell cannery; burned in 1926; rebuilt by Apte Bros. in 1933.
5. Reynolds Bros. drying factory; possible site of Reynolds & Co. cannery, on land of Houston Hall.
6. Ward & Merritt cannery, 1902; H.R. Draper, 1907; became Draper-King Cole, Inc.
7. Queen Anne Railroad Depot
8. Bentley & Walsh Chemical Co. on the south bank of the river adjacent to Carey's Landing.
9. The dotted line drawn is an extension of Route 256 and indicates the location of a road that no

- longer exists leading to Black's or Martin's Landing and shipyard where the body of Mrs. Gordy was found floating.
10. Douglass-White Co., shirt and overall factory.
11. The old public school (as of 1914)
12. Milton Times printing office.
13. Lodge Hall 14. Masonic Hall
15. D.A.C.'s home (lived with his daughter). 16. Milton Academy
17. Two buildings supported by pilings over the Broadkill at Union St. Bridge. One was the fire dept.; on the second floor was the rehearsal hall for Dr. Robert B. Hopkins' Milton Cornet Band. The other bldg. contained the Town Office and Mayor's Office in front, and the jail, always called the "lock up," in the rear.
18. Road to Lavinia's Woods camp meeting ground.

By 1882 the firm had machinery and personnel to make all of its own cans. April, 1882: "The schooner *Sussex* arrived this week from Philadelphia with a cargo of tin for the canning factory, which has been enlarged and will run full-handed this season. Barker and Welch will soon commence to make cans. The company expects to pack 150,000 cans of tomatoes this season." September, 1882: "The canning factory furnishes employment for a large number of hands and puts a considerable amount of money in circulation." In spite of these promising reports, it did not operate in 1883, and probably did not run again.

No further canning occurred in Milton until 1890. May, 1890: "Jacob B. Counselman & Co. at Houston, Del. are running a force of 20 can makers at their factory there. They will also operate a small cannery at Milton this year." Since the firm rented the ground on which the cannery stood, it cannot be said with certainty where it was. It may have been the former Reynolds factory. It did well enough in its first year to encourage the Counselmans to return in 1891, and George L. Counselman moved to Milton to manage it. In 1891, about 200 people were employed. A crew of eight men began in May to make cans for the coming season, and the building was enlarged by 100 feet. The schooner *Emma Burton* brought an additional 100,000 cans. Successful contracts with local farmers provided the volume of peas and tomatoes the firm would need. July, 1891: "The cannery of Messrs. Counselman & Co. has been very busy during the past week. Persons who could not go to the cannery and work were furnished with peas to shell at their own homes. Thus old men and matrons as well as young men and maidens have had employment for once. Canning peas is new in Milton and new to the growers, some of whose peas were rejected when brought to the factory. The growers will probably learn this season what the packers want." The newspaper also mentioned that more labor, especially of children, was needed.

September, 1891: "Such an influx of tomatoes as arrived at the packing house of Messrs. Counselman & Co. on Saturday last was never before known in this town. All the streets contiguous to the factory were filled with carts and wagons from early in the morning until late in the afternoon. The factory is being worked to its utmost capacity."

"James Leonard, alias 'Hodd,' alias 'Dr. Tanner,' is night watchman at this packing house, and on Wednesday night some persons played a prank on him. A tremendous noise was made on the outside of the factory, and while 'Tanner' went to investigate, someone entered at another door and took the clock belonging to the firm. It was found the next morning by Mr. Counselman on the porch of the house at which he boards. 'Tanner' is extra careful now. On Saturday night a mischievous young man attached a cord to the valve of the whistle and ran it to the top of a stack of bark, with himself at the other end. When the operatives had gotten well under way at work, he began operation by pulling the cord. Work was stopped for a few minutes and as soon as it resumed, the same trick was attempted, but this time the manipulator of the cord was caught. This put an end to his fun for the night."

Burns and other injuries were common in these early factories, and any such occurrence usually got into the news. September, 1891: "While cutting caps (die cutting from sheet tin plate the caps with which the cans were sealed) at the cannery on Wednesday, John Herd, a lad, cut off the end of his left index finger."

MILTON NOTES FROM THE DELAWARE PILOT
OF LEWES

1897

April The Baltimore, Eastern Shore and Delaware Railroad commonly called the Queen Anne Railroad, has been completed from Queenstown, Maryland, to Greenwood, Delaware, and was opened for service on Thursday, April 5.

In its issue of April 24, the Delaware Pilot reported receiving the first issue of the Milton Times and gave a favorable review to the reporting and the 7-column folio.

May The Delawareans who are on the Board of Directors of the new railroad are Ex-Governor James Ponder of Milton, Hiram R. Burton of Lewes, L. L. Layton of Georgetown and Philip L. Cannon of Bridgeville.

(Friendly rivalry existed between the Milton and Lewes newspapers, and sometimes the Delaware Pilot poked fun at its neighbor.) Mrs. Milton Broadkill at a five o'clock tea asked indignantly: "Why are you moving those umbrellas? Do you think the guests will steal them?" Mr. Milton Broadkill replied: "No, but they might recognize them."

Old Captain Broadkill of Milton who recently lost his fourth wife was asked by an acquaintance, "How's your wife, cap'n?" "Well," replied the Captain with a solemn, not to say sad countenance, "to tell the trewth I'm kinder out of wives just now."

June Regular service on the railroad from Ellendale to Baltimore began on Monday. The steamer B.S. Ford is used for travel from Baltimore to Queenstown. The line from Ellendale to Milton is completed and will be occupied next week. (From the issue of June 26.) A hotel will be built at Ellendale.

July It is hoped that Milton will not secede from Sussex County when the new railroad passes its outskirts on the way to Lewes (July 3).

Aug. The signal tower has not yet been built at Ellendale, so for this reason no train has yet passed over the Queen Anne tracks east of Ellendale.

Sept. The Milton folks dressed in their Sunday-go-to meeting clothes on Sunday, August 29, to welcome the advent of the new railroad. By night every waist band and corset in the town had been burst on account of swelling emotions.

The Queen Anne Railroad will run an excursion from Milton to Baltimore and return next Thursday, September 16. The train leaves Milton at 6:12 a.m. and on the return leaves Baltimore at 4:00 p.m. Fare for the round trip from Milton is \$1.60.

Oct. A. H. Manship is the new postmaster at Milton. The Queen Anne Railroad is erecting a fine station at Milton. Opening Up a Town (Oct. 2) Until a few weeks ago there was probably no town in Delaware so completely isolated from the outside world as the little town of Milton. Ellendale, seven miles away, was the nearest village and also the closest railroad station. Milton could not even boast of a telephone, but

it did have two mails per day. But all is different now, as the new Queen Anne Railroad opened up the advantages of the outside world to Milton and vice versa. The first regular passenger train to enter the town arrived on one Sunday (August 29), and without exaggeration it is safe to say that four-fifths of the population of Milton were present to meet it. The railroad company had announced a special excursion to Queenstown, the terminus of the railroad, for 60¢ round trip. Everybody went on that trip. When the train stopped, the car steps were a considerable distance from the ground, but this did not matter to the crowd. They climbed into the cars, young and old alike, as if their very lives depended upon their getting the first seats. In an incredibly short time the cars were filled, the aisles were crowded, and passengers hung on the platforms wherever they could get a foothold. There were four cars, and it was the same in each one. The excursion was a success, and Milton was opened to the outer world. It was a big time in the old town that day. (Milton first appeared on the train schedule in the Delaware Pilot on October 23. Trains left Milton for Queenstown at 6:20 a.m. and 2.45 p.m.)

Nov. Milton Shirt Factory is overcrowded with orders and is running night and day.

Elmer Outten and William Russell of Lewes purchased the wrecked schooner Lillie Falkinburg and then sold it next day to R.C. Beardsley of Milton. He will construct a track from the timber pile on the beach to the creek and carry it to a vessel by means of a car drawn by mules. He will use the lumber to manufacture crates, boxes, etc. at his factory in Milton.

Dec. The owners of the black walnut trees at Milton are sending off their timber to be shipped to London, England, to be used for veneer.

A Milton genius has invented a lover's alarm clock. At 10 o'clock it strikes loudly, two little doors open, and the figure of a man attired in a dressing gown appears, holding in his right hand a sign on which are inscribed the words, "Good night."

1898

Jan. The first passenger service of the Queen Anne Railroad arrived on January 30. Regular service began in March. The Queen Anne pier at Lewes was erected later in the year. The Queen Railroad was connected with the tracks of the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia branch of the Delaware Railroad, in order to enable the Queen Railroad to run excursions to Rehoboth. Regular stops and whistle stops on the railroad from west to east were: Hickman, Adamsville, Blanchard, Greenwood, Owens, Banning, Deputy, Ellendale, Wolfe, Milton, Whitesboro, Drawbridge, Burton and Lewes.

April (Prior to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, there was talk of mining Delaware Bay for fear of a surprise raid

by a Spanish Fleet.) Lewes has six cannon that can be brought into service. They were in use during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. They make a mighty big noise when they are fired. Raw troops from the interior, accustomed to the quiet of mill pond surroundings, for instance, Laurel, Georgetown, Milton and Seaford, would probably be terrified, but a short training period would harden their nerves.

May The "Y" has been completed on the beach at Lewes for the Queen Anne Railroad, making it possible for the engine to turn here, instead of running up to Milton backward as heretofore.

June Theodore Primrose of Milton has made a contract with S.J. Wilson of Milton to furnish 500 coffins to be delivered at Tampa, Florida by July 15. (Wilson was an undertaker and cabinetmaker and presumably the order was for the war department, as the Spanish-American War began on April 19.)

Oct. A movement is on foot at Milton to establish a steamboat connection with Philadelphia. Presumably the steamer will also stop at Wilmington. Milton is enjoying a building boom. Contractor Nailor is building a dwelling for Frank Carey, and others for Captain John Burrows, Captain John R. Megee and George Atkins. He is also building a public hall and gives employment to 36 mechanics.

Dec. Luke Clendaniel of Georgetown will manage Hart's Hotel (now the site of Goshen M.E. Church) next year.

1899

Jan. Immaculate shirts will now be worn by our gallant swains as a Chinese laundry will be established here next week. The calithumpian band (Editor's Note: This is a group of people who used to serenade newlyweds on their return from a honeymoon by rousing them from their sleep with horns, dishpan drums, etc. In the musical "Oklahoma", this type of event was called a shivaree) was out again on Monday evening serenading Mr. and Mrs. George Dutton and Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Atkins.

March The erection of the lock-up has commenced on the north side of the red bridge (Union Street Bridge). We hope that there will be no occasion to use it.

Aug. Henry Wilkinson of the Milton Times has sold that paper to Theodore Messick of Georgetown. Mr. Wilkinson and his brother, Howard, of Dover have purchased the Democratic Milford Herald. Milton has granted a franchise for an electric light plant, and work upon it will begin in a short time. William H. Welch has opened a factory in Milton to make bed springs.

1900

Jan. A representative of the Heinz Pickling Works of Philadelphia was in Milton this week looking for a suitable location on which to erect a factory. He expressed himself as being well pleased with the sites offered. (Apparently this factory was never built.)

March Josiah Culver, station agent, has patented a clock wholly unlike anything seen before. It has but one hand on its face, which marks the minutes; the hours are indicated by a revolving disc showing the number where the character 12 is placed. It is particularly adapted for railroad use, and Mr. Culver has received several offers for the patent rights.

April William T. Starkey has placed the latest improved gas lamps in his store.

June William Lank is now the pill mixer in Starkey's Pharmacy.

Oct. On Saturday evening about 6:30 the large box and basket factory of R.C. Beardsley on the north side of Milton was discovered to be on fire. In less than two hours the buildings were completely consumed by flames. Supposedly the fire originated in the boiler room or by sparks falling on the engine house roof. The loss is \$7,000 with an insurance of \$3,000. Mr. Beardsley contemplates building again. Remonstrances against the sale of liquor in Milton were filed at Georgetown. Indictments against the hotels for the sale of intoxicants to minors were also made, but the hotel men won.

1901

Jan. Milton is considering the purchase of a \$1250 chemical fire engine from a Chicago firm. A representative of the firm will come here and build a house and fill it with combustibles and set it on fire to demonstrate how the engine will operate.

1907

Jan. At the little town of Heavalow in Milton (north side of town on or near the corner of N. Union and Rt. 16), there is a new U.A.M.E. church under construction under the supervision of Joseph Heavalow.*

*Other local names were Scull Town and Mt. Ararat. Both were located on Front Street just before it crosses Round Pole Branch. Scull Town was a collection of houses on the south side of Front Street. Across Front Street from it was the Ponder (later Davidson) shipyard lot called Mt. Ararat, possibly from the frequent appearance on the lot of ship's hulls without masts, resembling the Ark. (Information from E.D. Bryan, M.D., of Dover.)

The south end of Mill Street--the Street of Captains in Milton--received the name of Puddin' Hill because an elderly lady who lived there made and sold steamed puddings. Among the sea captains who lived there were: Captain John Peter Wilson, Captain D. Blocksom, Captain Bradley, and Captain and Mrs. Fowler (lost at sea). (Information from Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson Tunison).

MILTON.

The surveyors for the proposed Queen Anne's railroad on the route direct through from Denton, struck Milton near Paynter's saw mill on the south side. No doubt this would be the cheapest place to cross on, there being no mill pond or no creek in the way. They are now running the line from Bridgeville via Georgetown and Milton. Will Mason living near the route said he heard the whistle blow, but not being accustomed to it failed to know what it was until after the train had passed.

The president of the Queen Anne's railroad company, and William Emery, Esq., the chief instigator of the proposed road, and two of the directors after driving over the route as far as Milton spent Monday night here. From Lewes came Dr. Burton, Frank Burton, Chas Maull, William Maull, Purnell Norman and Robert T. Arnold. A meeting was held at Ex Governor Ponders and at State Treasurer Atkin's home. These gentlemen were very favorably impressed with Milton and its surroundings.

The Poverty party that's announced for Thanksgiving eve by the young folks of the M. P. Church promises to be a success as the friends are sparing no pains or expense to make it so. A large attendance is expected.

The colored people's new public school building will be built near the Odd Fellows' cemetery at an early date.

Winter whiskers are sprouting even though the weather was dry awhile back. A young man in town has from thirty to forty hairs started already on his face.

Thomas Megee has opened a store in the James P. Wilson storeroom, and occupies the dwelling of Captain C. T. Megee.

Stanton Draper is homeward bound from his cowboy adventure. The young man has been waylaid and robbed. Stanton will pull through for he's tough as whit leather and don't scare worth a cent.

The young preacher at the M. P. Parsonage has been christened, by Rev. Will Valiant, Robert Milton Hodge—middle name after our beautiful town.

POVERTIE PARTIE.

Ye be all herewith invited to a gathering to be held on ye evening of Wednesday, ye 27th day of ye 11th month of ye year of our Lord Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-Five in ye Methodist Protestant parsonage house located on Broad street, Milton, Del., Such partie to be given in ye spirit of ye hard times which do now prevail.

ADMITTANCE.

"Five pennies it shall be to all,
Whether it be great or small."

Ye women must ye cotton gowne and apron or equally befitting apparel wear.

Ye menne must wear ye plain attire. Such men as do bedeck themselves with gold watch, chain or brocade te shall pay ye fine of five cents.

Ye man and ye woman who shall appear at such partie in garments most suitable shall partake of ye supper free of compensation.

These rules shall be enforced by ye select committee, who will likewise introduce strangers and also much befriend ye bashful young menne.

In ye dining room refreshments will be served.

LIST OF FINES.

These be ye fines for women: No apron, 1 cent; earrings, plain, 5 cents; earrings, diamonds, 10 cents; wool dress, old, 3 cents; wool dress, new, 5 cents; trimmed, 3 cents; finger rings, plain, 3 cents; diamonds, 10 cents; gold framed glasses, 5 cents; steel frame, 3 cents; no glasses, 1 cent; hats, 5 cents; silk dress, 10 cents; evening dress, 25 cents.

These be ye fines for ye menne: Moustache, 1 cent; full beard, 3 cents; patent leather shoes, 3 cents; ye glasses fined the same as women; ye gold cuff buttons, 5 cents; ye diamond scarf pin, 10 cents; ye plain scarf pin, 5 cents; linen collars, 5 cents; linen cuffs, 2 cents; bicycle suits, 25 cents; evening suits, 50 cents; extra flirting, 3 cents; teiling secrets, 5 cents; back biting, 3 cents.

BY ORDER OF COM.

THE GORDY MURDER
1897

(From Every Evening, June 15, 1897)

GORDY DIES ON THE GALLOWES

The Condemned Wife-Murderer Executed at Georgetown this Morning. The Drop Fell at 10:25 and the Body Swung from the Rope, Without a Movement--Gordy's Last Hours on Earth--An Affecting Farewell to his Two Brothers

Georgetown, June 11--James Gordy was hanged today for the murder of his wife, formerly Mrs. Mary M. Lewis of 3613 Eighth Avenue, New York City, at Milton on the night of Wednesday, March 10th.

The Murderer's Last Hours

Gordy retired about 10 o'clock last night, and although he was awake several times he rested comparatively well. He arose at 4:45 a.m. and approached his night watch, Jester, expressing the hope they would meet in the next world. At 7:30 W.S. Holt, the assistant of Undertaker Obed Marvil of Laurel arrived with a coffin of plain walnut with three silver handles on each side.

Mrs. Gordy, the doomed man's aged mother, expressed a desire to have the body taken to the house and kept a few days, but Gordy's brothers wanted it taken to the family mansion at Whitesville, instead of the church at Gumboro. A short funeral service will be conducted at the homestead by the Rev. J. H. Sewell of Georgetown and the Rev. Frank R. Gale of Beaver Dam M.P. Church, after which the body will be buried in the family burying ground near the home. He refused to eat any breakfast.

Between 7 and eight o'clock Sheriff Johnson swore in 40 deputies and 30 jurymen to witness the execution. The scaffold was erected and tested by George Hatfield of Georgetown.

William Thoroughgood and Barber J. C. Abbott were admitted to his cell and tried to get a confession from him, but he continued to protest his innocence.

His two brothers, John and Benton, arrived at 8:30 a.m. with a new suit for the prisoner, and their farewell was touching.

A Final Farewell

The last few minutes before the march to the scaffold was spent with ministers, who sang and prayed. The march to the scaffold began at 10:10 a.m. Sheriff Johnson led the way and was followed by Preston Ewell and Collins after whom came Gordy with ex-Sheriffs Sharp and Parnell at his side. Gordy read a statement in which he denied his guilt.