

An Act to divide North West Fork Hundred, in Sussex County into two Hundreds, to be called, respectively, North West Fork Hundred and Seaford Hundred.

Section 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Delaware in General Assembly met That North West Fork Hundred in Sussex County shall be, and the same is hereby divided into two Hundreds for the purpose of holding the General and Special elections the election of Assessors and inspectors and for the appointment of Constables and for such other purposes as may be necessary to constitute the respective Hundreds distinct and separate hundreds, with the rights that may properly appertain to them as such All that part of said North West Fork Hundred now embraced in upper North West Fork Election District shall constitute one Hundred of Sussex County and shall be called and known by the name of North West Fork Hundred. And all that part of said North West Fork Hundred now embraced in Lower North West Fork Election District shall constitute one Hundred of Sussex County and shall be called and known by the name of Seaford Hundred and all laws of this State that apply to Hundreds of Sussex County as such shall apply and extend to the said North West Fork Hundred and the said Seaford Hundred as separate and distinct Hundreds.

Section 2 Be it further enacted by the authority

aforesaid. That North West Fork Hundred and Seaford Hundred as  
 formed by this act, shall each have one of the Commissioners of the Levy  
 Court and Court of Appeal each shall have and be entitled to a separate  
 Assessor, Collector and inspector and such other officers as may ~~be~~  
 have been provided by law for the said North West Fork Hundred  
 as it existed heretofore. Provided, That nothing herein contained  
 shall be construed to abridge the terms or to effect the rights duties  
 and obligations of any officer who may now be in office and who  
 may have been appointed or elected to any office the jurisdiction of  
 which extends over the whole of said North West Fork Hundred, but  
 it is expressly made and provided that each of said officers shall continue  
 in office during the term for which he may have been appointed or  
 elected, and the first appointments or election of the separate officers  
 for each of said Hundreds in lieu of those who now hold over  
 for the whole of said Hundreds as it now exists shall only be made  
 (if appointed) upon the expiration of the terms of the present incumbents  
 and shall only be had (if elected) at the next general or little election  
 preceding the time when the terms of said present incumbents  
 shall expire.

Section 3 Be it further enacted that the Levy Court  
 of Sussex county shall in addition to the separate officers provided  
 for in the preceding section, appoint annually at the term now fixed

by law for the appointment of Trustees of the Poor, one Trustee of the Poor for each of said Hundreds

Section 4 Be it further enacted That the dividing line between said Hundreds of North West Fork and Seaford shall be the line as laid down in the first section of Chapter 38 Vol 12 of Delaware Laws, of the Act Entitled, "An Act to divide North West Fork Hundred into two election districts,

Section 5 Be it further enacted that all general and special elections, and all elections for assessors and inspectors shall be held in the said hundreds of North West Fork and Seaford at the places now designated by law for holding elections in upper North West Fork Election District and in Lower North West Fork Election district,

Passed at Dover

March 11 1869

James Williams  
Speaker of the Senate

John H. Stanton  
Speaker of the House of Reps

An Act to divide  
North West Fork Hundred  
in Sussex County into two  
Hundreds to be called  
Respectively North West  
Fork Hundred and  
Seaford Hundred.

S.

4  
8

Passed March 11. 1869

# **SUSSEX, DELAWARE**

## **AN EARLY HISTORY**

**Explored in 1608  
Settled in 1672**

**Richard E. Thek**

**Seaford, DE**

**10 June, 1996**

## Preface

This effort is part of a larger plan to identify all the original European settlers along the Nanticoke River and all its tributaries. While that task is ongoing it appeared to me that a need existed to clarify the early history of Seaford, Delaware. As you will see the area was settled much earlier than any local history texts have noted. So early that the Woodland (Cannon ) Ferry is one of the oldest ferry services still in use.

Thank You

Regina for your patience.

## Seaford

The land at the head of the Nanticoke River has long been inhabited by mankind. The Nanticoke Indians and their ancestors have lived along this lovely river for over 6,000 years. Although the Indians traveled among themselves nothing prepared them for the events that would take place in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Their culture was to rudely clash into that of a very different one from the European continent. The first contact that the Nanticoke Indians had with the Europeans is not certain. The Spanish, long established in the Caribbean, were notorious for their raids along the east coast of America in search of slaves to support their activities on the islands. There is circumstantial evidence that the Spanish may have been here in the late 1500's but no records have surfaced to support this. The first record of a European to explore the head of the Nanticoke is in the year 1608. (We will be celebrating the 400th anniversary of this event in just a few years) At that time, the now famous Captain John Smith, after settling in Jamestown Virginia, set out with a small group and explored the Chesapeake Bay and its major tributaries. They explored only the Pocomoke and the Nanticoke rivers extensively on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay. The map his exploration created served as a standard for many years. His map shows the location and names of Indian villages along the Nanticoke River and he also illustrates the larger tributaries of the Nanticoke River, specifically Barren Creek, Marshyhope Creek, Broad Creek and Deep Creek. In his log book he noted;

"Here doth inhabite the people of Sarapinagh, Nause, Arseek and Nantaquak, the best Marchants of other Salvages"

Although the Virginians were the first to settle on the Delmarva peninsula in the very early 1600's, the land along the shores of the Nanticoke River would wait another sixty years to be extensively settled by Europeans. All land in current western and southern Sussex County Delaware was first settled as part of the Province of Maryland. King Charles I, in 1631 granted Lord Baltimore a tract of land in America. It was established in 1634 and it was named Maryland, with its capital at St. Mary's City. Development on the eastern shore took a few years to take hold. The eastern shore was developed from both the south and from the islands along the Chesapeake. Somerset County, a very large county then, was established in 1666 and Dorchester a few years later in 1669. Although the Counties were not well defined in the early days the following is approximately how the county lines were in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. All land south of the Nanticoke River, Deep Creek, and Indian River was part of Somerset County (Worcester & Wicomico Counties were not established until years later.). All land north of the Nanticoke River and north of Deep Creek was Dorchester County (Caroline County was not established until later). Both Dorchester and Somerset Counties went all the way from the Chesapeake Bay to the Atlantic Ocean. Thus the towns we now call Blades, Laurel, Bethany Beach and Concord had they existed then would have been within the boundaries of early Somerset County. Meanwhile, the areas we now know as Seaford, Bridgeville, St. Johnstown, Greenwood, Old Furnace, Rehoboth, Adamsville and Middleford were all part of Dorchester County in the Province of Maryland.

## *Seaford*

The migration north along the peninsula slowed briefly in the mid 1600's in part because of the English civil war and in part due to friction between the Nanticoke Indians and the English settlers. With the death of Oliver Cromwell in England and the establishment of peace between the Nanticoke and the English, development once again flourished.

Two major Indian reservations were created around 1700. The largest was north of Vienna on the Nanticoke and the other was on the tract known as "Greenland" on Broad Creek. That tract was first patented in April of 1683 to William Green.

Many land patents appeared in the late 1660's and early 1670's once the new counties were established. Many of the early settlers of this area were migrating up the peninsula from Virginia and the lower part of Somerset County.

My search of the land patents for the Nanticoke River watershed have identified over 400 patents issued prior to 1720

The first record of any settlement in the area around Seaford is a very large tract of land (1,750 acres) granted to a Jeremiah Jadwin (Jadwyn) of Virginia on the 22 January 1672 (ref. Liber 7, folio 146 at the Maryland Hall of Records) The patent indicates it was bordered in part by the Nanticoke River, and Herring Creek and that the land rent was to be 3 pounds and 10 ten shillings per year. The tract was identified as "Martin's Hundred". A very unusual name. The name is unusual in two ways. First the name Martin is the not the owners. Second the word hundred was usually used to define a geographical area approximately the size of a township. The use of the word hundred goes back at least into the fourteenth century in England. There may be a connection to

the lost "Martin's Hundred" venture downstream from Jamestown, VA. the then capitol of Virginia. In the Virginia Martin's Hundred the word hundred may be related to the number of investors in that venture.

The early English settlements were much like those of the Indians, living along the river, on dry ground and next to a supply of fresh drinking water. The rivers, creeks, branches and Indian trails were the primary travel routes for many years. The only roads noted in the early records are those in support of the ferry routes linking the upper and lower eastern shore. Only two Nanticoke River ferry crossings appear in the early deeds; Cannon's (now known as Woodland's Ferry) and Vienna. The Vienna Ferry was not established until after 1756, at which time a road was created through the marsh on the east side of the Nanticoke River. A firm date has not been established for the first crossing at the Cannon Ferry but it appears to be before 1671. The Bill of Ferrys was recorded in the minutes of the Maryland General Assembly on 17 October in the year 1671. This Bill suggests that the ferries were in fact in use prior to that date. It appears that the Woodland Ferry is one the countries oldest ferries in still in continuous use. It is possible it may be the oldest ferry in the USA. Extensive searches of wills and other related documents may someday give us a more accurate date. The first record, to date, of the Cannon family in the area of the ferry goes back to a land patent of 1688. (The sign at the ferry site refers to the date that the State of Delaware granted a license after the area became part of Delaware)

Although there is some reference to roads in Legislative action in the late 1600's, there mention in land patents of that period is rare. More frequent mention of roads in court



## *Seaford*

records, maintained by overseers, would have to wait until about 1720. An 1804 map of the Northwest Fork Hundred of Delaware shows only a dozen roads.

Unlike other parts of the original colonies the Chesapeake area was settled almost exclusively by people from the British Isles. The majority of the people came from England. However, Ireland, Wales and Scotland are well represented. Even such names as Beauchamp (very French) were from families who had come to England during the period following the Battle of Hastings in the year 1066. You might note that the name does not have a French pronunciation. The local pronunciation is very similar to that in England today. Many of the names surviving today affirm that link. Sussex and Kent Counties in the south of England. Lewes and Seaford both in the county of Sussex. Dover in the county of Kent. Salisbury, Oxford, Cambridge, Dorchester, Somerset, Lord Baltimore, Princess Anne, Queen Anne, High Street and the list goes on.

Religion of this area was primarily the Church of England, although the influx of Quakers from Virginia played a significant role in the early days of the Maryland eastern shore. The presence of Quakers, Catholics and Presbyterians was largely a result of Lord Baltimore's insistence on religious tolerance, unlike the colonies of Virginia and New England. The original parish church for the entire eastern part of Dorchester was a church located at Cambridge in the very late 1690's. Chapel's of Ease were created at both Vienna and at possibly what we now call East New Market. The St. Mary White's Chapel of Ease later became St. Stephen's. There is evidence that a Chapel called St. Mary's was also located on Chapel Branch

west of what is now Seaford. A date has been given of 1704. I have no evidence to support that date. More research is needed to more clearly define the dates and members of the church. It is reported that the church was burned to the ground by patriots during the War of 1812. It was reported that the Church was primarily attended by those having Tory sympathies.

Early County courthouses were placed in a central place and when court was in session the area became populated with people to sell wares, ordinaries to supply liquid refreshments (it was not uncommon for the Courthouse to also be the ordinary), horse races, cock fights, etc. After Court was over, people went home leaving only the court house building to await the next event. This was the beginning of the town.

The settlement of this area was one that focused on the plantation style of living. Tobacco for years was the cash crop. With this style of living the need for villages was very little. For example, Williamsburg, the capitol of Virginia, at the time of the Revolutionary War had only 1,600 people living there year round. As noted above when court or the House of Burgess was in session the population expanded significantly. Meanwhile Philadelphia had a permanent population of over 30,000. Unlike the Chesapeake Bay area, Philadelphia was home to many trades people. Yet Virginia was by far the most populated colony at the time.

Thus the lack of villages should not be interpreted to mean that there were few settlements in the area. A census in 1704 identified 2,312 people living in Dorchester County and 4,437 people in Somerset County. It is not clear if this number

## Seaford

includes females, youth, indentured servants or slaves.

Census figures for the 1790 period are as follows

Nanticoke Hundred, DE	200 *
Broad Creek Hundred, DE	244 *
North West Fork ** Hundred, DE	408 *
Little Creek Hundred, DE	347 *
Dorchester County MD	644 ***
Somerset County MD	records lost

\* Heads of household

\*\* Seaford Hundred did not exist at this time

\*\*\* Adults

Agriculture was and continued to be the primary enterprise of people living in the Chesapeake Bay area for many years. In addition to agriculture there is much evidence to suggest that the area east of where Seaford now resides, was a very busy bog iron area in the mid eighteenth century. Over 7,000 acres are noted in various land transactions associated with the iron industry in the mid 1700's. The following are just a few of the names noted in the deed records.

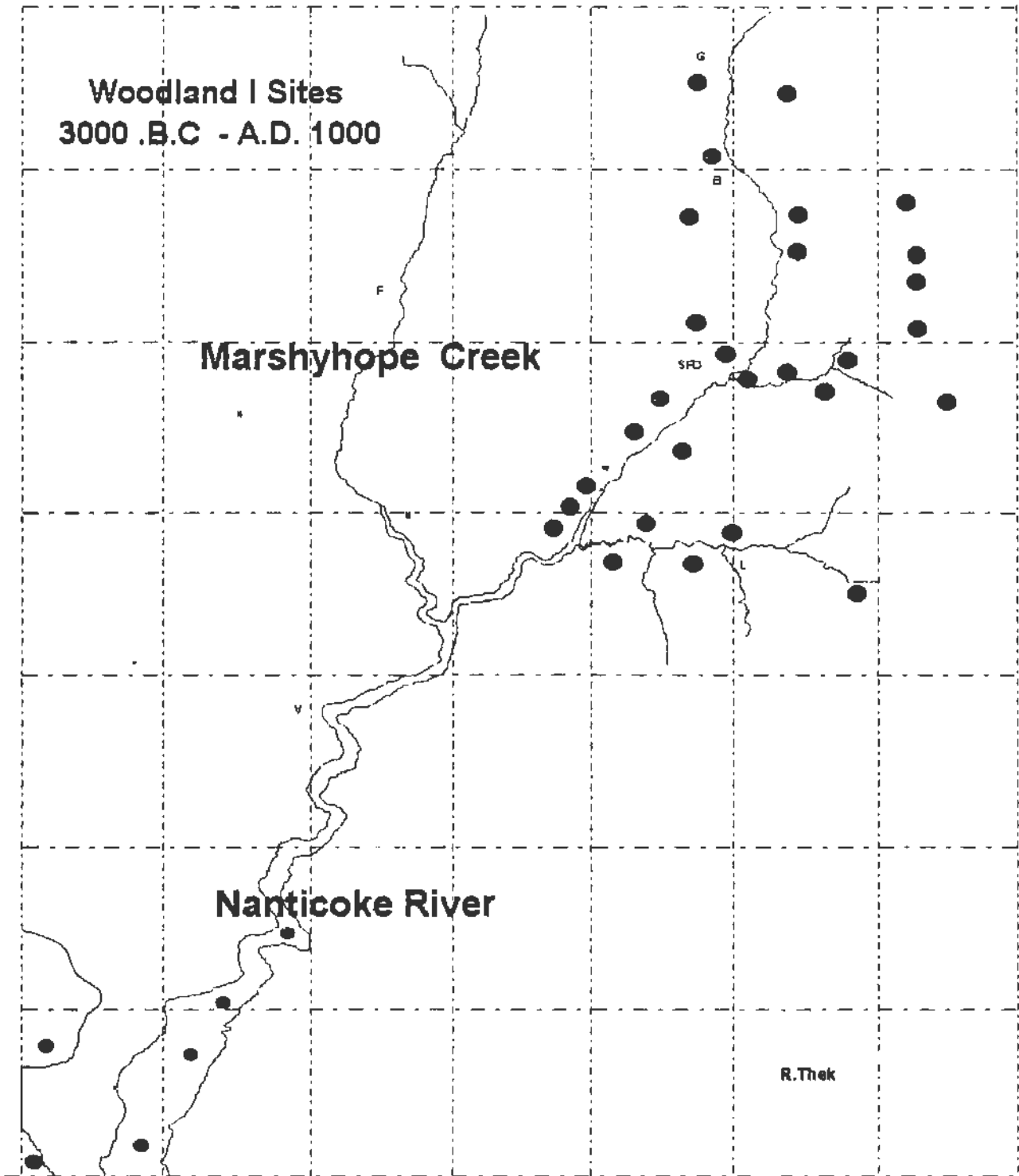
*Deep Creek Iron Works* made up of; Deep Creek Furnace in Nanticoke Hundred, Nanticoke Forge at Middleford, Pine Grove Furnace at Concord, Unity Forge in North West Fork Hundred Collins Forge, Polk Forge, Gravelly Delight Forge and Millsboro Forge

The material from Deep Creek Furnace; 3 miles from Concord; was called "OLD

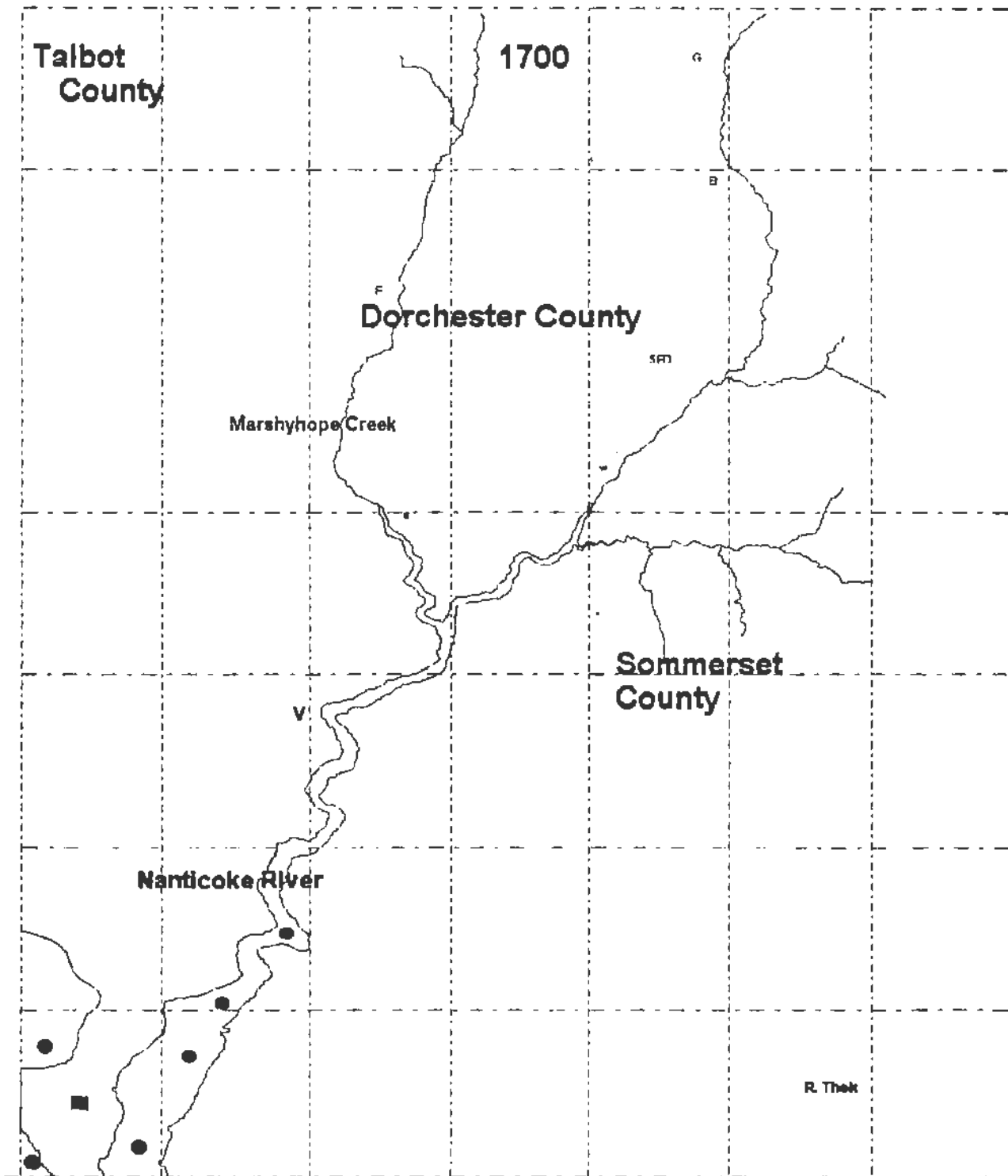
MEADOW" pig iron. One source identified it as the best in America. The remains of a few of these forges could still be found as recently as a few years ago.

The current Maryland-Delaware boundaries came about as the result of a long dispute between William Penn and Lord Baltimore with each claiming the area we now know as Delaware. Ultimately, the Duke of York defined the north-south boundary to be approximately as it is today. It is reported that an error in a map coordinate resulted in the east west line being from current Delmar to Fenwick. It is proposed that the original agreement had the east-west line at the Cape Henlopen not at the false cape. (If that line had survived, Seaford area would still be in Maryland.) After many years in the courts of London the boundary lines are as the surveyors Mason and Dixon have defined in 1763. However, with the courts of Maryland and Delaware being preoccupied with the war, few land titles were changed until after the war.

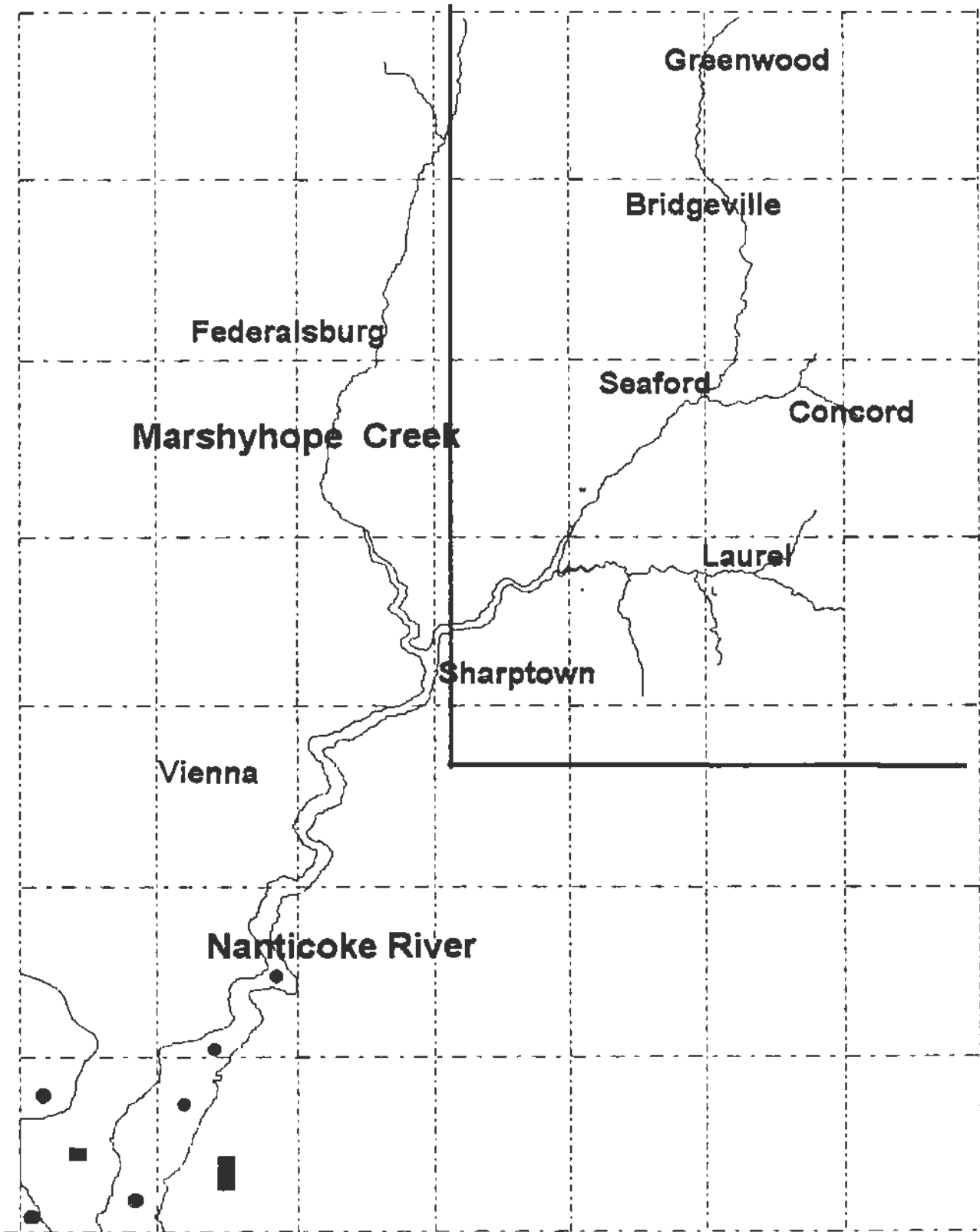
*Seaford*



*Seaford*



*Seaford*





**A HISTORY**  

---

**of SEAFORD**  

---

**(DELAWARE)**

---

**1632-1932**  

---



**W. WRIGHT ROBINSON**

# FOREWORD

By THE REVEREND JOHN CROSBY, D. D.; PH. D.

Rector, St. Luke's Church, Seaford, Del.



*In writing a history of his home town for the edification of present day citizens, Mr. Wright Robinson has not only performed a service to his community, but done a piece of historical research of real educational and historical value.*

*We are told by Mr. G. K. Chesterton that we, as a country are not old enough to have a history, and that what history we have is a sordid story of political aggrandizement. To a certain extent this is true. We are a young country as compared to the kingdoms and republics of the old world. Our history up to the present is very largely the story of the rise of small towns, and the growth of a few large cities. It is in studies such as this that we are able to realize the true growth and genius of our nation.*

*After all this country is composed of amalgamations of small towns, and the study of the microcosm unfolds to us the nature of the macrocosm. This Mr. Robinson has carried out not only with historical accuracy, but with artistic sympathy and very considerable literary ability.*

*He has shown us that we should be proud of our heritage not only as American citizens of the State of Delaware but as the legitimate heirs of those sturdy pioneers who conquered the primeval wilderness, and by practising the Anglo-Saxon virtues of honesty, sobriety and thrift, shrewdness and common sense built up the community in which we live.*

*I am writing this on the three hundredth anniversary of the holding of the first church service held in Seaford Hundred, by those immigrants from our mother Church and city in far off Sussex county, England. The old town of Seaford that has faced the English Channel for nearly two thousand years, and whose descendants still carry the banner of freedom, independence and religious liberty, in the daughter community on the banks of the Nanticoke.*

*The town owes a public debt to Mr. Wright Robinson.*

# A History of Seaford

1632 -:- 1932

By W. Wright Robinson

—:—  
CHAPTER ONE

## *The Settlement of This Section*

### *The Hooper family and the part they played in this development*

THE earliest local references to that particular tract of land which is the site of the present town of Seaford, are in the courthouse at Georgetown, Del., dated as of the year 1726. These records indicate that the Hooper family at one time held the deed for all of this land, and it is entirely probable that a deed or charter had been in the possession of this family for at least twenty years prior to the county records.

Granted that these records are authentic, we have evidence that a colonization of this territory had been made nearly a century previous to the Georgetown references. In 1632 Lord De-La-Warr, a pioneer colonizer of the State, and from whom the State took its name, placed five English families in the district of which Seaford is now a part. From church records at present in the possession of the Archbishop of London in England, the names of the heads of these five families were: Walter Gameson, Thomas Jacobs, Jeremiah McNeilly, Elijah Cannon and John Gibbons. Members of these families survived and spread their progeny throughout the whole of this section. The Cannon and McNeilly families still remain in Seaford, and the other families have long been associated as prominent Sussex county citizens.

Although we have evidence that earlier settlers did inhabit the district, one Thomas Hooper was the first landowner of the present site of Seaford of whom the county has any record, and for our narrative we shall class him as Seaford's first citizen.

At his home, the exact location of which is long since forgotten, he raised a family of three sons and four daughters: Thomas, John and Henry, Nancy, Mollie, Priscilla and Sally. Four of these children

THE AUTHOR wishes to express his appreciation to *The Seaford News* for the pictures printed in this book and to William L. Torbert, Jr., principal of the Seaford High School, for his constructive criticism and advice on the literary and historical accuracy of its contents :: :: ::



married and settled in this section and from these marriages came the nucleus for what was to be the future Seaford.

Nancy married a Mr. Douglas, and settled in the village. Sally married John Tenant, a landowner who resided on or near what is now known as the Governor Ross farm, and John followed in the footsteps of his father as a farmer. Mollie married John Wallace, and by this union one son, Henry, and one daughter, Margaret, were born. Becoming a widow, Mollie later married for a second husband, Jacob Wright, of Dorchester county, Maryland. Mr. Wright had a daughter by a previous marriage, Miss Margaret Wright, who was married to her step-brother, Henry Wallace, in 1815.

In the division of land following the death of the elder Hooper, John Hooper became possessor of the site of Seaford, and from his family sprang the long line of Hoopers that ended with the passing of Miss Mollie Hooper, the last to bear the family name, in 1931.

In the family of John Hooper there was one son and three daughters: Henry, Ann, Elizabeth and Susan. Henry settled in the village and was the father of Hicks Hooper, whose tomb is in the present M. P. Cemetery. Ann married Dr. Cottingham, Seaford's first physician, and by this union were three sons: John, Alfred and Charles. Elizabeth married Nathan Vickers, one of the first settlers in the village, and Susan married Zebediah Fountain. From the latter marriage one boy, Zebediah, was born, who later became the father of the wife of Lewis Wallace, another Seaford pioneer.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the Hooper family played a large part in the early settlement of the town. At the time that these developments were taking place, it must be remembered that there were very few villages in the whole of the State. Lewes and Georgetown were fairly well established, but the southwestern part of the State was practically one large forest. Cannon's Ferry (Woodland), which is now regarded as a relatively unimportant village, at that time was much more progressive than Seaford.



AN EARLY SEAFORD LUMBER MILL

Parsons Mill, erected in 1901 by Stansbury Parsons, now operating under the name of Hurley & White.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Early Seaford . . . The Plotting of The Town* *New Arrivals . . . Early Business*

THE history of Seaford may safely be said to have commenced with the dawn of the 19th century. Imagine a few isolated buildings in a clearing by a river and you have a picture of this village around the year 1790. There were no stores and the few people who lived in the neighborhood were compelled to do their marketing and trading at Jackson's Wharf, about a mile below Seaford—just beyond the point of land called Penknife, on the Nanticoke River. The main road leading from Seaford to this trading center started at the foot of North street, along Water street to the foot of Pine street Hill, up the hill to High street, and thence along the then Cedar Lane and river to Jackson's Wharf.

On the 29th of October, 1799, Seaford, or that part of it which lies between the river on the south, Herring creek on the east, West street, (now King street) on the north, and Market street on the west, with a few lots on the west side of Market street below High street, was plotted. This original layout for the first division of Seaford into lots has practically remained unchanged to this present day,

and the original plot is now in the possession of Dr. Chas. M. Hollis, a prominent Seaford dentist. The plotting of the village and the subsequent coming of energetic and farsighted citizens virtually assured the success of the small village.

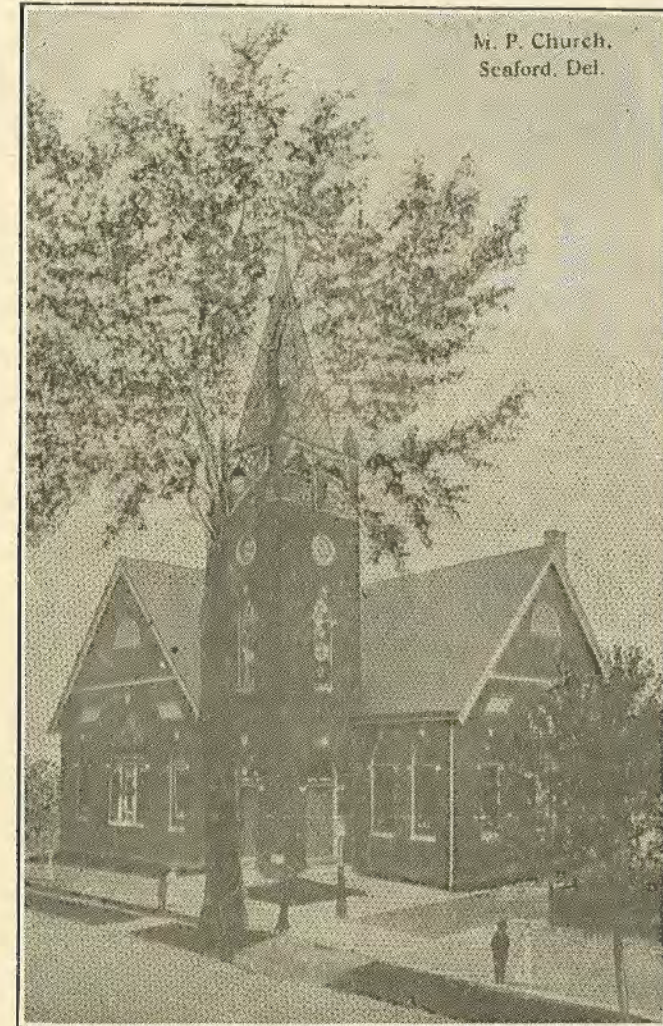
At that point where Herring creek flows into the river, there was a landing originally called Indian Landing. From the name it can be inferred that in the remote past this section was an Indian camping ground, and indeed, such is the case. The Nanticoke Indians, a branch of the Leni-Lenape tribe, roamed over the entire countryside, spending their time in fishing and hunting. Even today, relics of their civilization can be found at many places along the Nanticoke, all of them within a short walking distance of the town.

The first store of which we have any reference was opened by Henry Adams early in 1800. Mr. Adams had his place of business at the corner of Front and Water streets, and was fairly successful. At his death a few years later, Levin Cannon took over the business. As nearly as can be determined this was the only store in the village until 1813, at which time two men who were later to play important parts in the development of the community arrived and entered the mercantile business on the southwest corner of North and Water streets. They were Aaron Swiggett, of Kent county, Maryland, and George Hazzard, of Lewes. These two men prospered and before their death raised families who became leaders in the social and economic life of the village.

Mr. Swiggett purchased from Susan Fountain seven lots on North and Water streets, and erected on them the old Swiggert Hotel. At his death he left four children, one of which, Eliza Ann, became the wife of Major Allen, an important Seaford figure later on in the century. Mr. Hazzard opened a tanyard on Herring Creek, and at his death was carrying on a tanning, shoe making and merchandising business. The last member to bear this family name in Seaford was William Hazzard, better known as Old Squire Hazzard, noted for his eccentricities, who was killed by a locomotive on the Delaware Railroad at Cannon's Crossing in 1882.

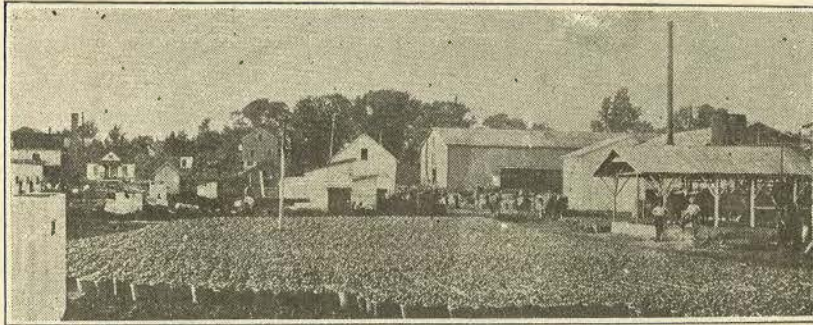
Soon after the opening of the first store in Seaford, Captain Solomon Boston, a Virginia coaster, settled in the town. At that time, large vessels engaged in the coastwise trade, often ran up the Nanticoke during severe winter weather and lay just below the shoals about a mile below Seaford. Although continuing his coastwise business, he was greatly interested in the village and acquired considerable property here, including what is now known as the Island Farm,

which before then had been owned by John Hooper. It is interesting to note that the old Hooper mansion, a portion of which is still standing in the rear of the property of Dr. T. F. Cottingham, was bought by Mr. Boston in 1804.



MT. OLIVET METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

This church, located on the southeast corner of High and Church streets, today has a membership of 339.



THE GREENABAUM CANNERY

Established by Emanuel Greenabaum and Charles Van Leer in 1887, this cannery has annually provided employment for hundreds of Seaford's citizens. It was originally a pea cannery, changing during recent years to a tomato cannery and becoming noted for its "Sundale" brand Catsup and Chili Sauce. Pickles and fruit preserves have also been put up at the plant, which is now managed by E. Arnold Greenabaum, Isidore Stephany and Ernest A. Simon.

CHAPTER THREE

*Seaford, 1810 - 1830*

TOWARD the end of the second decade new arrivals and new industries had made the village a lively little place, and it is estimated that there were at least twenty-five homes and business buildings in the neighborhood.

Dr. Henry Little, who had lived near Seaford previous to the survey, moved into the village in 1820 and for several years held the office of Justice of the Peace. In 1835 when the Thompsonian system of practicing medicine came before the public, he engaged in its study, and was very successful in its practice. In those days, methods for the control of rabies, and the deadening of pain were unknown. In 1810 an interesting example of this lack of modern knowledge occurred which is worthy of note. Shadrick Cannon, a resident on the Magee farm, later Bradford City, then Nanticoke City, and now West Seaford, was bitten by a mad dog. He contracted rabies, and nothing that physicians could do could save him from the agonies and tortures of his spasms, so a group of the better people of the town solved the problem of putting him out of his misery by smothering him to death between two feather mattresses.

Robert Hopkins, James Scott, James Conwell and William Conwell, all from the eastern part of the county, settled in the village, and the latter two developed much of the land west of Market street to Pine. The present Conwell street of the town was so named in their honor.

Another man who became very prosperous and prominent in the village was Captain Hugh Martin. He was one of the few of the first settlers of Seaford who was raised hereabout. His parents settled here about 1793, and ran a hotel on Water street between North and Market. He became a captain of a coastal schooner and in 1834 had a bridge built across the Nanticoke south of Market street hill, over which he charged toll until 1883, when the county bought it and made it a free bridge.

Three brothers who became prominent business men in the early history of the town moved here from Lewes. They were Solomen, Joel and Asbury Prettyman. Solomen was engaged in the manufacture of pig iron, with his forge near Collins' Mill. At this place there are yet evidences of his industry, and in the neighborhood, as indeed practically at all points at the head of the Nanticoke, can be found large deposits of iron ore. In Seaford he engaged himself in the manufacture of black oak bark into fine dust for dying purposes with his mill on the northwest corner of Market and High streets. He built the first house to stand on the present site of the Sussex Hotel, and because of its rather elaborate construction, was often referred to as Solomen's Temple. Joel engaged in the boating business, and sailed for many years between Seaford and Baltimore. Asbury became a merchant and conducted a store in Solomen's building.

In 1826, the Wright brothers, Terpin, Jacob and Charles, became associated with the business interests of the village. Dealers in lumber and general supplies, they gradually broadened out until some years later they had acquired considerable property in the neighborhood. Terpin moved into Dorchester county, Maryland, and Jacob spent his last years in Easton, Md., but not before he had established himself in this section as a successful slave dealer. On what was then the town cow pasture, Charles erected a country mansion and remained in this neighborhood until his death. The mansion today is the property of Custis W. McNeilly, and is one of the show places of the county.

Captain Job Stockley was another early settler of the village. Before his death he raised three sons: Benjamin, Jacob and Job, who became leaders in the progress of the community.

William Blades, who came to Seaford early in its history, raised a family of two boys and two girls. One of these boys, James Blades, settled across the river from Seaford and from this fact the town of Blades derived its name.

James Darby, a tailor from Milford, also entered business in Seaford around 1830.

All of these sketches of the pioneer families of Seaford make very dull reading, but their inclusion in a history of the town is essential. Until near the end of the third decade no rapid growth of the community had manifested itself. For forty years the village had consistently developed and it was not until 1840, or thereabout, when a number of new settlers arrived, that a rapid expansion became evident.

No story of the town from 1800 to 1840 is complete, however, without an account of the "Cold Year of 1816." In that year one of the queerest freaks of weather ever to occur caused the severest of hardships for people in Seaford and the vicinity. From the fall of 1815 to the spring of 1817, no month escaped a killing frost. During the summer of 1816 practically no crops could be raised, due to the cold weather, and it is said that in the following year owing to the scarcity of grain, seed corn sold for as high as nine dollars a bushel.

In 1830, Patty Cannon, probably one of the most famous slave traders the country has ever known, was brought to Seaford for trial on a murder charge. This woman, about whom several books and a motion picture have been produced, had for one of her places of business the house yet standing on the northwest corner of Johnson's Crossroads, now Reliance. Due to its location on the Mason-Dixon line separating Maryland and Delaware, she could successfully evade arrest in either State, and did so until Jacob Wilson, Sheriff of Dorchester county, Maryland, and Joseph Neal, deputy Sheriff of Sussex county, apprehended her. When news of her arrest reached Seaford, the town crier, who called the hours, announced to the town at large—"Three o'clock and Pat Cannon's taken." She was brought here before Dr. John Gibbons, the justice of the peace, and committed to Georgetown jail, but before she could receive sentence she took poison and died.



AN EARLY SEAFORD GARAGE

From a small beginning in a garage near the foot of Pine street hill to the ownership of one of the most fully equipped garages of the State is the story of J. Tillie Bryan. The above photograph depicts the second of Mr. Bryan's garages. Today his place of business is northeast of Market street bridge and is the most modern and complete garage south of Wilmington. In conjunction with his general repair business he manages the local sale of Buick and Packard automobiles and conducts an automobile supply outlet for independent garagemen.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

### *How Seaford got its Name*

AT THIS point in our narrative, we feel that it would be well to pause for a moment and try to determine just how Seaford got its name. There seem to be four general opinions on the subject, and without claiming that any one is better than the other, they are hereby set down, and the reader can use his own judgment as to which one he cares to believe.

#### NAME DUE TO GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

It is supposed that the word "Seaford" was derived from the fact that at one time this place was the closest ford to the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. The combination of the two words "Sea" and "Ford" would naturally form the name given the town. As proof of this derivation, it is pointed out that about three miles up the river there is a small village called Middleford, signifying the fact that at that point there must have been a middle ford. At any rate

a mile above Middleford, practically at the head of the Nanticoke, there is a section known in the dim past as "Little Ford" or "Top Ford," which would indicate that there were three fords in all, the one at what is now Seaford being nearest the sea.

*NAMED FOR A SCOTCHMAN'S HORSE*

Tradition says that Seaford took its name from that of an old white horse owned by a Scotchman then living at Indian Landing, who had named his horse after his native town in Scotland. The Scotchman was Bernard Lidday, who was one of the first citizens of the village. Mr. Lidday later moved to Baltimore, and his property passed into the hands of the Stockley family.

*NAME APPLIED TO DISTRICT WHEN FIRST SETTLED*

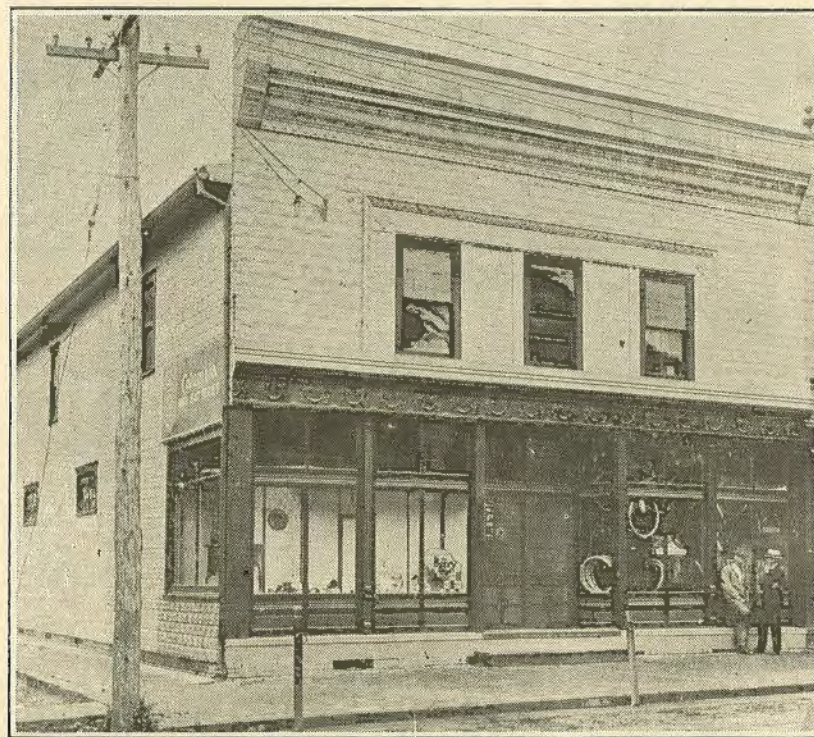
In 1631, when Lord De-La-Warr was enlisting settlers for the region to be known afterward as the State of Delaware, he was assisted in his selection by the Chancellor to the Bishop of London. When the final selections had been made, records indicate that families that comprised the group were from Dover, Kent county, England; Lewes, Sussex county, England; Milton, Sussex county, England, and Seaford, Sussex county, England. Upon their arrival in this country they were allotted lands in such a manner that those who had been neighbors in England were again neighbors here. The Dover group settled in the middle of the grant, the Seaford group in the southwestern part of Sussex, the Milton group in the middle of Sussex, and the Lewes group on the coast. The name "Seaford" therefore, came into being from the fact that this group of pioneers from Seaford, Sussex county, England, were the first to settle in this region.

*NAMED AFTER ENGLISHMAN'S HORSE*

William Neal, an immigrant from Seaford, Sussex county, England, came to the village in 1815 to survey and lay out some lots for William Conwell, and subsequently to complete a survey of what then comprised the town. With him he brought a horse that he had used on a similar job in Seaford, England. The name of the horse was Seaford, and Mr. Neal suggested that the same name should apply to this town. His suggestion was accepted and that is how the town got its name.

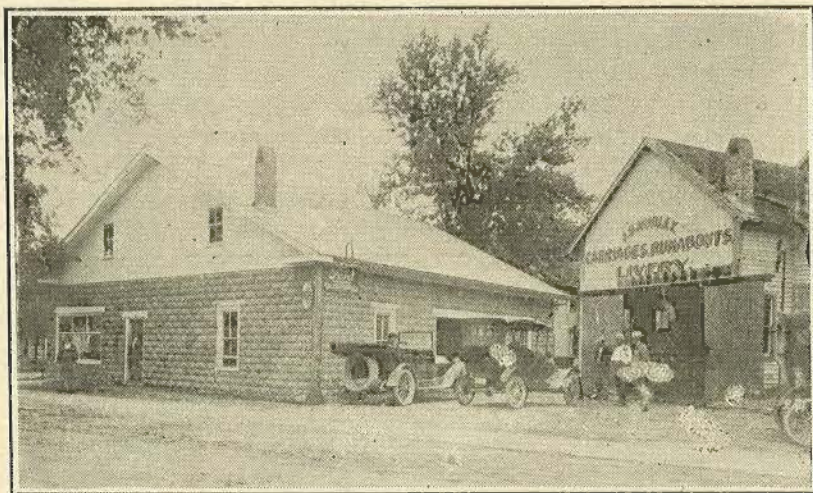
Which of these four stories is correct we shan't attempt to say. They all have plausibility. We do know that Mr. Neal *did* survey the town. Later he married the widow of Major Allen, Sr., and in 1823

erected the house now known as the Frank Allen mansion, about four miles northwest of Seaford. It is well to bear in mind, however, that references to the village as "Seaford" appear in records many years prior to the coming of Mr. Neal and his horse, and the third story is now generally accepted as the true version of how the town got its name.



BURTON BROTHERS HARDWARE STORE

Founded in 1894 by W. S. Burton, this hardware store today is a most important factor in the business of the town. Following in the footsteps of their late father, Fred and Charles Burton, the present owners, have developed their business to the extent that it is now one of the leading hardware stores of the State. A spirit of friendly cooperation has done much to make it the town's most progressive hardware establishment.



J. B. HURLEY AND SONS, SEAFORD'S OLDEST GARAGE

Although not the first garage to be built in the town, the J. B. Hurley and Sons Garage on the northeast corner of Market and King streets, is the oldest in point of continuous service. Its founder, John B. Hurley, conducted a livery and general drayage business on the present site and developed a modern garage to meet the demands of a more modern day. From April 1915 to June 1929 the firm conducted one of the largest Ford automobile agencies in the State, but turned their attention to the sale of Plymouth, DeSota and Hupmobile cars in 1929, at which they have been very successful. The garage and salesroom which is complete in every respect, is now managed by Le Roy and Victor Hurley.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 1840-1860 *Business Places of the Time*

THE year 1840 marked the beginning of the present development of the town. In that year, or thereabout, came the Horseys—Josiah, William and Nathaniel. Josiah was a carpenter and kept a grocery store on the corner of Market and Water streets, near the bridge. William was for years one of Seaford's most enterprising merchants, his place of business being the northwest corner of Market and High streets. Nathaniel likewise engaged in the mercantile trade on the south side of Water street between North and Market.

Then there were John Windsor, the caulker; Thomas Henderson, the cabinet maker; James Dutton, James Jacobs, John Tucker, a cooper, and Phillip Massey, a carpenter.

Later in the fourth decade came William Rogers and the Browns, from Laurel; the Robinsons, from Dorchester county, Maryland, and the Coulbourns and Williams, from Caroline county, Maryland.

Agriculture interests, which hitherto had been confined to comparatively small projects under such farmers as the Rusts, Williams and Willings, at this time became greatly stimulated. The reason for this was the arrival of one who was to do more for farming in this section than any other man has probably ever done. That man was William Ross, afterwards Governor of the State. Coming to this district from Laurel, he developed a splendid farm and through his untiring efforts, managed in 1856, to bring the Delaware Railroad to Seaford. This latter act did more to develop the town than any single thing since its inception. Besides Governor Ross, large landowners who developed the agricultural holdings were Captain Hugh Martin, Captain Charles Wright, William and Levin Dulaney and Levin Cannon.

It is well to get a mental picture of Seaford in 1840. There were, in all, about fifty-five dwelling houses and ten stores. Nearly all of the houses and stores were single-storied. The stores were grouped in the town as follows: One at the corner of Front and Water streets; Josiah Horsey's at the corner of Market and Water streets; the Messrs. Wright's store, North and Water streets on the north side; on the south side of Water street, almost opposite, the store of William Nichols; George Hazzard on the east side of North street, between High and Water streets; directly across the street the store of William and David Conwell; Asbury Prettyman, corner of Market and High in the Solomen Prettyman building; on the northwest corner of Water street a small store used by a number of merchants; the William Horsey store, northwest corner of Market and High, and Levin Cannon's store at the corner of High and Pine.

Industries in the town at the time included two tanyards, a blacksmith shop, a tailor, a hat maker, a shoemaker, a carriage, harness and saddle works, and the Boston Mill. This latter was erected in 1835 by Solomen Boston. The ponding of water to run this mill changed the village from a very healthy to a distressingly sickly place and in its first year nearly every family in the town was taken with ague and fever. Before the mill was erected, however, it had been necessary to carry corn to what is now Hearn's Mill or a mill at Concord, to get it ground.



AN EARLY PICTURE OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF SEAFORD  
An Honor Roll Bank

This institution had its beginning in the house now occupied by W. H. Miller, on Pine street, with Governor William Cannon as its founder. The present building on the northeast corner of High and Cannon streets was first occupied in 1903. Today this bank is generally conceded to be one of the foremost banking and financial institutions of its size in the United States. Its capitalized value is \$250,000. Madison Willin is president and Charles J. West, cashier.

CHAPTER SIX

*The Last Half of the Nineteenth Century*

PRIOR to the Civil War sentiment in this section was for the most part pro-slavery. Farmers in the district and many families in town had slaves, and any suggestion that slavery be abolished was ridiculed. At the time of the war, however, sentiment was about evenly divided, and although Seaford officially remained a part of the Union, many citizens took up arms under the grey uniform of the Confederacy.

However it was hazardous for anyone in the town to voice his sympathy for the South while the war was in progress. Several of

KEY TO ACCOMPANYING MAP

LEGEND:—Italic type indicates building now standing on original site

1. *Old Hooper Mansion* (oldest building in Town).
2. Solomen's Temple; Union Hotel; *Hotel Sussex*.
3. Indian Landing (*Hooper's Landing*).
4. Horsey's Wharf; Miller Pea Cannery; *Seaford Power House*.
5. Principal business district, early 19th century.
6. Hazzard's Tanyard.
7. Grain Exchange; Lumber Yard; *Delmarva Fertilizer Factory*.
8. Blacksmith Shop.
9. *Toll Bridge* (now owned and maintained by County).
10. *School No. 70*.
11. *School No. 102*.
12. Seaford Academy.
13. Bochim Meeting House; Shirt Factory; Seaford's first motion picture Theatre, owned and operated by J. Wright.
14. *St. Luke's P. E. Church*.
15. Gordy's Ice Plant; *P. E. Parish House*.
16. Boston Mill; Williams' Mill; *Seaford Milling Co.*
17. Old M. E. Parsonage.
18. Town Hall (1868).
19. First National Bank.
20. Hopkins' Peach Cannery (*Later Tin Shop*).
21. Sharp Marble Works.
22. Baseball Ground.
23. *Negro School*.
24. T. F. Knowles, Brickyard.
25. Gawthrop and Pennington, Lime Kiln.
26. Red Robin Saloon; Sussex National Bank; *Sussex Gas Company*.
27. Steamboat Wharf.
28. Morrow Block; *First National Bank*.
29. *Collison Block*.
30. Bell's Exchange Building; *Corner property now Seaford Trust Co. Building*.
31. *Coulbourn Building*.
32. Ice Plant; Motion Picture Theatre.
33. *Seaford News*.
34. *M. J. Cox and Co., Ladies' Wear*.
35. Seaford Public School.
36. *Seaford Marble Works*.
37. *Odd Fellows' Cemetery*.
38. Town Hall; Sussex National Bank; *Stein and Co., Haberdashers*.
39. *Greenabaum's Cannery*.
40. Jackson's Wharf; *Allen Package Co.; Seaford Shipyard; Ross Cannery; Negro Settlement*.
41. Town Hall; *Seaford Public Library; Ladies' Acorn Club*.
42. *Seaford Volunteer Fire Department Building*.
43. *R. & G. Shirt Factory*.
44. *A. S. Wooley & Co., Fertilizers*.
45. *Farm Produce Market*.
46. Iron Foundry.
47. *Purse's Potato Storage*.
48. *Burton Wharf*.

## KEY TO ACCOMPANYING MAP

LEGEND: *Italic Type indicates building now standing on original site*

49. *M. E. Church.*
50. *M. P. Church.*
51. *W. F. Haines & Co., Drugs.*
52. *Burton Bros., Hardware.*
53. Ralph Prettyman, Wheelwright and Undertaker; *M. L. Watson & Sons, Undertakers.*
54. *New Theatre.*
55. *Baseball Park.*
56. *Fred Douglas Negro School*
57. Annie K. Cannon, Seminary; *Postoffice.*
58. *Owens Building.*
59. (Car) John Allen, General Merchandise.
60. *J. E. Willey Property.*
61. *Dulaney's Mill.*
62. *Haines Building.*
63. Post Office; *Seaford 5c to \$1.00 Store.*
64. *L. W. Hurley, Lumber and Coal.*
65. *New Seaford School.*
66. *Hurley and White, Lumber Mill.*
67. *Sussex Gas Co. Power Plant.*
68. *Parsons Bros. Lumber Mill.*
69. *Enterprise. Milling Company, Feed.*
70. *Atlantic Ice & Storage Co.*
71. *Seaford Ice Company.*
72. *Garage; used as dance hall and basketball court.*
73. *Hastings & Eskridge, Lumber and Coal.*
74. *P. R. R. Depot; first combined with a hotel.*
75. *W. H. Stevens & Co., Oysters; T. F. Blades, Oysters.*
76. *Donoho and Co., Oysters.*
77. *J. B. Robinson & Co., Oysters.*
78. *J. A. Morgan, Potato Storage.*
79. *L. C. Longfellow, Department Store.*
80. *Cooperative Cannery.*
81. Seaford's First Garage (E. H. Allen and Oscar Graham, proprietors).
82. *Telephone Exchange.*
83. The Blue Jay Saloon.
84. *W. O. Covey, Wholesaler.*
85. *B. L. Ross, Seeds.*
86. *Church of Christ.*
87. *The Leader.*
88. *Johnson Potato Storage Co.*
89. *C. C. Allen, Baby Chicks.*
90. *John Purse Building.*
91. *Towers & Metten, Undertakers.*
92. *C. E. Hurley & Sons, Hardware.*
93. *J. B. Hurley and Sons, Garage.*
94. *O. E. Woolford, Grocery, (Negro).*
95. Business center around 1850.
96. Miss Willie Robinson, Dry Goods; *Nathan's Furniture Store.*
97. *Warrington Building.*
98. *Amateur Radio Station W3W1, owned by Elmer Ellis, Seaford's first licensed amateur.*
99. *J. B. Thompson Building.*
100. *Business Center 1932.*

## A HISTORY OF SEAFORD

the town's most prominent citizens were threatened with promises of being shipped south if they didn't keep quiet, and a Protestant Episcopal minister, the Rev. Thomas Martin, was evicted by force from St. Luke's pulpit because he refused to have prayers for the Union.

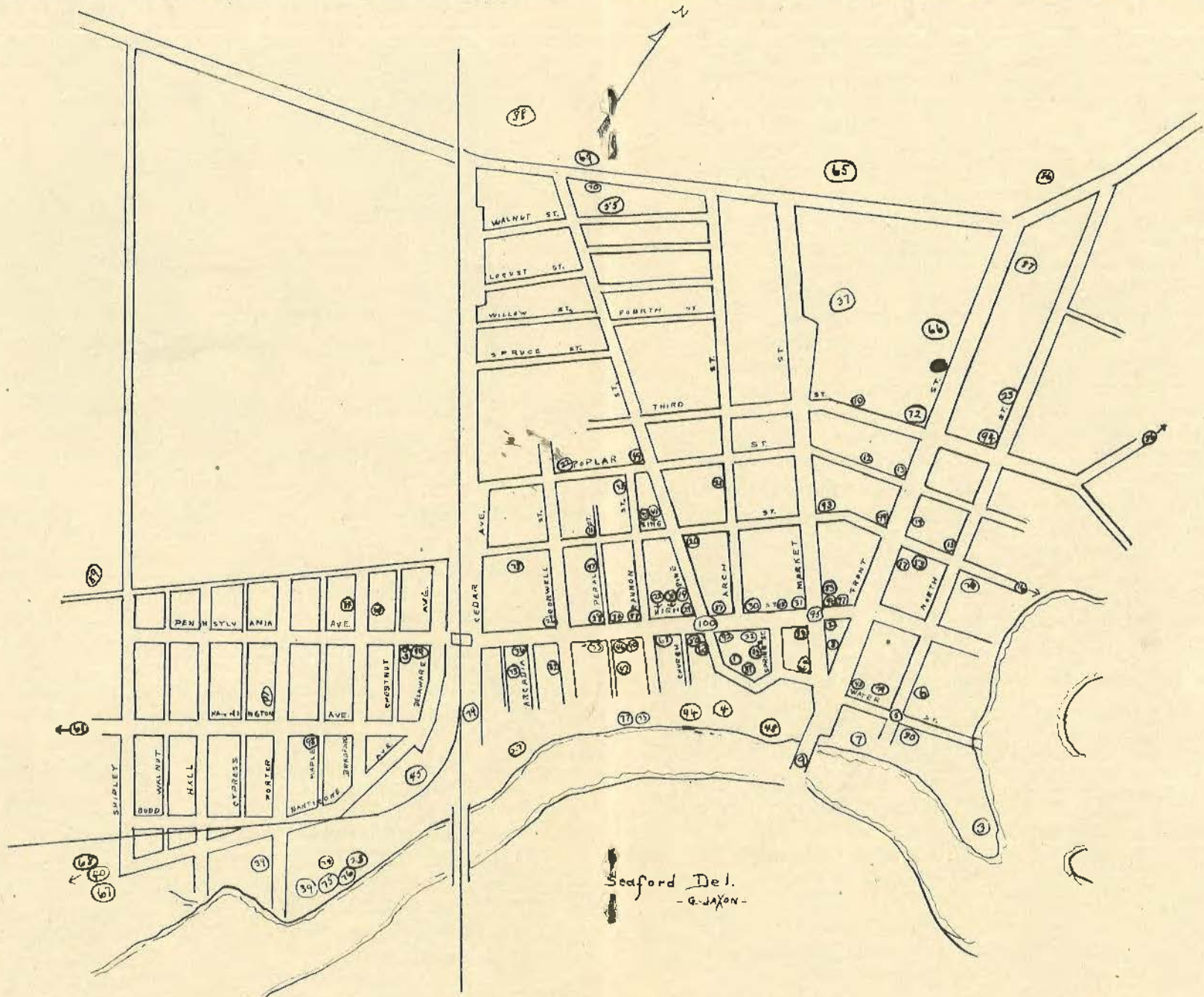
Following the war, organization of the negro element set free by the Emancipation Proclamation presented no serious problem in this region, as in other parts of the country. In many cases, the negroes remained with the families who were their former owners, and gradually drifted into a settlement of their own on the northeast side of Seaford. Today they maintain two churches and number about five hundred of Seaford's total population.

On April 6, 1865, Seaford became an incorporated town, under the laws of the State of Delaware, with Alfred Cottingham as Alderman, and Alfred Williams, Benjamin Stockley, Henry S. Hopkins, John Conaway and John K. Brown acting as the first town fathers. A charter having been granted, the first step taken by the Council was a survey of the village, which was made by James Stuart. In the same year a smallpox epidemic was raging in the community and the dogs of the town were regarded as carriers of the disease. The owners of these animals were taxed fifty cents apiece for each dog owned. This was the first tax ever levied by a Seaford government.

In 1869 C. C. Donoho moved to Seaford from Wicomico county, Maryland, and entered the oyster packing business. While not the first oyster packer to locate in Seaford, he laid the groundwork for the industry that was later one of the most important of the town. A few years later he was followed by W. H. Stevens, of Vienna, Maryland, who also opened an oyster packing house. Both of these men were very successful, and toward the close of the 19th century it was a common sight to see oyster boats lined side by side the entire width of the Nanticoke river. During season, oyster factories opened at 1.00 A. M. and closed at 7.00 P. M. Laborers could work as long as they liked, and for their convenience, saloons, pool rooms and restaurants remained open night and day. While the oyster industry still employs many people in season, there is but a fraction of the business transacted here today that was handled in 1900.

In 1866, when confronted with the problems of civic improvement, the town fathers decided on a system of taxation based on the value of properties in the town. The first tax rate was fixed at eight cents on the hundred dollars, and the revenue of this tax was used to grade High street.





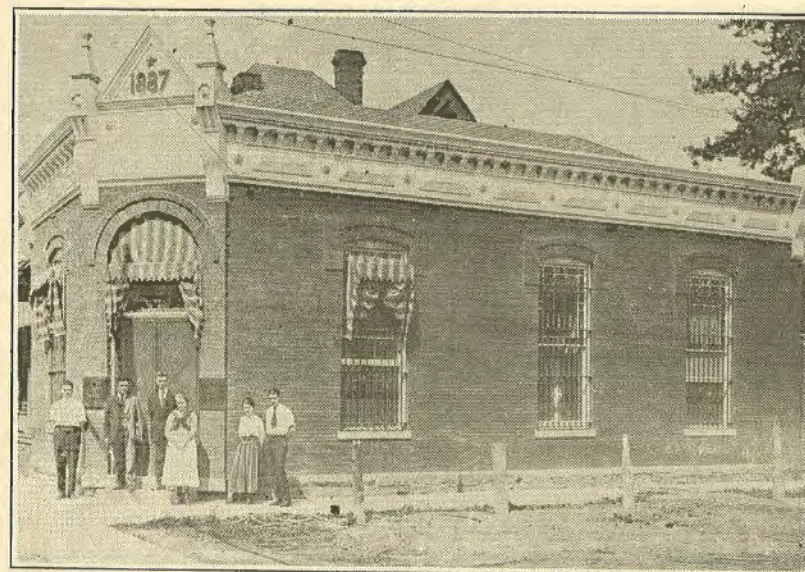
By 1871, Seaford had acquired a newspaper. Mr. C. C. Donoho established the Peninsula Record, the first paper to be published in the town, and G. W. Donoho, his son, now residing on south Conwell street, assisted in the make-up of its first edition.

From 1865 to 1895 the growth of the town went steadily forward. A town hall was erected in 1873, which served as a meeting place for many organizations. Seaford's early bands rehearsed there, and the first W. C. T. U. meeting was held in the building.

By 1874 civic pride had reached such a stage that brick sidewalks were laid on High street, with only one resident on the entire street objecting to the cost of the paving. Three years later, twenty-four street lamps were set up in the town, with a bailiff appointed the town lamp-lighter. A Board of Health was organized and ordinances for the suppression of contagion were rigidly enforced. By 1886 Pine street boasted of brick sidewalks, and the other streets in town followed soon after with this improvement. Board walks at street crossings were laid down, and a system of guttering was adopted.

It was only natural that with these developments property value should increase and in 1887 the value of the Seaford property tax amounted to nearly \$3000. By this time taxes had increased to seventeen cents on the hundred dollars, and 343 head taxes at fifty cents each were also collected.

Toward the last half of the ninth decade, Seaford was a thriving town. Its citizens were industrious, and its leaders were ably fitted to carry on a constructive and far-sighted plan of government. An example of the interest in civic development may be seen in the results of an election held in September, 1894, to determine whether or not a bond issue of \$20,000 should be arranged in order that Seaford could get a water pumping system. All but ten voters voted in favor of the project. The bond issue petition was sent to the Legislature for approval but it was not until five years later, in 1900, that the dreams of such a system were realized.



SUSSEX NATIONAL BANK, FORERUNNER OF SEAFORD TRUST CO.

Founded in 1885, this banking institution has since been an important factor in the financial interests of the community. In April 1918 it became a branch of the Delaware Trust Company and February 23, 1929, was organized as the Seaford Trust Company by a group of local capitalists, with a capital of \$90,000 and a surplus of \$45,000. The present bank building is a modern single story structure on the northeast corner of High and Arch streets. E. J. Winder is president of the Board of Directors, and Glenn M. Huston is treasurer.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1895 - 1932

FROM 1895 to the present time constitutes the final chapter in the growth of Seaford. In 1895 electricity was brought to the town.

At that time few places of business used the new service, and practically no homes adopted electrical installation. Telephonic communication, however, was accorded a more cordial reception, and in 1897, when the Diamond State Telephone Company opened an exchange here on the southwest corner of Arch and King streets, forty telephones were immediately put into operation. Prior to this the Universal Electric Company, of Baltimore, had applied to the town

for a franchise, but had never carried the project any further. At the time The Diamond State Company opened their exchange, only one operator was on duty and her hours were from 7.00 A. M. to 10.00 P. M. daily. Today Seaford is the central station for long distance calls for the entire southeast section of Sussex county, and 11 operators are required for the handling of telephonic communication.

In 1901, Seaford's electric power house was completed. This building, located at the foot of Pine street hill, was originally intended to house electric power apparatus as well as to serve as a pumping station. In 1902, however, the Sussex Power and Light Company, of Laurel, offered the town very reasonable electric rates, and got the franchise for the lighting of the town. Electric street lamps were installed, and it is interesting to note that on moonlight nights these lights were turned off in order to save electricity.

The advent of the power house and a 108-foot standpipe, used as a water reservoir, made Seaford one of the most up-to-date towns on the peninsula. This same building today houses equipment capable of pumping 350,000 gallons of water daily, an amount sufficient to fill the standpipe three times. Since the inauguration of this service water mains have been added to the system until Seaford at the present time has nearly eight miles of modern mains, running on practically every street of the town. In 1927, an Artesian well was drilled to take the place of former water supplies, and while the water of Seaford is hard, it is exceptionally pure. E. E. Conaway, the present water superintendent, also is in charge of the sewerage system of the town, which is adequate and modern in every respect.

In 1910 the Sussex Gas Company laid gas mains in the town, and installed a gas plant in Nanticoke City. Later that same year Nanticoke City became a part of Seaford, and is now known as West Seaford. At the same time that the two settlements merged, Bladesville, on the south side of the Nanticoke, was urged to incorporate with Seaford, but refused.

By 1912 the wood street crossings on High street were replaced with crossings made of cement. Later, cement crossings replaced the wood ones all over town.

The tax rate gradually increased until by 1915 every hundred dollars of property was taxable to the extent of fifty-five cents.

The coming of the World War was coincident with the fact that Seaford had definitely come of age. Stansbury Parsons, a pioneer lumber mill man opened the first basket and crate factory in 1901

and he was soon followed by mills owned by L. W. Hurley and the Allen and Moore Package Company. The Greenbaum family were the owners of one of the largest canneries on the Eastern Shore, packing as many as 240,000 cans of peas in a single day, and another canning house did business under the ownership of E. C. Ross. A sewing factory and a shipyard were also added to the list of industries. Seaford had grown as an agricultural market center and by 1915 it was one of the most important railroad centers on the Delaware Line.

On September 15, 1921, the town fathers inaugurated a movement that was to become one of the most important steps in the history of the development of the town. Although there were nearly eleven miles of street in the town, the only improvement ever done to their surface consisted of their being graded with oyster shells from time to time. During the winter months, particularly after a rain, High street was a sea of mud, and the drainage system was, at the very best, very unsatisfactory. In 1921, a \$25,000 bond issue for the concreting of High street from curb to curb was launched, and in the summer of the following year the project was finished. At its completion Seaford was in possession of the most modern strip of concrete in the State, and the improvement to the town's business center was immeasurable.

Along with the paving of High street came Seaford's first fire engine. Prior to 1921 sections of hose were attached to fire plugs and the resulting weak streams of water were Seaford's sole fire protection. On October 1, 1921, the town council voted a \$10,000 bond issue for the purchase of modern firefighting equipment, which included, among other things, a fire engine. The engine purchased was a Seagrave, and is still in use, although a lighter engine, purchased later, now answers most of the out-of-town calls. These engines have proved of untold value in their protection of Seaford property and backed by an extremely efficient fire company, composed entirely of volunteers from the town, Seaford can boast of being one of the best protected from the ravages of fire of all the towns on the Shore.

In 1923 property owners on Pine street petitioned the town council for improvements, and the outcome of their petition was a bond issue of \$20,000, for improvements to be in the form of a more modern sewer, and a 16-foot concrete strip down the center of the street.

Coincident with these improvements it was decided to extend the sewer conveniences to the other streets in the town, and by 1924

the entire town sewerage system had been modernized, and Pine street had its concrete roadway.

Concrete roads were fast joining every town in the State, and in 1923 the Stein highway, from Seaford to Reliance, was laid. This six-mile strip of road made Seaford easy of access to the best farming land in this entire section, and took its name from Samuel J. Stein, a prominent Seaford merchant. Mr. Stein worked tirelessly on the project, and it was due to his efforts that the right-of-way for the entire length of the concrete strip was presented to the State without a penny of expense to the Highway Department.

Curbing and the widening of the cement roadway from curb to curb was completed in 1929 on Pine street, and in 1930 Market street was paved for its entire distance.

Recently the State highway, running through Front street, has been widened, and Seaford now boasts of having more fully concreted streets than any town in the county.

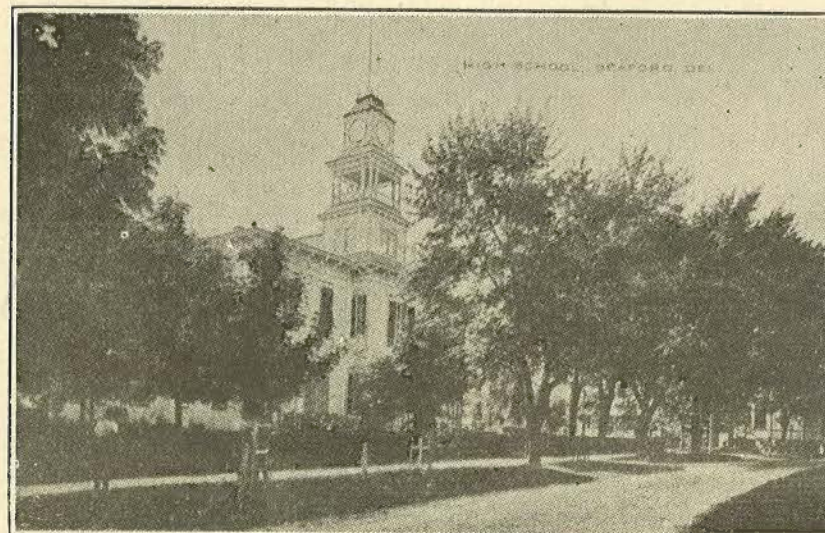
With the addition of these improvements to the town, real estate values have increased until today the assessed valuation of property amounts to \$1,600,000 with a return in taxes of approximately \$19,000.

There is no doubt that Seaford will never be a large city. The town, however, possesses geographical advantages that will some day make it much larger than it is at present, but these advantages are greatly overshadowed by those of another type. These latter advantages have to do with the citizens themselves. Seaford citizens have all the qualities that go to make a small town a decent place in which to live. For the most part, they are honest, industrious and likeable, and when these three qualities are evident in its citizenry, a town cannot help but succeed.

### Administrators of The Town

Since the Incorporation of Seaford in 1865, a council, elected by the citizens of the village, has carried on its civic business. Until 1917, the voters did not vote for a mayor or other administrative leader. Up to 1885 members of the council appointed a leader from the citizenry of the town and designated him Alderman. From 1885 to 1917 members of the council elected from their own membership one who was to be called President of the Council. In both cases the one elected was the administrator of Seaford's civic government. The following is a list of these men from 1865 to date:

<i>Aldermen</i>		1890-1891	William H. Stevens
1865-1871	Alfred Cottingham	1892-1894	W. H. Coulbourn
1871-	Hugh Martin ( <i>un- expired term of Mr. Cottingham due to death</i> ).	1895-1897	Henry L. Phillips
		1897-1900	B. Frank Prettyman
		1900-1903	Stansbury Parsons
		1903-1907	P. Jefferson Wil- liams
1871-1879	Jesse W. Robinson	1907-1910	Samuel Pusey
1879-1883	Major W. Allen	1910-1915	G. W. Donoho
1883-1884	William I. Stewart	1915-1917	Walter B. Robinson
1884-1885	William H. Stevens		
<i>Presidents of Council</i>		<i>Mayors</i>	
1885-	J. B. Morrow	1917-1920	Joseph H. Cox
1886-	L. E. Wallace	1920-1924	John R. Eskridge
1887-1889	J. B. Morrow	1924-1931	Charles E. Hastings
		1931-	Howard F. Callaway



SEAFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL 1895-1928

This building, located on the southwest corner of Poplar and Cannon streets, housed the 12 grades of Seaford's educational system.

## The Story of Education

SINCE the beginning of the 19th century free public education has been a part of the history of Seaford. Indeed, for a time, around 1850, Seaford had two free schools within its corporate limits.

Although Dr. Henry Little conducted a school at his home in what is now the Wesley district, the earliest school in town of which there is any record was located on the north side of Third street, between Front and Market. This served as Seaford's first free school for many years, with Pipkin Minor as its teacher. The building is still standing on its original site.

Toward the end of this building's use as a place of public education, a free school sprang up for residents east of Arch street, and was located on the old school property at the north end of Cannon street.

So poor were the State and local governments at this time that a full nine months education could not be given. Three months out of twelve were all that could be provided to students who were not able to study privately. For this reason many private homes housed supplementary schools, at which, for a small fee, children could continue their education.

Pipkin Minor, who was long associated with education in Seaford, also directed the Seaford Academy. This institution stood on the old M. E. Church graveyard site at the corner of Poplar and Front streets, and for many years was the main educational center for the district. Leonides Polk, who was later to become a famous general in the Confederate army, served for a time as an instructor in the Academy.

There is a record of a private school having been conducted in 1840 by a Miss Bradley near Indian Landing. Later in the same decade Miss Allie Morgan conducted a similar school.

With the discontinuance of Seaford's first school, Miss Martha Hazzard opened a private school in what is now the Barnes property, just south of Odd Fellows' Cemetery.

A new and modern four-room building was erected in 1876 to take the place of the school then standing on the Cannon street lot. In 1895 this building was destroyed by fire, and was supplanted by the school which served until April 1, 1928, at which time it, too, was destroyed by fire. In the case of the latter fire, there is little doubt

but that the building was touched off by a fire maniac. For several months mysterious fires had been breaking out all over town, and only three weeks previous to the fire a group representing the Seaford Volunteer Fire Department had advised the school board to keep a careful watch for just such an occurrence as happened.

While the school board was making arrangements with the State Board of Education and wealthy citizens of the State for a new building, classes were conducted in the churches, lodgerooms and vacant storerooms of the town.

By 1929 a three-story brick building, complete in every detail, had been constructed at a cost of \$360,000. The school board under whose guidance this project was fostered consisted of C. W. Robinson, president; Ernest A. Simon, vice-president, and H. M. Bell. W. B. Thornburgh was the first superintendent to take charge in the new building. The institution today has an enrollment of 850 students. Pierre du Pont, one of the greatest benefactors to educational work this State has ever known, gave \$300,000 toward this magnificent building.

In 1921, there was erected on a portion of the Pea Liquor District, northeast of Seaford, a nine-room single story brick building for the education of Seaford's negro population. This building replaced a two-story frame building on North street then in use as a school and was called the Fred L. Douglass school, with Professor R. W. Thomas as its first principal.

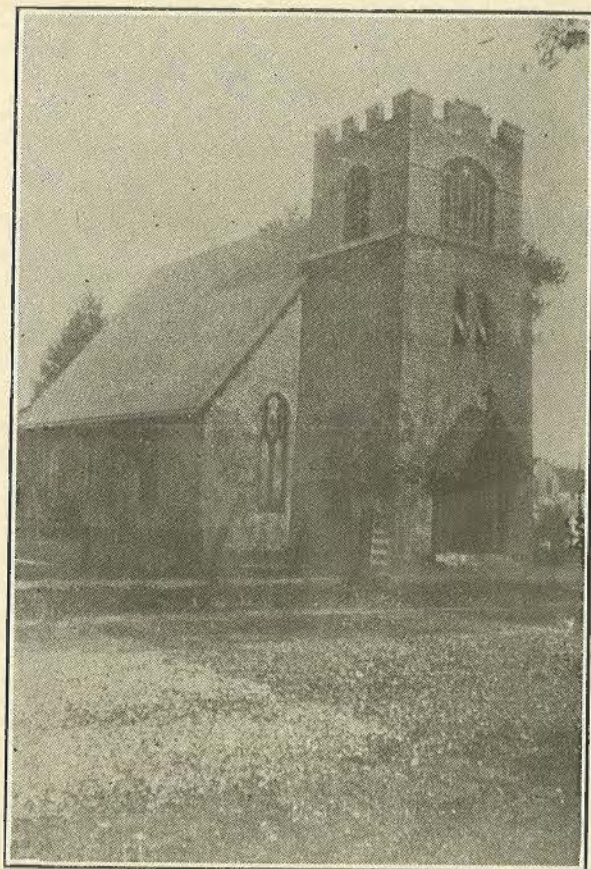
Until 1931, nearly all rural children attended the first eight grades of school in country schoolhouses, only coming to Seaford to complete their high school education. By 1931, however, such rural schools as Wesley, Morgan, Neal, Tull, and Flowers had consolidated with the Seaford Special School District, and today busses go into every district outside the town and bring the children to this central school.

Private schools flourished in the latter part of the 19th century and there are records of no less than fifteen within a period of thirty years, conducted for the most part by educated ladies of the town. The school conducted by Miss Annie K. Cannon on the site of the present postoffice was probably the best known of its kind. Following Miss Cannon's retirement, Miss Nettie Donoho and Miss Emma Price conducted like institutions. On the second floor of the Cottingham building a select finishing school for young ladies was conducted by a Miss Rivers, who later moved her school to the Hardesty property on Front street. A Mr. Bartlett, Jerry Eskridge, Professor

Brerwood and Mrs. Florence Herrant also conducted private schools in the town.

In 1902 Miss Lillie Wright opened a school on the second floor of the Bell's Exchange building, and conducted it until 1906. At that time she turned it over to her mother, Mrs. H. Martin Wright, who continued it until 1913.

Few towns in the State have the educational facilities of Seaford. The new school building is one of the show places of the State, and the faculty is splendidly chosen. The school board is alive to the needs of the day, and the entire system bids fair to do great things toward the future well-being of the town.



ST. LUKE'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

This church, located on Front street between King and Poplar, today has a membership of 227.

## Seaford Churches

*The following sketches of the churches have been made a separate part of the history of Seaford for a very definite reason. It would have been practically impossible to give an effective story of the history of these organizations while other town events were being chronicled, and it is the author's belief that their adoption in the following form makes them a great deal more interesting.*

### ST. LUKE'S PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**T**HE first church services ever to be held in this section were conducted in the home of Walter Gameson about the year 1633.

From records in the possession of the Bishop of London, Rev. Arthur Huston, a travelling minister who had for his charge the entire peninsula, conducted this service, and from this humble beginning arose what is now St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Parish. Services in the homes of various church members living in the section were conducted for about half a century, at which time a log chapel St. Mary's, was erected near what is now known as Chapel Branch. Among the first communicants of this parish were Walter Gameson, Thomas Jacobs, Jeremiah McNeilly, Elijah Cannon and John Gibbons.

Although St. Mary's Chapel gradually fell into disuse, records in England and St. Luke's Church here indicate that services have been held continuously from 1633 to the present time.

On June 4, 1827, a meeting of the vestry of the church was called by the Rev. Corry Chambers, and held in the home of Dr. John Gibbons to discuss plans for the building of the present church. At that time the vestry consisted of Charles H. Ross, Charles Wright, Major W. Allen, Henry Hazzard, Dr. John Gibbons and Elijah Cannon.

The church was not incorporated, however, until February 20, 1837, at which time William Dulaney, Jeremiah McNeilly, George Hearn and Benjamin Stockley were elected to the vestry.

Six years later the building now standing on Front street between King and Poplar streets was erected, and on May 21, 1843 was consecrated by Bishop Lee. At the same time Mr. John Long was ordained Deacon and became a rector for one year at a salary of \$100 per year. At the end of the year Rev. Long asked for a raise in salary, which was denied him, the vestry at the time passing a resolution of regret that a minister of the gospel should ever go so far

as to ask for more money, when he derived so much spiritually from his calling.

Leonides Polk, who later became a general in the Confederate Army, assisted for a time in the church services of this parish.

In 1919, the rectory, which stood at the corner of Third and Front streets, was sold, and the new rectory is now located on the northwest corner of Poplar and Arch streets.

Due to the untiring work of Dr. John R. Crosby, the present rector of the parish, a modern church school and parish house was erected just back of the church on the corner of North and King streets, and dedicated on St. Luke's Day, October 18, 1931.

Items of historical interest concerning the first events of their kind to be held in the present church building follow:

- First Baptism—June 30, 1835—Terpin Wright.
- First Confirmation—May 30, 1836—Dr. John Gibbons, by Rt. Rev. H. Onderdonk, Bishop of Pennsylvania.
- First Marriage—August 4, 1844—James Staurt, of Middleford, to Miss Caroline Gibbons.
- First Burial—November, 1844—Washington N. Gibbons.



ST. JOHN'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

This church, located on the northwest corner of Pine and Poplar streets, today has a membership of 513.

MT. OLIVET METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

A GREAT deal of uncertainty surrounds the exact date of the beginning of the Methodist Protestant Church in Seaford. Near the year 1830 Dr. William Morgan, pastor of the Methodist Protestant group, succeeded in having the old M. E. Chapel then standing at Chapel Branch, moved into Seaford and placed on a part of the Hooper burying ground. The site of this church has remained at this spot ever since.

In 1847, the first Board of Trustees of which we have any record, was appointed, with the following membership: Dr. William Morgan, P. N. Rust, Samuel Lacey, Thomas I. Phillips, Isiah Neal and Henry Wallace.

Shortly after their appointment a new church building was erected on the same site as the old one, and in 1869 the burial ground in the rear of the church was laid off as a church cemetery.

The affairs of the church moved along in a smooth fashion until 1896, when the increased membership of the church body made their building inadequate to hold the regular congregations. The present brick church was the outcome of this growth.

Until a few years ago a handsome sycamore tree reared its limbs across the portals of Mt. Olivet, but with the laying of concrete on High street, this ancient landmark was torn down.

Mt. Olivet M. P. Parsonage is located on Cannon street between High and King, and its present tenant is the Rev. G. J. Hooker, who is also pastor of Gethsemane M. P. Church, Reliance.

ST. JOHN'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE early days of Methodist history Old Dorchester Circuit, which was organized in 1780, included a part of Sussex county.

Old Bethel Church on Seaford Circuit was built in 1781, and became one of the regular preaching places of the itinerants from old "Dorsey." How long before this the local Society was organized there seems to be no record to tell. When, later on, a society was organized in the neighborhood of Seaford, it too became one of the appointments on Dorchester Circuit, and so continued until 1844.

There seems to be no record of the date of the first organization of a Methodist Society in this immediate community, but it must have been as early as the last decade of the eighteenth century. On August 4, 1804, a deed was made by John Cannon and Jeremiah Rust Jackson for one acre of land at Chapel Branch to John Handy, Thomas

Prettyman, Jeremiah Brown, Augustus Brown, Nathan Cannon, J. Rust Cannon and William Davis, as trustees for the Methodist Episcopal Church. On this ground a chapel was erected which was used for both church and school purposes until about 1820.

On April 29, 1818, James Conwell gave a deed to Henry Little, Aaron Swiggett, Robert Hopkins, Whitefield Hughes, George Hazard, Levin Cannon and Freeman Rose for the lot of ground on which was erected a house of worship to be known as Bochim Meeting House. This was built and occupied about 1820, and continued to be used until 1860.

As time passed on and the town grew, need for a new and larger church building became pressing. In 1859, under the leadership of Rev. John F. Chaplain a new church was started on the same site as the old one and by 1860 had been completed at a cost of about \$4,000. This building was used continuously as a house of worship till the end of 1897. It was afterwards used as a shirt factory, and later was destroyed by fire.

On February 7, 1861, a meeting of the congregation was called to elect a board of trustees to comply with a new State law, and the following men were elected: Henry Little, Rhoads Hazzard, Hugh Brown, William E. Rogers, Levin J. Cannon, Ralph D. Prettyman and William E. Cannon.

Early in 1870 by a vote of the congregation the name of the church was changed from "Bochim Meeting House" to "St. John's" in honor of Rev. John L. Taft, the retiring pastor.

During the pastorate of Rev. W. B. Gregg, a lot was secured and a parsonage built on East High street. But presently the feeling began to grow that neither the church nor the parsonage was well located, and that it would be to the interest of the society to secure lots of a more desirable location, to which the old church should be moved or on which a new one should be built. This agitation resulted in the purchase of the lot where the new church now stands, in May, 1889. In the same year, Mrs. Caroline Hallowell donated the adjacent lot to be used as the site for a parsonage, and in 1889 the parsonage was erected.

Plans for the building of a new church took definite shape in 1896 with the arrival of Rev. R. K. Stevenson. During the fall and winter of that year over one hundred members were converted to the Methodist faith. This greatly inspired the people and a building committee composed of Rev. R. K. Stevenson, Rev. P. H. Rawlins, J. N. Johns, H. W. Baker, Geo. W. Emery, J. E. Dutton, H. L. Phillips, Wm.

McDowell, J. R. Cooke, L. N. Buttle, Madison Willin and W. H. Miller set about raising funds for the church. Ground was broken with appropriate religious services April 27, 1897, and the building was finished and dedicated January 2, 1898. A pipe organ was installed in 1905 and a little later a room was added for the use of the little folks. Today St. John's has the largest membership of any Seaford church and its activities play an important part in the life of the town.

### *The Story of Adoniram Abrahams, a Seaford Slave*

**I**N 1686 Adoniram Abrahams was born in Seaford Hundred, the youngest of eight children—all slaves in the family of a Mr. Pennewill, a farmer and tanner residing in the neighborhood of what is now Reliance. When Adoniram was eight years old, his master sold the entire family excepting him, and moved to Philadelphia, taking the young boy along as his personal servant.

In that city he attracted the attention of a member of the Society of Friends, who became interested in him and aided him in getting an education. So industriously did he apply himself to this opportunity that he was known throughout Philadelphia as the best educated member of the negro race.

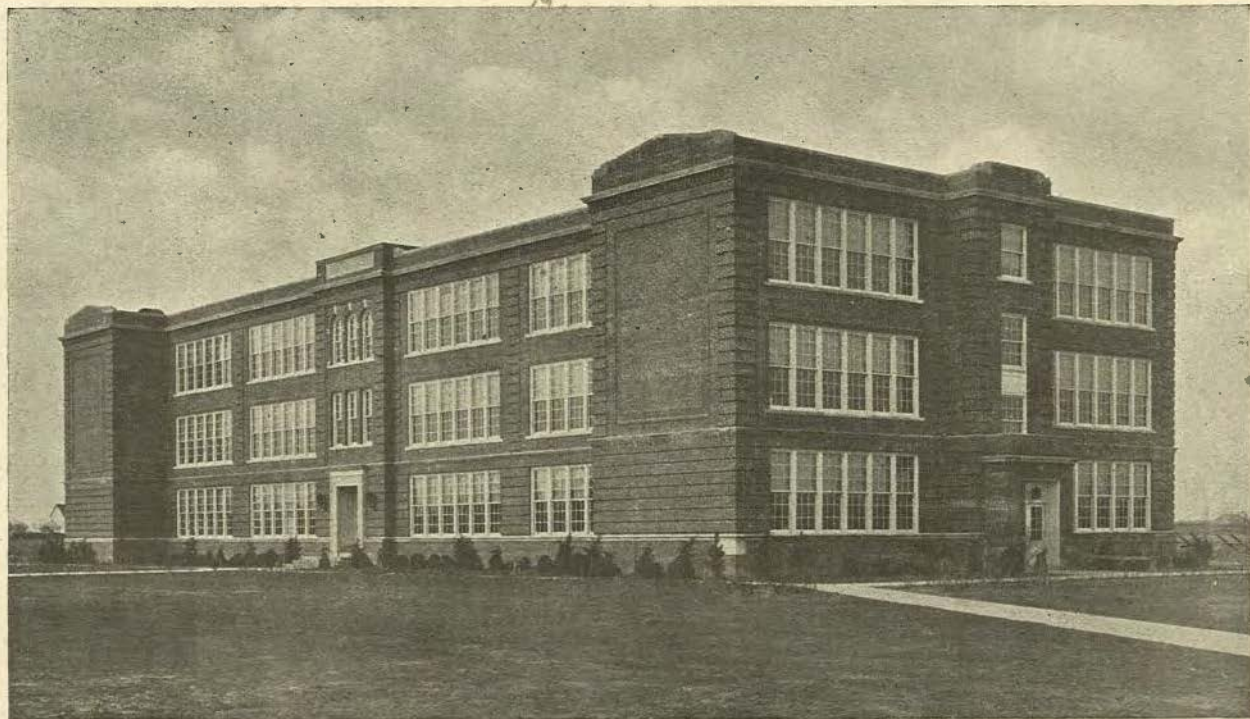
A year later he had saved enough money to buy his freedom and married a slave girl by the name of Rebecca, whose freedom he purchased during the course of the next five years.

Through his efforts a society was founded for the uplift of the colored race. This society is still in existence today. To assist in this work a building was purchased for religious and social activities, and later became an independent colored church, of which Abrahams was appointed lay-reader in charge. After some years it was felt that the colored people should have their own parish in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the congregation under his leadership bought a lot at 12th street below Walnut, and built the first colored Episcopal church in America.

Abrahams was ordained Deacon and later Priest. After 55 years of devoted service, during which time he won the respect of the entire city, he passed away in his 90th year, and was the only colored individual ever honored with a civic burial.

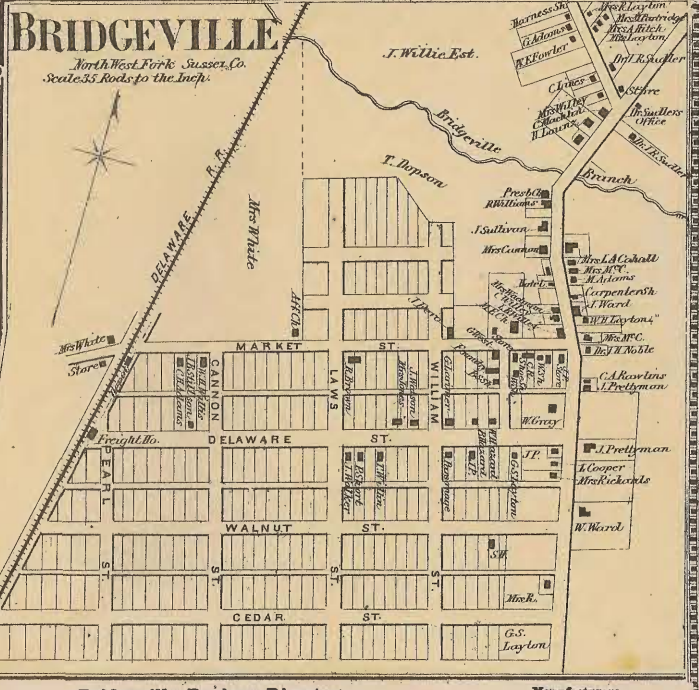
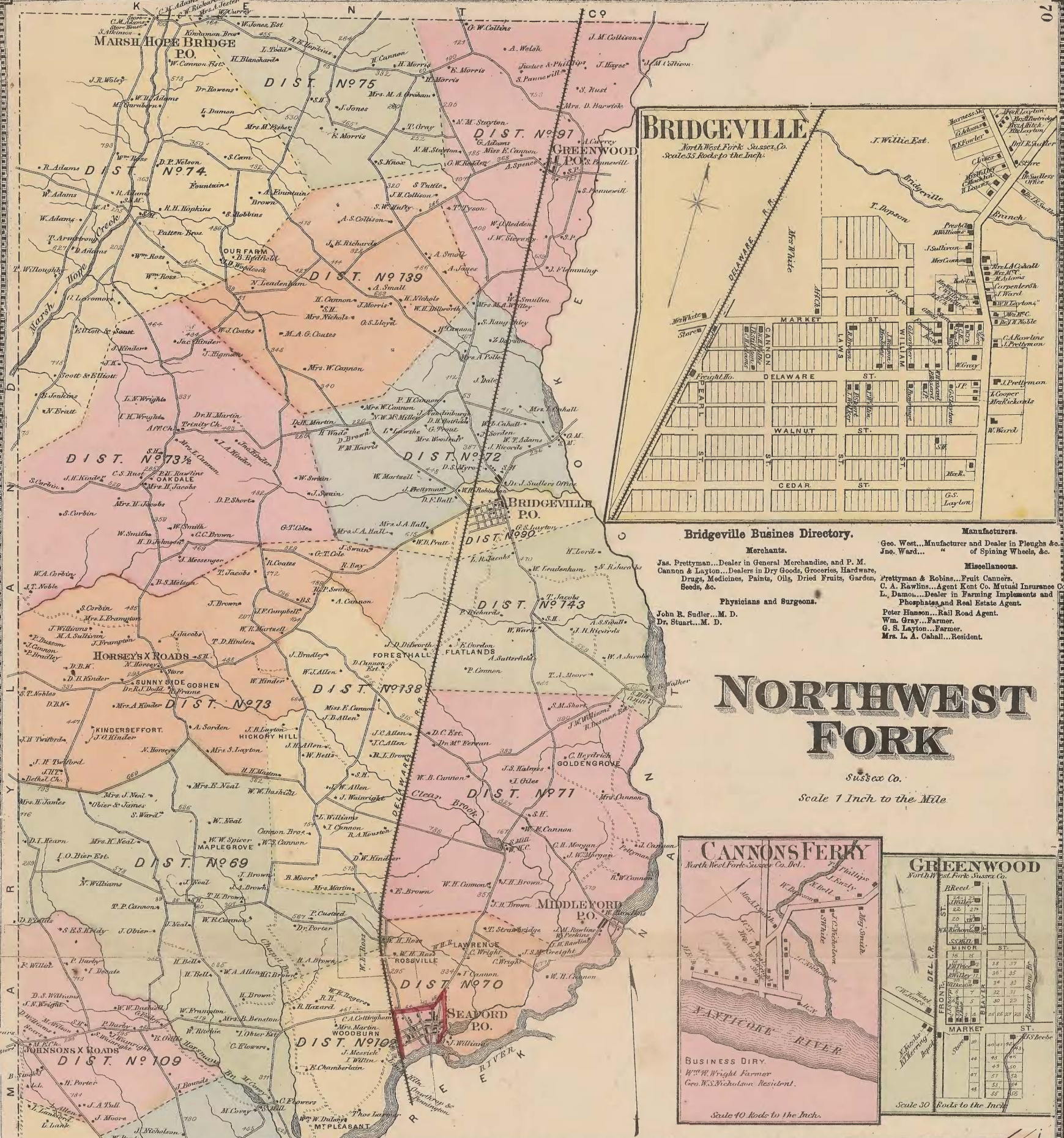
The colored Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia is still in existence as an old and flourishing colored parish; and directly has its origin in the early training implanted in Adoniram Abrahams at the Protestant Episcopal Parish located at Chapel Branch, near Seaford.





SEAFORD'S NEW SCHOOL

The erection of this splendid educational center was made possible largely through the generosity of Pierre S. duPont, one of Delaware's first citizens.



**Bridgeville Business Directory.**

**Manufacturers.**  
Geo. West...Manufacturer and Dealer in Ploughs &c.  
Jno. Ward... " of Spinning Wheels, &c.

**Miscellaneous.**  
Pretzman & Robins...Fruit Cannors.  
C. A. Rawlins...Agent Kent Co. Mutual Insurance Co.  
L. Damon...Dealer in Farming Implements and Phosphates and Real Estate Agent.  
Peter Hanson...Rail Road Agent.  
Wm. Gray...Farmer.  
G. S. Layton...Farmer.  
Mrs. L. A. Cahall...Resident.

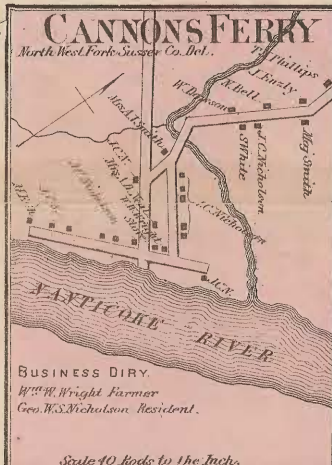
**Physicians and Surgeons.**  
John R. Sudler...M. D.  
Dr. Stuart...M. D.

**Merchants.**  
Jas. Pretzman...Dealer in General Merchandise, and P. M. Cannon & Layton...Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Drugs, Medicines, Paints, Oils, Dried Fruits, Garden Seeds, &c.

# NORTHWEST FORK

Sussex Co.

Scale 1 Inch to the Mile



**Seaford Business Directory.**

**Hotel.**  
T. W. Dawson...Proprietor of Union House.

**Physicians and Surgeons.**  
Jacob Knowles...Physician and Surgeon.  
Joe. P. H. Shipley... " "  
Hugh Martin... " "  
J. H. D. Knowles... " "  
J. W. Murrell...Surgeon Dentist.

**Merchants.**  
L. J. Cannon...Dealer in General Merchandise.  
W. B. Horsey... " "  
John W. Phillips P. M. and Dealer in General Merchandise.  
Willis & Conaway... " "  
H. W. Baker... " "  
Joseph C. Collison... " "  
J. E. Darboe...Dealer in General Merchandise and Brick Manufacturer.  
T. H. Chipman... " "  
J. P. Conaway... " "  
Stiles & Fisher...Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Provisions, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, Hardware, Notions, &c.  
J. K. Brown...Dealer in General Merchandise.  
Jacob W. Wallace...Dealer in Dry Goods, Notions, &c.

**Bankers.**  
Isaac M. Fisher...Cashier First National Bank, Seaford.  
N. H. Brown...Teller

**Manufacturers.**  
Gawthrop & Pennington...Manufacturers of Shell Lime.  
E. R. Sharp...Marble Works.  
T. F. Knowles & Brother...Brick Manufacturers.  
S. G. Patterson...Manufacturer of Saddles and Harness.  
W. T. Hill...Bakery and Confectioner.  
J. Long...Boys' and Men's Clothing Made to Order.  
J. Long...Merchant Miller.

**Druggist.**  
T. E. Cottingham...Wholesale and Retail Dealer in Drugs Medicines, Chemicals, Paints, Oils, Eye Stuffs, Confectionaries, Soaps, Fancy Articles, &c.

**Blacksmiths.**  
Thomas Scott...Blacksmith.  
Geo. M. Scott... " "

**Carpenters and Contractors.**  
L. E. Wallace...Carpenter and Builder.  
E. E. Wing...Contractor and Builder.  
James M. Dutton...Contractor and Builder.  
Alfred Williams... " "  
L. Q. Dennis, Jr...Brick layer and Contractor.

**Miscellaneous.**  
Annie K. Cannon...Principal of Seaford Seminary.  
H. L. Hopkins...Fruit Canner.  
Thomas I. Colburn...Restaurant.  
James Stuart...Notary Public, Surveyor and Conveyancer.  
Lewis Q. Smith...Ship and House Painter.  
Wingate B. Conaway...Oyster Dealer.  
George T. Kay...Delaware R. R. Ticket and Freight Agent.  
M. Colburn...Lumber and Grain Dealer, also Shipper of Produce and Lumber.

**Residents.**  
James H. Radoliff...  
Avandrus Outten...

An Act to divide North West Fork Hundred, in Sussex County into two Hundreds, to be called, respectively, North West Fork Hundred and Seaford Hundred.

Section 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Delaware in General Assembly met That North West Fork Hundred in Sussex County shall be, and the same is hereby divided into two Hundreds for the purpose of holding the General and Special elections the election of Assessors and inspectors and for the appointment of Constables and for such other purposes as may be necessary to constitute the respective Hundreds distinct and separate hundreds, with the rights that may properly appertain to them as such All that part of said North West Fork Hundred now embraced in upper North West Fork Election District shall constitute one Hundred of Sussex County and shall be called and known by the name of North West Fork Hundred. And all that part of said North West Fork Hundred now embraced in Lower North West Fork Election District shall constitute one Hundred of Sussex County and shall be called and known by the name of Seaford Hundred and all laws of this State that apply to Hundreds of Sussex County as such shall apply and extend to the said North West Fork Hundred and the said Seaford Hundred as separate and distinct Hundreds.

Section 2 Be it further enacted by the authority

29

29