

ZWAANENDAEL WOMEN'S CLUB
History of the Building and Club
Savannah Rd. and Third St.
Lewes DE

- 1898 The first bank in Lewes was the Sussex Trust Title and Safe Deposit Company. It was built at a cost of \$5,000 and officially opened on October 26, 1898 on the corner of South St. (now Savannah Rd.) and Third St.
- 1905 On February 5, 1905, thirty women met with Mrs. Robert G. Houston, President of the Delaware State Federation of Women's Clubs, to become the Zwaanendael Club, a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. It was christened "Zwaanendael", in commemoration of the first Dutch settlement on Delaware soil in 1631.
The Club met in members homes, Lewes Auditorium, and Bingham House before acquiring the Clubhouse.
- 1909 Property was purchased on Second St. in Lewes by Sussex Trust, Title & Safe Deposit Company to build a new bank, since more space was needed in the safety deposit vault.
- 1911 On February 6, 1911. The Sussex Trust Company (now Wilmington Trust) held its opening day in its new location on Second St.
- 1919 On May 9, 1919, the Mustard family purchased the old Sussex Trust Company property at the corner of South St. and Third St. - recorded in Deed Book No. 213, page 540.
- 1919-1929
It is said that during this period the building was rented by a Mr. John Henry Riley, who sold millinery and notions.
- 1920-1929
The Club, during this period, was busy with fund-raisers for their community projects, and their Clubhouse Building Fund which had reached over \$1,000.
- 1929 On December 14, 1929, Virginia L. Mustard, a widow, deeded the property to The Zwaanendael Club, Incorporated, a corporation of the State of Delaware, for and in consideration of the sum of One Dollar. Mrs. Mustard, who had moved to Wellesley, Massachusetts, was a Charter Member of the Zwaanendael Women's Club.
It was not until 1931 that the Club learned that the Deed had not been recorded so a member donated \$2.00 to have this done on April 9, 1931.

1930 The club met in their permanent Clubhouse for the first time on October 7, 1930. The membership decided that the Clubhouse was to be used by organizations in the community with the request that they pay for the extra fuel, lights, and cleaning. The first group to use the building was a baby clinic.

1932 The Clubhouse was used as a lending library for the community, charging 25 cents per book loaned.

1930-1932 - During this period, the addition on Third St. was made, an inside wall was built to separate the meeting room from the kitchen, and the fireplace was built with granite stone from the original Cape Henlopen Lighthouse, the second oldest in the country, which had collapsed into the ocean.

1928-1952 - Club Minutes for this period are missing.

1952-1954 The first issue of the Lewes Telephone Directory was published by the Club in March 1953, with 46 pages, at a cost of \$290.83. Today, 50 years later, it is still published annually, with 152 pages, at a cost of \$6,864, with 3500 copies distributed free, with donations and ads accepted. It is our major fund raiser which makes it possible for us to maintain our lovely old building and continue with our commitment to the community.
A heating system was installed in the building.

1978 In January of 1978, the Zwaanendael Club building was nominated #143 on the National Register of Historic Places of Delaware - Lewes Historic District.

1980 Word was received from the Lewes Historical Society that our building had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places of Delaware.

1984 Restoration of the building began with a new slate roof, new gutters and downspouts and pointing of bricks. The Club received money from a matching Grant, described as follows:

“\$25 million was to be used for historic preservation as part of an Emergency Job Bill passed by the Congress. The money was allocated from the state Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Only four projects in Sussex County received part of the \$408,498 granted to Delaware. The Club was one of only 14 out of 135 applicants in the State of DE to receive any of the money.” Since it was a matching Grant, the Club was responsible for 50% of the cost. Some money was borrowed from Mellon Bank and then was repaid by holding many fund-raisers. Members and organizations in the community generously donated to the fund upon learning of our Club’s project.

1996 In 1996, a Councilmatic Grant was received from The Sussex County Council to

apply towards the cost of replacing the furnace in our Clubhouse.

- 2002 Additional preservation of the building has become necessary and some has already been completed. Grant money in the amount of \$1,000 has been received from the Improved Order of Redmen and \$500 is pending from the First State Preservation Revolving Fund, Inc.

The objectives of the Zwaanendael Women's Club, a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, are charitable, as defined by Section 501C3 of the Internal Revenue Code. It was founded in 1905 to bring club women into communication for mutual support in promoting the highest interest in education, public welfare, moral values, civic affairs and fine arts of the community and state. It is dedicated to community improvement through volunteer service and the raising of funds for local charities.

Each December, the Club holds an Open House on the day of the Lewes Historical Society House Tour welcoming all guests, acquainting them with the history of the building and serving refreshments.