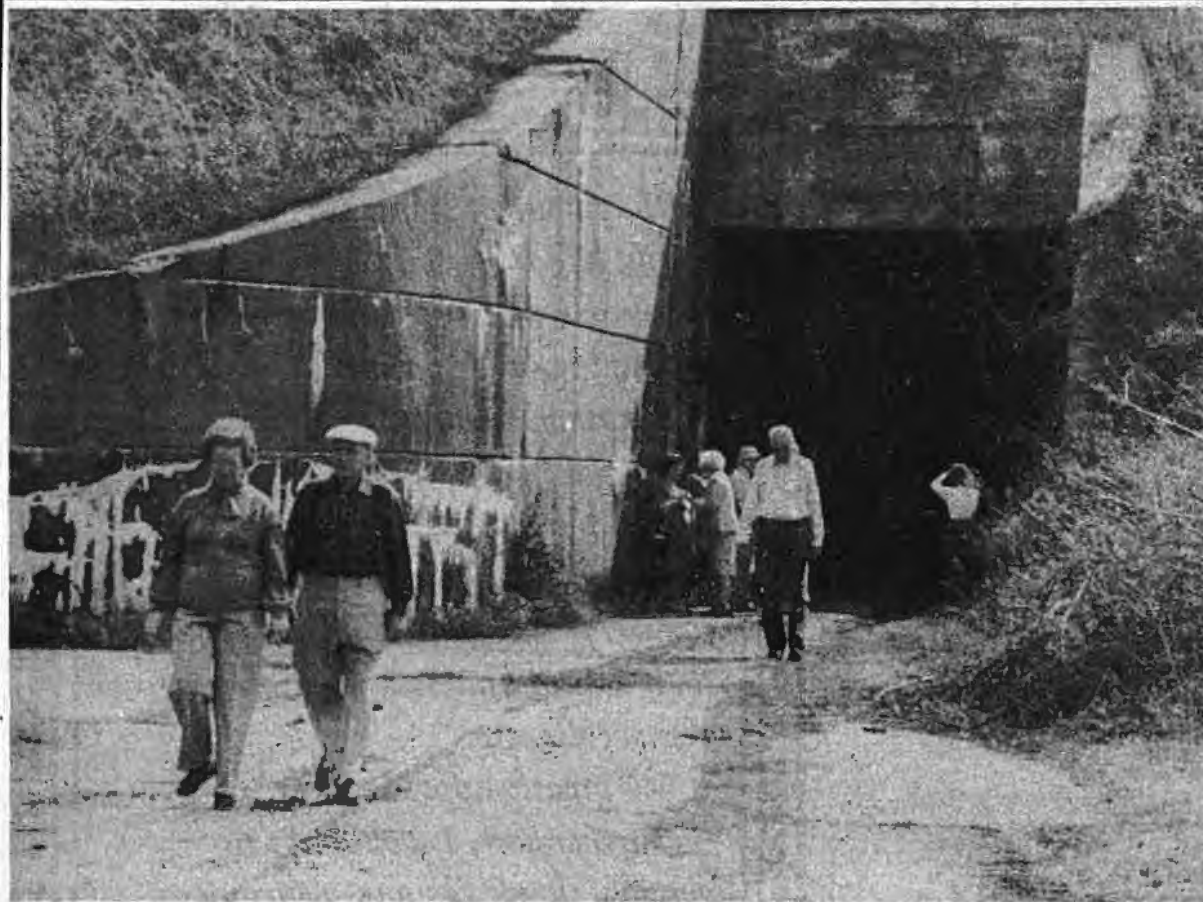


## INTO THE DEPTHS OF AREA HISTORY



The underground bunkers at Fort Saulsbury were open for tours following the dedication of a historical marker Saturday.

Photos by Doris Beard

# DAR helps recall World War II history with marker dedication at Ft. Saulsbury

# DAR helps recall World War II history with marker dedication at Ft. Saulsbury

By Doris Beard

**SLAUGHTER BEACH** - The Capt. Jonathan Caldwell Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) dedicated a Delaware Historical Marker to Fort Saulsbury Saturday, April 6.

Slaughter Beach historian Dr. Hugh M. Miller said the dedication drew nearly 200.

Fort Saulsbury was built in 1917 as a coastal defense fortification of the U. S. Army.

It was named for Willard Saulsbury, U. S. Senator from Delaware between 1859-71.

Descendants of Sen. Saulsbury, Milford residents James F. and Esther B. Saulsbury were present for the dedication.

"This was built during World War I," Miller said. "Four 'great guns' were put here to defend the bay."

The "great guns" were 40 feet long and 12 inches across.

During World War II, the fort was used as a training site. "On Pearl Harbor Day, Dec. 7, 1941, 200 men were stationed here," Miller said.

"This bay was never entered by

the enemy, but it came near it," Miller said.

The historian said the marker should contain the word "memorial" since so many who served there were not present.

Veterans who were stationed at Fort Saulsbury and were present for the dedication were: Raymond H. Jacobs, James F. Saulsbury, Gordon Ellis, Carlton "Skinny" Carmean, James T. Carey (first sergeant), Robert H. Fields, Roscoe Fisher, Jack Strickland and Charles Rocco.

Jacobs came from New York for the dedication. He was part of a team in 1941 who made a training film on the use and care of the great guns.

The north battery was named for Col. David Hall and the south for Col. John Haslet, heroes of the Revolution.

Following removal of the great guns during World War II, the fort was used to house prisoners of war. As many as 300 prisoners were interned there at one time.

"The national archives say more than 1,000 European prisoners

See SAULSBURY - page 11A



Emory and Edith Short of Georgetown have a prisoner's eye view of the cells inside Fort Saulsbury. Mr. Short is a World War II veteran; his wife a "G. I. Bride."

## Saulsbury —

(Continued from page 1)

were here during the war," said Betty Homan, honorary past regent of the DAR.

"Most people today don't know Fort Saulsbury is here and what an important part it played in our history," Homan said. "With the marker here now, hopefully they will."

Miller said one of the veterans present for the dedication later called him and said he'd spoken with a man present who said he'd been a prisoner there.

"It's really unfortunate he didn't make himself known to us on Saturday," Miller said.

Miller said he'd been looking for

former prisoners of the fort, through the German Society, advertising and research.

"Evidently, he told the veteran he'd been treated well while he was there," Miller said of the former prisoner.

Miller requested that anyone with information about the former prisoner who was present call him at 422-0765.

The prisoners supplied labor for local agriculture during their stay.

Miller has written a booklet about Fort Saulsbury, which will be published in its entirety in the next edition of the Milford Historical Society's newsletter.

An unknown benefactor is paying to have the booklet published as well. "I don't know who he is or even who the publishing company

is," Miller said.

The fort was deactivated in 1946 and sold as surplus property in 1948, reportedly for \$10,000. Because of the dampness, much of the hardware at the fort was made from brass.

The buyers of the property reportedly collected and sold the brass remnants, recovering the price they paid for the land.

Following the dedication, the bunkers were open for tours.

The vast concrete bunkers are now barren, damp and cool.

The echoing chambers, many of which have fireplaces, cannot be identified by their present appearance.

Several open bay areas on the west side of the Hall bunker can be identified as POW bays by the bars

on the windows along its length.

The Battery Haslet bunker today has begun to show its age, with cracking concrete allowing water to seep in and heavy rainfalls washing mud inside.

"This place isn't nearly as big as I thought it was," said Emory Short, a World War II Army veteran from Georgetown.

"I used to drive by here as a teenager and think it must be a huge place," Short said. He added that the fort was deactivated before he returned to the states from Europe.

The property, east of Milford on Rt. 36, is currently occupied by the Gerald Kendzierski family. The Kendzierski's allow public tours of Fort Saulsbury by calling them in advance at 422-6184.

# Former fort near Milford captures place in history

By **Lisa Scott Screeton**  
Staff writer

FORT SAULSBURY — About 50 years ago, while James T. Carey of Lewes was a U.S. Army first sergeant assigned to Fort Saulsbury, he took snapshots of his buddies in front of the mess hall.

On Saturday, Mr. Carey got to show that photograph to several former soldiers who gathered to dedicate the historical marker commemorating Fort Saulsbury's contribution to coastal defense.

Located east of Milford on Del. 36, the marker is the product of months of work by the Capt. Jonathan Caldwell Chapter of

the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Patricia T. Marshall of Milford, chapter regent, said the idea for requesting a marker came following a presentation to the DAR by local historian Hugh M. Miller.

What remains of the fort can't be seen from the road. Built in 1917 by the Army, the fort was deactivated in 1946 and sold as surplus property in 1948.

According to Mr. Miller, the fort was named for Willard Saulsbury, a U.S. senator from Delaware who served during the Civil War.

Mr. Miller said the fort housed

See Fort — Page 2





State News/Lisa Screenshot

From left, Charles J. Rocco of Milford and James F. and Esther B. Saulsbury of Milford look at a photo taken at Fort Saulsbury, on Delaware Bay near Milford, in 1941 by James T. Carey, right. The Saulsburys are distant relatives of Willard Sausbury, for whom the former fort was named.

## Fort

Continued from Page 1

four, 12-inch "great guns," each 40 feet long, to protect the coast from enemy ships and submarines. The guns sat atop bunkers made of concrete reinforced with steel, which were open for tours following Saturday's dedication.

"I was hoping the sign would reflect the word 'memorial,'" said Mr. Miller, "because it stands for so many that aren't here with us today."

He said the bunkers were named for Sussex County Revolutionary War heroes David Hall and John Haslet, and housed war prisoners after World War II.

According to Mr. Miller, materials to build the fort were brought in by railroad from Milford because bay water was too shallow to allow shipment by boat.

Betty C. Homan of Milford, an honorary state regent with the DAR, expressed pride at getting

the marker in place.

"When we (DAR) go after something, we go all the way," she said smiling broadly in front of the crowd of approximately 100 people.

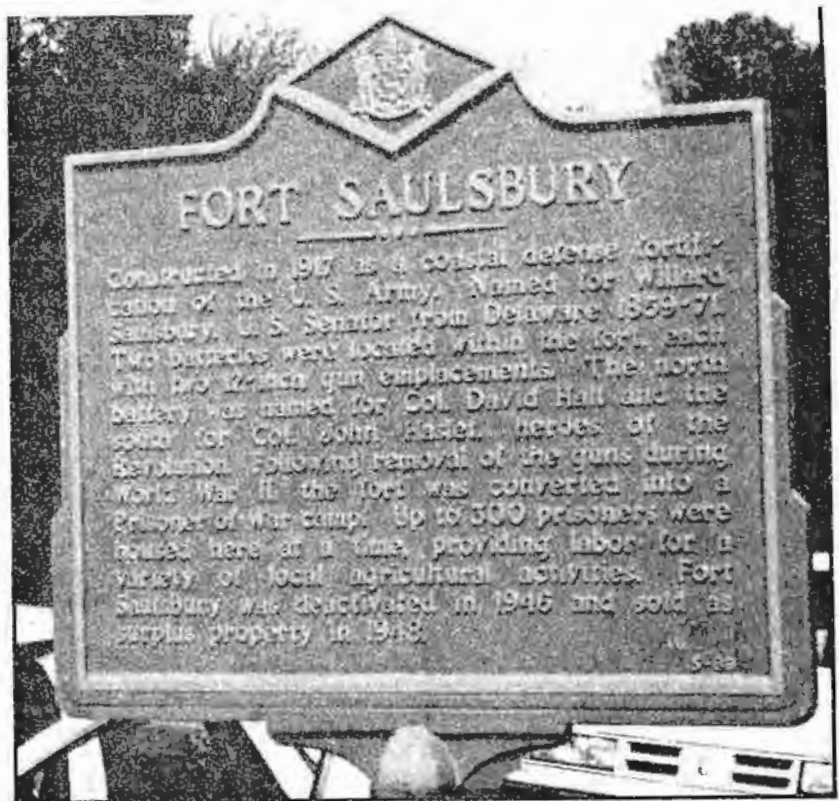
Mrs. Homan hopes the marker will let people know of the importance the fort played in area history.

Ramond H. Jacobs came all the way from Roslyn Heights, N.Y., for the dedication. He was part of a camera crew in 1941 that put together a training film on the use and care of the guns.

Mr. Jacobs said the large guns were fired only once during his five-month stay to insure they would work. He said the vibrations from the firings caused eggs to crack in nearby hen houses, dogs howled and windows shook and sometimes shattered.

But the worst thing he remembers has nothing to do with guns.

"The mosquitos were awful," he said. "You couldn't pull guard duty without mosquito netting."



State News/Lisa Screenshot

The historical marker erected for Fort Saulsbury reads: Constructed in 1917 as a coastal defense fortification of the U.S. Army. Named for Willard Saulsbury, U.S. Senator from Delaware 1859-71. Two batteries were located within the fort, each with two 12-inch gun emplacements. The north battery was named for Col. David Hall and the south for Col. John Haslet, heroes of the Revolution. Following removal of the guns during World War II, the fort was converted into a Prisoner of War camp. Up to 300 prisoners were housed here at a time, providing labor for a variety of local agricultural activities. Fort Saulsbury was deactivated in 1946 and sold as surplus property in 1948.

*The Honor Of Your Presence is Requested*

*at a*

*Dedication Ceremony*

*for the*

*Fort Saulsbury Historical Marker*

*Route 36, East of Milford*

*April 6, 1991*

*at one-thirty in the afternoon*

*by*

*Captain Jonathan Caldwell Chapter  
Daughters of the American Revolution*

*A tour of the Fort will follow the ceremony.*

FORT SPENCER



FORT SPENCER



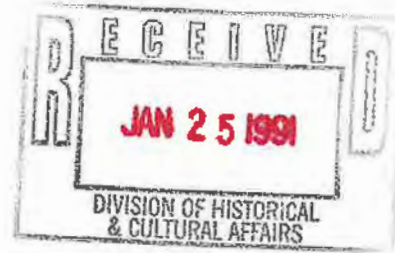
# National Archives



Washington, DC 20408

Date: 1/14/91

To: C. Russell McCabe  
Bureau of Archives & Records Man.  
State of Delaware  
Hall of Records, Dover DE 19901



Dear Mr. McCabe:

Thank you for your recent inquiry relating to film footage of Fort Sassenbury, Delaware, and a training film of firing the 12-inch artillery at the fort.

The items checked below and the enclosed materials should answer your questions. If you wish to pursue your research in person, you may visit our research room located in room G-13 in the National Archives Building at 8th & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, in Washington, 8:45 AM - 5:15 PM, Monday through Friday (except holidays). Reservations to view or listen to audiovisual materials are advised.

Subject to copyright and other restrictions, copies of films, videotapes, and sound recordings can be purchased. Reproductions take 2-3 weeks from receipt of payment. Payment must accompany orders. Please send checks made payable to the National Archives Trust Fund (NNSM), to P.O. Box 100793, Atlanta, GA 30384. Please also note any checked items:

1. Your letter was referred to us by the Military Reference Branch of the National Archives.
- // 2. The National Archives does not publish a general catalog of its films, video and sound recordings. If you have specific subject or title requests, we will be glad to search our holdings.
- // 3. The enclosed materials will answer your questions.
4. Enclosed are copies of catalog cards that may be of interest.
- // 5. No loan or rental service is available although copies may be studied in the audiovisual research room. Audio, video copies or photographs may also be made by using your own equipment.
- // 6. Prices are shown on the enclosed order form for the item(s) you requested. Return a copy of the form with your order.



~~X~~ 7. To purchase a copy of any specific items, request a price quote. Identify the item(s) of interest (including title, film or tape number, and reel number(s)), and specify kind of copy desired (for picture: masters, negative, work print, or projection print. A or B wind, silent or sound, 16mm or 35mm, black-and-white or color). 6% for international air mail will be added unless air freight collect is specified. Only copies of complete reels are sold. Enclosed is a copy of the current fee schedule.

// 8. Please obtain permission from the donor to reproduce the items marked on the enclosure.

~~X~~ 9. To the best of our knowledge, the items you are interested in are in the public domain. However, it is your responsibility to verify the lack of copyright before you make commercial, broadcast, or other use of this material. See enclosed warning notice on use of audiovisual materials reproduced from our holdings.

// 10. We were unable to find the titles or subjects you requested. If you can give us any more specific information we will be happy to continue our search.

// 11. Your request is too broad for us to be able to conduct the search for you. We suggest that you either hire a professional researcher or make plans to visit the National Archives in person to conduct the search.

// 12. Your inquiry has been referred to another office for a separate reply:

If we can be of further assistance, please write or telephone (202) 501-5449.

Sincerely,

Motion Picture, Sound,  
and Video Branch  
Special Archives Division

Enclosure(s)

2-3/4" VT - I + R

|                  |  |     |                     |
|------------------|--|-----|---------------------|
| .0619            | Identification of U.S. Army Aircraft - B-25 Medium Bomber                |     |                     |
|                  | 910'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM          |
|                  |  |     | 1 FGMC              |
| <br>             |  |     |                     |
| .0621            | Care and Release of Pigeons in the Field                                 |     |                     |
|                  | 940'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM          |
|                  |  |     | 1 FGMC              |
| <br>             |  |     |                     |
| <del>.0624</del> |  |     | <del>FGMC-R-1</del> |
| <b>III TF</b>    | film #   |     |                     |
| .0630            | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Material and Personnel              |     |                     |
|                  | 1 reel 935'  | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/3)   |
|                  | 2 " 850'   | 0.8 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/3)   |
|                  | 3 " 880'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R3/3)   |
|                  |  |     | 3 FGMC-R-1, 2, 3    |
| <br>             |  |     |                     |
| .0631            | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Breech Mechanism                    |     |                     |
|                  | 968'   | 0.4 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/2)   |
|                  | 715'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/2)   |
|                  |  |     | 2 FGMC-R-1, 2       |
| <br>             |  |     |                     |
| .0632            | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Checks for Base Ring and Range Disk |     |                     |
|                  | 1030'  | 0.4 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/3)   |
|                  | 959'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/3)   |
|                  | 579'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R3/3)   |
|                  |  |     | 3 FGMC-R-1, 2, 3    |
| <br>             |  |     |                     |
| .0633            | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Duties of the Ammunition Squad      |     |                     |
|                  | 895'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/2)   |
|                  | 617'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/2)   |
|                  |  |     | 2 FGMC-R-1, 2       |

2-3/4" VT-I+R

|       |  |     |                    |
|-------|--|-----|--------------------|
| .0634 | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Safety Precautions      |     |                    |
|       | 690'   |     | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/2)  |
|       | 424'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/2)  |
|       |  |     | 2-3/4" VT-I+R      |
|       |  |     | 2 FGMC-R-1, 2      |
|       |  |     |                    |
| .0635 | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Care and Maintenance    |     |                    |
|       | 699'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/3)  |
|       | 790'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/3)  |
|       | 620'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R3/3)  |
|       |  |     | 2-3/4" VT-I+R      |
|       |  |     | 3 FGMC-R-1, 2      |
|       |  |     |                    |
| .0636 | 12" Gun Battery, Barbette Carriage - Firing                  |     |                    |
|       | 861'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/2)  |
|       | 868'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/2)  |
|       |  |     | 2 FGMC-R-1, 2      |
|       |  |     |                    |
| .0637 | Know Your Enemy - Airborne Troops                            |     |                    |
|       | 1057'  | 0.5 | 1 FGMC 35MM (R1/2) |
|       | 957'   | 0.5 | 1 FGMC 35MM (R2/2) |
|       |  |     | 2 DNC-R-1, 2       |
|       |  |     |                    |
| .0640 | Care and Maintenance of the 90mm AA Gun - Routine Inspection |     |                    |
|       | 803'   | 0.4 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/2)  |
|       | 917'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/2)  |
|       |  |     | 2 FGMC-R-1, 2      |
|       |  |     |                    |
| .0641 | Care and Maintenance of the 90mm AA Gun - Regular Inspection |     |                    |
|       | 809'   | 0.4 | 1 DNC 35MM (R1/2)  |
|       | 910'   | 0.5 | 1 DNC 35MM (R2/2)  |
|       |  |     | 2 FGMC-R-1, 2      |



*Captain*

**JONATHAN CALDWELL**

*Chapter*

**MILFORD, DELAWARE**

FORT SAULSBURY  
DEDICATION OF HISTORIC MARKER

April 6, 1991  
1.30 P.M.

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Welcome                              | Mrs. George W. Marshall, II, Regent<br>Captain Jonathan Caldwell Chapter<br>Daughters of the American Revolution |
| Prayer of Dedication                 | Mrs. Charles P. French, Jr.,<br>Chaplain   |
| Inspiration for Historic Marker      | Mrs. James B. Homan, Honorary<br>State Regent, Delaware Society, NSDAR   |
| History of Fort Saulsbury            | Dr. Hugh M. Miller, Historian  |
| Remarks                              | Mrs. T. Moore Holcombe, IV<br>Historian and Honorary State Regent,<br>Delaware State Society, N.S.D.A.R.         |
| Introduction of Distinguished Guests | Dr. Miller   |
| Comments                             | Mr. Russell McCabe, Archivist<br>State of Delaware<br>Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs                |

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Kendzierski family for graciously permitting this ceremony to take place here today and for their thoughtful invitation to tour Fort Saulsbury.

Note: a tour of Fort Saulsbury is available following the Ceremony.



422-61811 (Linda)

FORT SAULSBURY - SUSSEX COUNTY'S UNIQUE MEMORIAL

Hugh McHenry Miller

1. Where Is Fort Saulsbury?

Ft. Saulsbury stands today as Sussex County's unique monument to our four great wars!

However, you will search in vain to find it on maps of the State of Delaware or even Sussex County.

It stands, shrouded in the memories of those still living among the thousands of men who served or were housed there. Located in the very northeast corner of Sussex County six miles east of Milford, it stands on the south side of Route 36 west of the drawbridge over the Cedar Creek Canal, adjoining the Town of Slaughter Beach.

Today it is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald L. Kendzierski and their three children. When Mrs. Kendzierski, several years ago, took their youngest child to register in a Milford School and said they lived in Ft. Saulsbury, the teacher asked why they were coming all the way from Maryland to go to school in Milford!

It is not Salisbury but Saulsbury!

The area includes 161 acres, about one-third marsh, bought by the Kiendzierski family at government auction in 1948, after the Fort was declared surplus.

In its boundaries are two, thousand-foot-long man-made mounds or batteries, the heart of a remarkable U.S. Coastal Fort which was manned continuously from 1917 to the end of World War II.

At first it was a sub-post of Ft. DuPont. Early in 1941 the men of the 261st Coast Artillery Battery B, which had been activated in Georgetown in 1936 and federalized

2.

January 27, 1941, came to Ft. Saulsbury, making it look more like a fort. In 1942 the headquarters for the coast defenses of Delaware were transferred to Ft. Miles at Lewes.

Emanuel R. Lewis, Librarian of the U.S. House of Representatives, in his book "Seacoast Fortifications of the United States," describes Ft. Saulsbury as a classic example of the East Coast fort of the period and worthy of preservation. He wrote, "The only good surviving specimens within the continental limits are two 12-inch gun batteries near Slaughter Beach, Delaware."

## 2. Building Fort Saulsbury for World War I

In June 1917, after more than a year of study by various agencies within the War Department, the 161 acres were purchased from two neighboring farmers, David L. Shockley and Mark H. Shockley. The Fort's mission was coastal and Bay defense ~~against~~ against potential attack from the sea. Its four great guns, capable of twenty miles range, were designed to cover the Bay entrance and deep channel from the entrance to the anchorage by enemy surface and underwater vessels.

In World War I intelligence, largely British, had it that the Germans planned an attack up Delaware Bay to destroy the industrial Wilmington and Philadelphia area. With the coming of World War II this became a real threat and the larger installations of surface guns, including two from Ft. Saulsbury, were established at Cape May and Cape Henlopen.

When completed at the end of World War I, Ft. Saulsbury included two batteries or casemates, each with two 12-inch gun emplacements. These huge bunkers were constructed of steel reinforced concrete, fourteen feet thick, with six feet of earth on top for camouflage. On the top were concrete tren-

3.

ches, connecting observation posts at the end of each.

This monumental task of construction in 1917-18 defies imagination. How to deliver the thousands of tons of steel, concrete, rock, soil and building supplies to the isolated site! A dirt road, often virtually impassible in winter and spring, was the only way to the nearest railroad in Milford.

At first, studies were made about delivering these by water. But, the Mispillion River and Cedar Creek Canal, with a mean depth of less than five feet, could accommodate very small barges and boats. Also, there was a lack of labor locally. Where would imported laborers live and eat? Finally, a narrow <sup>GAUGE</sup> ~~gauge~~ railroad, following the north side of today's Route 36, was built from Milford.

The railroad had two small steam engines and a string of small cars. A bridge for the railroad crossed the Cedar Creek Canal to the Beach hauling sand for the cement. Raymond Masten as a boy lived on South Washington Street in Milford, near where this spur connected with the mainline of the railroad. He remembers Mac McClarey, his neighbor, one of the engineers on this line. The other <sup>ENGINEER</sup> was Rollie Walls. In addition to the railroad, the contractor had ten trucks to haul the hundreds of loads of stone. The railroad trains and the trucks, passing just a few feet from the front of the Cedar <sup>NECK</sup> ~~Creek~~ School, caused so much interest among the boys and girls that <sup>THE TEACHER</sup> ~~they~~ painted the windows, according to Granville Shockley. <sup>BUT,</sup> Every boy had a penknife which <sup>WAS</sup> ~~was~~ used to make peepholes to enjoy the unusual <sup>A</sup> traffic.

Inside the batteries were emergency living quarters including showers, latrines, fireplaces, a kitchen, water and sewage, as well as working areas and storage rooms for the

4.

975-pound four-foot-long projectiles and the powder for firing. It took 275 pounds of powder to fire each projectile. Heavy steel doors sealed off the various areas of the casemates.

~~There was also a sophisticated, for that period, plotting room for range data, connected by lead cables under the Bay to towers at Bigstone Beach, Fowlers Beach and near the Mispillion Lighthouse. Only the tower at Bigstone Beach remains today.~~

The four guns sat on concrete pads at each end of the two batteries. They were ground level on Barbette carriages and could turn 360 degrees on brass circles for aiming. The men kept the brass so highly polished they could shave in its reflection.

The guns were of twelve inch bore and forty feet long. Since the tiny railroad from Milford could not bear their weight, when they arrived for installation they were brought down the Mispillion River and to the site by barge, said to have been a major operation.

The Fort was and is today entirely circled by a high dirt mound, making the guns and buildings invisible from the Bay and surrounding land.

### 3. The Naming of Fort Saulsbury

The Saulsbury name is prominent in Delaware history. Willard Sr., for whom the Fort was named, was a United States Senator from Delaware from 1859 through 1871. A southern sympathizer in the Civil War, Harold B. Hancock describes him as "Lincoln's most bitter foe in the Senate."

Eli, his brother, followed in the Senate serving until 1889. A brother, Gove, was Governor of Delaware from 1865 through 1871. His son, Willard S., was in the United States Senate



5.

from 1913 until 1919, during the time Ft. Saulsbury was built.

"Delaware's Role in World War II", published by the Public Archives Commission in 1955, describes the naming of the Fort for Willard Sr., who also had served as Attorney General of Delaware from 1850 to 1855.

In this account we find that the War Department's proposal in 1916 for a fort on the Bay was going to be very costly, almost a million dollars. The Senator's support was critical. Finally, he is said to have offered this in exchange for naming the proposed installation for his father and the deal was made.

#### 4. Life at the Fort Between the Wars.

Following World War I, the Fort manned by a small detachment of six to eight men under the command of a sergeant, was the home of well-known Milford area families. The first commander was Staff Sergeant Dorphin C. Wigley who lived there with his wife and children. Mrs. Wigley died in 1988, having made her home on Slaughter Beach in the latter years.

Wigley's first assistant for many years was Sergeant Robert I. Hayes, who later became the commanding officer. His widow, Serena, who died in 1989, would recount life at the Fort with her three sons, <sup>DURING</sup> ~~their~~ fifteen years there.

The Wigley and Hayes families lived in government houses across the road from the Fort, an area now known as Bald Eagle Farm. The dirt road into Milford was often impassible during the winter and spring. Mrs. Hayes regularly would ride one of the mules used at the Fort into Milford for groceries and medicines.

Another commander was Sergeant Major Robert Fields. His son, Sergeant Major Robert H. Fields, now living near Bowers Beach,

6.

remembers growing up as an Army brat at the Fort and being interested in the big guns. He tells how the grounds were kept like a park and doing his homework as a schoolboy by the two-mantle Coleman lanterns since there was only electricity inside the batteries provided by an electric generator. The extensive gardens in the Fort were plowed by mules and all they wanted of rabbits, quail and pheasants were in the marshes and fields.

The great guns, never fired in anger, were kept in prime condition. From time to time they were fired at large orange targets, probably fifty-five gallon drums, anchored in the Bay.

Many are the stories of hearing these go off after the soldiers would go up and down the Beach warning residents to open their doors and windows to avoid the concussions. The final announcement was sounding a huge siren cranked by the soldiers.

Claims for cracked windows following the firings came from as far as Lewes. Farmers as distant as Greenwood reported turkey eggs cracked, although it is said no claims were ever proved or paid. It is commonly reported that the men of Ft. Saulsbury maintained the top accuracy record on the East Coast for such firings.

#### 5. Ft. Saulsbury and World War II

In 1939, with the approach of World War II, Ft. Saulsbury was quickly expanded. A \$60,000 contract was let for eight new wooden buildings. Included were a mess hall, recreation hall, storehouse, infirmary, administration building and three two-story barracks, two for the enlisted men and one for officers. ~~On November 25, 1941, Governor Walter W. Bacon inspected the Fort and the then 200 officers and enlisted men, as preparations for World War II swept Delaware.~~

6-A.

During this period three huge steel frame towers were erected. These stood at Bigstone Beach to the north, Fowlers Beach to the south, and just south of the Mispillion Lighthouse. From these manned towers information on every vessel entering the Bay was sent to the plotting room located just inside the north entrance of Battery Hall.

William L. Ryan, now living in Millsboro, was the Sergeant in charge of what was for that time a quite sophisticated operation. This information came via connecting lead cables under the Bay. <sup>ONLY</sup> The Bigstone Beach tower is ~~still~~ <sup>WITH ITS</sup> standing ~~and the~~ cable into the Bay <sup>STILL</sup> is visible.

Sightings also came into the plotting room from the top of the bunker to judge the accuracy of the firing of the guns, which word was given the gun crews for their settings.

The tower on Fowlers Beach was the last to be erected. V. George Carey tells that on October 7, 1941 his father, Vinal H. Carey, sold .52 acres of his property to the Government for \$75. for this purpose. Incidentally, after the war, on December 1, 1947, the Government sold the land back to Carey, minus the steel tower, but then the price was \$290.!

On November 25, 1941, Governor Walter W. Bacon inspected the Fort and the then 200 officers and enlisted men, as preparation for World War II swept Delaware.

7.

James F. Saulsbury, not related to the political Saulsburys and now living on Canterbury Road, Milford, was the Sergeant in command of the north gun crew on Battery Hall. He has provided a roster of thirty-six of the men stationed at the Fort at this time who had completed the Record Rifle Practice Course "C" with their qualifying scores. This had been saved by the late William K. Kenton and follows:

Taylor, William R., Private  
Townsend, John G., Private  
Schrimer, Charles F., Sergeant  
Saulsbury, James F., Corporal  
West, Joseph F., Corporal  
O'dell, Robert G., Corporal  
Ryan, William L., Sergeant  
Gray, James E., Pvt. 1 cl.  
Adkins, Oliver, Private  
Davis, Glenn V., Private  
Ryan, Patrick F., Sergeant  
Kenton, William K., Private  
Moore, George A., Corporal  
Parsons, Edward, Pvt. 1 cl.  
Bradley, Alton B., Sergeant  
Hall, Charles L., Corporal  
Kiamio, Edward, Corporal  
Wharton, Mervin L., Corporal  
Dorman, John A., Private  
Moran, Gordon H., Sergeant  
Niemeier, Frederick W., Corporal  
Coulbourne, Alonzo O., Private  
Jerman, Harold E., Pvt. 1 cl.  
Lindale, Augustus H., Private  
Smith, Raymond O., Private  
Fisher, David R., Pvt. 1 cl.  
Ellis, Gordon E., Sergeant  
Beidman, Samuel S., Pvt. 1 cl.  
McCaslin, Charles O., Pvt. 1 cl.  
Mitchell, Charles E., Private  
Stayton, Everett L., Private  
Legg, Reynolds W. Jr., Private  
Zeigler, George J., Sergeant  
Short, Everett A., Private  
Carmean, Carlton D., Private  
Hall, Chester L., Pvt. 1 cl.

Charles J. Rocco of Milford was the Sergeant on the south gun crew on Battery Hall. Describing the firing of his gun, sometimes observed by dignitaries from Fort DuPont, he notes "We had to load, turn around, open our mouths and fire!" The



8.

concussion for men at the gun controls was very great.

Pearl Harbor Sunday, less than two weeks after the Governor's inspection, found the Fort alive. Saulsbury tells of the excitement when word of the Japanese attack came and the emotional reaction of the late Lt. William Craig, just out of OCS at the University of Delaware. Craig was sure Ft. Saulsbury would be next!

Saulsbury and several others of Battery B were chosen early in 1942 to install the gun emplacements at Cape May and then to duplicate the Ft. Saulsbury batteries in Greenland and later in France. Their Ft. Saulsbury experience was tops.

Air power and the fear of German dirigible attacks on the East Coast early in 1942 made Ft. Saulsbury obsolete since the guns could not be hidden from the air. Thus, the guns were dismantled, two going to Ft. Miles at Cape Henlopen, which now became the Headquarters of the Coast Defenses for Delaware Bay. One gun went to a fort in Virginia and the record of the fourth has been lost.

That this fear of air strikes was real at this time is attested by an event on the farm of V. George Carey's father, located just south of Slaughter Beach. The tower at Fowlers Beach had been built on his property.

George Carey was just a boy when a delegation of high military brass appeared at the farm asking for his father. For a long period his father was questioned about seeming to help the Germans. Their problem was the planting of a field on the Carey farm in the form of a triangle with the corners pointing west to Washington, south to Ft. Miles and north to Ft. Saulsbury. The long-time innocent coincidence of the shape of the field had raised the possibility that it was to guide the enemy aircraft to these critical locations!

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#### 6. Ft. Saulsbury and Prisoners of War

Removal of the guns in 1942 did not finish the World War II mission of the Fort. It was assigned a task which old-timers in Sussex County remember well when it became a Prisoner-of-War Camp for thousands of German and a lesser number of Italian prisoners.

Some of these men became the only persons to actually have lived within the batteries, where security was no problem. They left the walls covered with beautiful paintings, dim remains of which are visible still. Many Milford area girls were guests at social affairs for the guard company and prisoners at the Fort during this time. Prisoners were a familiar sight on Milford streets when they were given passes to come into town.

Many prisoners worked in area canneries, poultry processing, orchards and in harvesting field crops. Stories abound from area families who were impressed by their hard work and honesty. Employers could not pay the prisoners, reimbursing the Federal Government for their work, but there were many occasions when giving cigarettes and other friendly gestures occurred.

Granville Skockley, whose father's farm was nearby, was impressed that the prisoners had no Army guard there and one of their own men was "boss." Noon meals were brought to them in the fields from the Fort.

Stories continue to surface that some of these men returned to this area after the war, having been well-treated and being in love with Sussex County. The writer has sought in vain to verify this.

Lt. Col. John J. Harris, who was in charge of the Delaware Prisoner-of-War Unit, reported that this program brought the Federal Government \$2,400,000 from the work of these men in Delaware.

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On January 11, 1946 Ft. Saulsbury was deactivated with the departure of the last of the POW's from Delaware. It had been an active Army Fort for almost thirty years. The Federal Government placed the land and buildings in the surplus category on March 13, 1946. In March 1948 the Kendzierski family purchased it all at a Federal Government auction for \$12,700.

For a time the Liebowitz Pickle Co. rented the area within the bunkers for pickle processing and storage. Later it became a center for collecting and selling old metal. The bunkers are now unused with Hall Battery having been cleaned out and easily available for inspection and the grounds beautifully restored and kept by the Kendzierskis. Visitation may be made only upon arrangement with the family.

#### 7. Fort Saulsbury as a Unique Memorial

In large letters embossed over the entrance of the north bunker is the word "Hall" and over the south bunker the word "Haslet." Their naming is significant.

"Delaware, a Guide to the First State" tells that these were named in honor of Sussex County's two most famous Revolutionary War heroes - Col. David Hall and Col. John Haslet. Col. Hall of Lewes was commander of the famous Delaware Line in the Continental Army.

Col. Haslet of Milford recruited 800 Revolutionary War volunteers, mustered into the State's service in Sussex County, and was chosen their colonel. He was a close friend of Casear Rodney, his counter-part in Kent County, who corresponded<sup>ED</sup> daily with Hall from the meetings of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

When the enlistment of his Delaware Regiment ran out late in 1776, Haslet remained with General Washington. Probably crossing the

11.

the Delaware on Christmas Eve 1776 with Washington, he took prominent part in the attack on Trenton and in the Battle of Princeton. <sup>IN THE LATTER</sup> There a bullet struck him in the head and killed him instantly on January 3, 1777.

Haslet was ordained a Presbyterian minister by Derry Presbytery in Ireland and also trained in medicine at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. The records of Lewes Presbytery show its holding meetings in his home which was near the present Milford Airport. His son, Joseph, was Governor of Delaware 1811-1814 and lived in the Lincoln area near Cedar Creek.

In 1941, the distinguished Delaware historian Christopher Ward wrote, "Who has heard of John Haslet?" Odd today that Haslet's only monument in Sussex County is the huge south bunker at Ft. Saulsbury, for who has heard of Ft. Saulsbury as well?

Here, just outside of Milford, the names of the two bunkers, the name of the Fort, the building of the Fort in World War I, and its expansion and use in World War II, combine to make Ft. Saulsbury the unique memorial to Sussex County's participation in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the two World Wars.

11.

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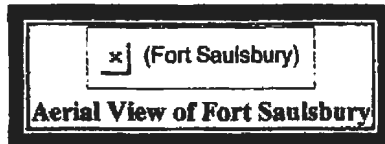
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# Fort Saulsbury

## Delaware's Forgotten Fort

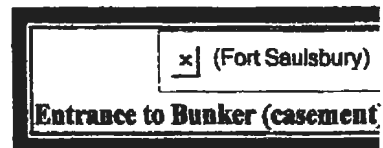


Fort Saulsbury is most definitely Delaware's most overlooked or forgotten Fort. It stands, shrouded in the memories of those still living among the thousands of men who served or were housed there from 1918 through 1945. Fort Saulsbury is located in the very northeast corner of Sussex County, Delaware, six miles east of Milford, adjoining the town of Slaughter Beach. It is the only known fort to be privately owned in the United States. The fort was purchased, and is still owned, by the Kendzierski family in 1948.

The U.S. Army approached David W. Shockley and Mark H. Shockley about purchasing their land for use as a fort in 1917. The Army decided that this particular location was the best available to insure protection of the mouth of the Delaware Bay and River from any possible enemy threats during World War I.

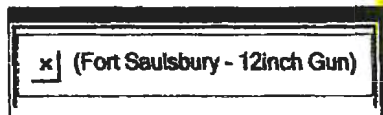
In 1918 the fort was completed very near the end of WW I. The fort included 4 12-inch guns capable of firing 4,000 pound shells 20 miles and two dirt and grass-covered concrete casemates. The casemates were constructed of 4 feet thick, steel reinforced concrete with six feet of earth on top for camouflage. The fort was named for Delaware's U.S. Senator Willard Saulsbury, Sr. who served in the U.S. Senate from 1859 through 1871 and as Delaware's Attorney General from 1850 through 1855.

The first casemate was named Battery Haslet after Delaware Revolutionary War Colonel and Sussex County native John Haslet. Colonel Haslet was killed during the Revolutionary War on January 3, 1777 during the Battle of Princeton and served under General George Washington. The second casemate was named for Governor David Hall. David Hall, also a Sussex County native, was with Colonel Haslet during the Revolutionary War and succeeded him as Colonel of the Delaware Regiment after the death of Colonel Haslet. Colonel Hall was wounded during the Battle of Germantown.



Since the fort was completed so close to the end of WW I it was never fully manned. After the armistice in November 1918 the fort was manned by 6 to 8 soldiers with the ranking soldier being a sergeant.

When the threat of World War II surfaced changes were made to the fort. First, two of the four 12 inch guns were moved to the newly constructed Fort Miles in Lewes Delaware. Eight new wooden buildings were erected at Fort Saulsbury to include one as a barracks for officers and three to be used as barracks for enlisted personnel. Also constructed was an infirmary, recreation building, company storehouse and an administrative building. This construction took place in 1940.



In May of 1941 the men of the 261<sup>st</sup> Coast Artillery Battery B, which was originally organized in Georgetown, Delaware, were assigned to Fort Saulsbury for the purposes of coastal defense. They watched the coast line from three steel towers

**12 Inch Gun at Fort Saulsbury** that were built as part of the 1941 restoration. These towers were located at Stone Beach, Mispillion Light and Fowler's Beach.

The 261<sup>st</sup> continued their duty until the completion of Fort Miles at Cape Henlopen in 1942. Then two of the 12 inch guns were sent to Fort Miles and the other two were sent to destinations unknown. The story of Fort Saulsbury didn't end with the dismantling of the guns however. The fort's new mission was that of a POW camp for German and Italian soldiers. Hundreds of POW's spent time at Fort Saulsbury until the end of World War II.

On January 11, 1946 Fort Saulsbury was deactivated with the last POW leaving. The fort was sold, as already noted, at a government auction to the Kendzierski family in 1948. The fort was then rented by the Liebowitz Pickle Company for pickle processing and storage. Later it was used as a storage spot for Milford Salvage Company's metal and surplus property.

Today Fort Saulsbury remains unused. Experts on American fortifications consider the fort to be the only surviving World War I-era fort which is virtually un-altered and in its primitive state. Many people feel that it is a site which is well worth preserving as a state, and perhaps a national historic landmark. Emanuel R. Lewis, librarian of the U.S. House of Representatives, in his book "Seacoast Fortifications of the United States," describes Fort Saulsbury as a classic example of the East Coast fort of the period and worthy of preservation. He wrote, "The only good surviving specimens within the continental limits are two 12 inch gun batteries near Slaughter Beach, Delaware."

Maybe someday this forgotten andgun batteries near Slaughter Beach, Delaware."

Maybe someday this forgotten and overlooked fort will finally get some attention and preservation actions will take place.

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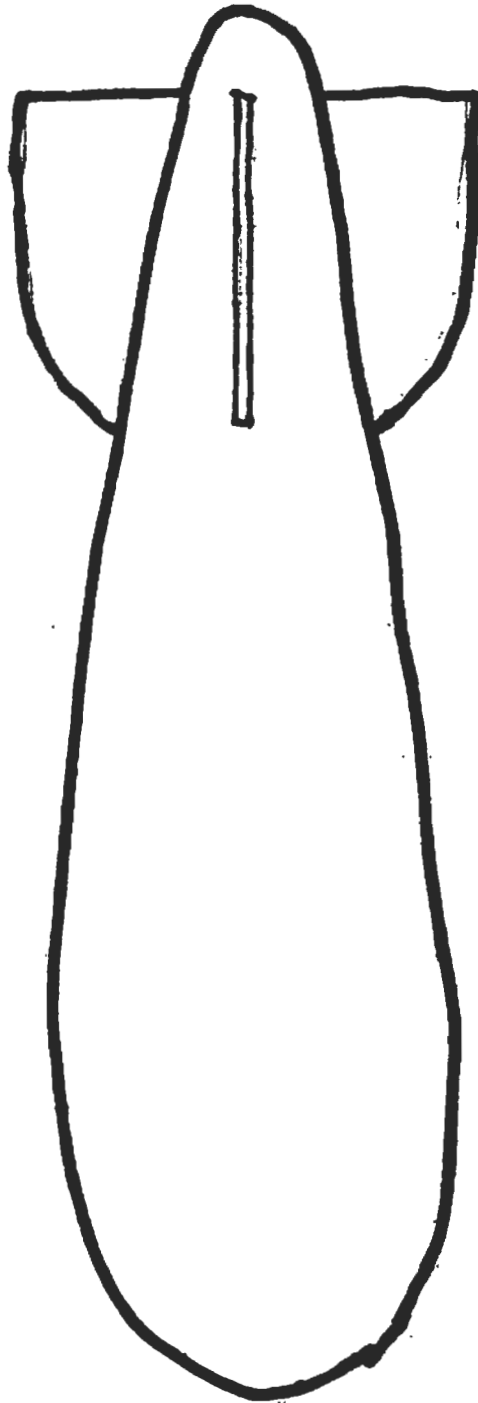


*Government Information Center  
121 Duke of York  
Dover, DE 19901*

- The Big Stone Beach Tower is the last steel tower in Delaware.
- Big Stone Beach was used as a bombing range by the Army Air Corp in WWII.

Jerry Wright 10/24/12

Estimated outline of bomb or bomblet used for practice at Big Stone Beach during WW.II by US Army Air Corp. Size about 7 inch long x maximum 2.25 inch wide with 4 vanes.







# Milford Historical Society NEWS LETTER

Volume 29

Fall 1991

Number 2

## "ELLERSLIE" AND THE FRANK GRECO ESTATE

The era of large farming plantations has long since passed in most parts of the country. Mechanization and generations of sales and family distributions have relegated most 19th century plantations to nothing more than old homesteads and dilapidated manor houses.

The Milford Neck section of Kent County recently saw the first chapter unfold in the break-up of a great old plantation called "Ellerslie" which eventually encompassed more than 3950 acres of marsh and upland along the Delaware Bay. The old plantation was owned most recently by Filomena Greco Muller born October 6, 1911 in Childwold Station, N.Y. and who died in Dover, April 10, 1991, age 79 years, a victim of heart failure following a short illness.

Most residents of our area know the large tract of land as the "Greco Estate" after the man who purchased in 1907-08 the various farms which today comprise the 3950 acre tract. The "Greco Estate" is located along both sides of Kent county road 124, known as the Big Stone Beach road to locals. The huge tract follows 3.3 miles of beach front along the Delaware Bay beginning north of the Mispillion Light house at the Conch Bar landing site and extending a mile north of Big Stone Beach. The village of Big Stone Beach lies entirely within the Greco estate boundaries.

Mrs. Muller was the only direct heir to the vast land holdings left to her following the accidental poisoning death of her parents, Frank and Emilia Mespero Greco, September 26-27, 1923. The history of "Ellerslie" and the Greco Estate is closely intertwined

with the history of Milford Neck, the Mispillion River and Milford itself.

The story of "Ellerslie" began in 1816 with Charles Polk, later to become 28th and 31st Governor of Delaware. Polk was born and raised near Bridgeville the son of Charles and Mary Polk. He was one of fifteen children surviving his father's unexpected death in 1795. Polk's father had served as an officer in Col. David Hall's Revolutionary War regiment in 1777.

In 1816 near Big Stone Beach in Kent County, built a two story mansion and began farming the land. Polk named the plantation "Ellerslie" after the family's ancestral home in Scotland. He then ran again for the State House from Kent County and won. His political career continued until 1840 when, at age 52 he returned to his farm in Milford Neck. Polk held other posts in Public life but managed to raise a family on his Big Stone Beach plantation. He and his wife, Mary



**"Ellerslie" built 1816-20 by Charles Polk, later Governor of Delaware. Mansion burned in 1929, today site of Tall Pine Hunting Lodge near Big Stone Beach, DE.**

In 1813, when only 25, Polk was elected to the State House from Sussex County. After two terms as the Sussex representative, Polk purchased 1100 acres (later surveyed as 1027 ac.)

Elizabeth, produced three sons; William A., Theodore L. and Charles. Governor Polk died Oct 27, 1857 and

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Newletter Editor  
Mr. David W. Kenton

## NEW TRUSTEES

Two new members have been elected to the Board of Trustees; namely, Charles H. Donovan and Michael Sophos. Both of these men are comparatively new to Milford and, fortunately for us, have taken an interest in the town and in the society.

Charles Donovan and his wife Helen came to Milford on March 19, 1980, from Wilmington where he taught at Goldey Beacom College. He now teaches in their southern campus in Milford.

Mr. Donovan received his Bachelor's degree from Villanova and his Master of Business Administration from the University of Delaware. He is a retired C.P.A. He is a communicant of Christ Episcopal Church where he serves as a Lay Reader. He and his wife Helen reside in Eastman Heights.

Michael Sophos and his wife

Dorothy moved to Milford in 1985 upon his retirement from a career in the United States Marine Corps. In 1966 he retired from the Marine Corps with the rank of Major. For fifteen years he worked in a civilian capacity as Personnel Director Marine Corps Exchange System.

Upon coming to Milford Mr. Sophos has been active in volunteer community work. He is a member of Avenue United Methodist Church where he serves as Financial Secretary. Other responsibilities are President of the Board of Directors of Peoples Place, Treasurer of the Milford Lions Club, and he helps at Milford Memorial Hospital.

The Board of Trustees welcomed these new members at the regular meeting held in June at the Parson Thorne Mansion.

which Greco called the "Home farm." In 1907 the original Charles Polk Mansion home was still in fine repair and Greco moved into the old homeplace built in 1816-20 by Governor Charles Polk. Before the end of 1908 Greco added thirteen additional tracts to his holdings giving him nearly all the bay front land from Bennett Pier Road to the Mispillion Light House.

Frank Greco wasted little time starting in the farming and canning business. He built a water tower on the mansion property, numerous barns, stables and equipment sheds. The site of the original mansion is today occupied by the Tall Pine Hunting Club lodge under lease from Delaware Wildlands, Inc., a conservation group that purchased the property in July 1991.

Greco brought with him many Italian immigrants who lived on the plantation and did much of the manual labor required in those days before tractors and machinery. Many early residents of Milford Neck can remember the immigrants working in Frank Greco's fields and cannery. Some of the immigrants are buried 75 yards east of the mansion site in an old graveyard maintained by Greco. Frank Morrone and Luigi Colella both lived on the farm with Greco.

Greco was one of the first farmers to make extensive use of locally mixed concrete. Nearly all foundations and pillars prior to 1900 were made from brick and layed manually. Greco mixed cement, lime and beach sand using hand labor to pour concrete foundations for his barns, wine cellar and cannery. The foundations to these buildings which surrounded the old Polk-Greco Mansion are still visible today although the wooden frameworks and buildings have long since rotted away. This process was considered revolutionary for the era and Greco was viewed as an engineering genius by the locals.

Greco built his vegetable cannery in 1915 and was operating through 1918 selling under "Big Stone Brand" label. To transport the can goods t market in the era prior to paved roads required another monumental engineering feat. Greco purchased a steam engine in 1910 and constructed a dredge which operated with a mechanical shovel. With his steam dredge Greco began digging a canal from the Mispillion Light House north

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was buried in Dover. (1)

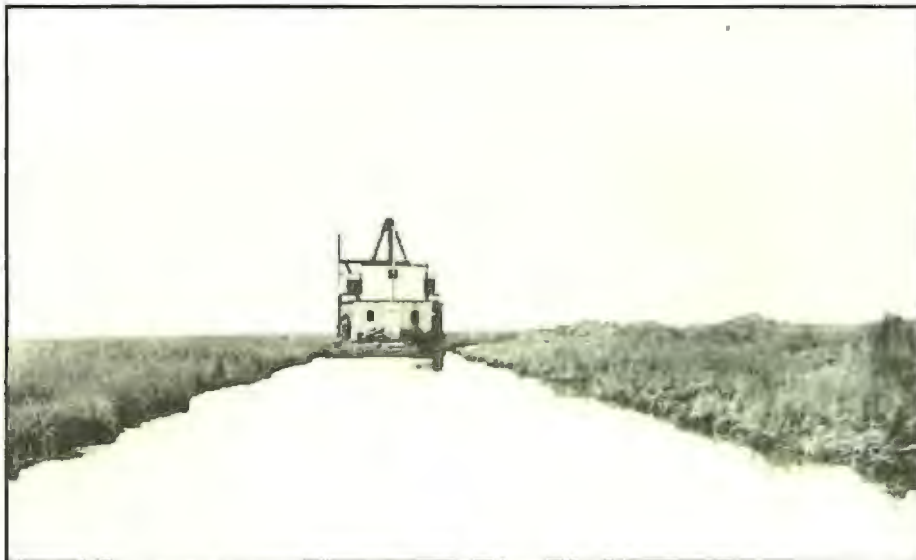
Although Polk's last will directed the sale of the plantation, his son, William A. Polk, continued farming the 1100 acres until his death March 23, 1900. Delaware Chancery Court directed the sale of the property at the request of Theodore A., Albert F. Polk and Mary L. Pyle, children and trustees for William A. Polk deceased. The farm was laid off in three tracts. The largest, 977 acres, was sold to William I. Simpson, May 29, 1902 for \$3,107 and was known locally as "The Polk Farm."

The Polk Farm did not remain with W.I. Simpson long for on September 30, 1907 he sold, for

\$7,000 the entire 977 acre farm to a railroad contractor from Galeton, PA named Frank Greco. Greco, a native of Italy, moved to Delaware from Pennsylvania where he had extensive experience with railroading, steam engines and heavy machinery. Why Greco migrated to Delaware is not known with great certainty, but his daughter, Filomena, stated that her father felt that land was cheap in Delaware and great potential existed for selling produce and crops in the Philadelphia market.

Frank and Emilia Greco paid the unheard of sum of \$22,600 in 1907-08 for 3,937 acres including fourteen separate tracts in Milford Neck. The first purchase was the Polk Farm





**Steam Dredge used by Greco to dig canal from Mispillion Light to Big Stone Beach in 1910-11.**

*Continued from Page 2*

and parallel to the Beach front, extending to Big Stone Beach. The distance of nearly three miles through some of the worst mosquito infested marsh known to Delawareans represented an enormous engineering achievement. Greco's Canal still stands in 1991 as a monument to Frank Greco's ingenuity and determination.

A combination of poor prices and political interference halted Greco's cannery after the 1918 season. After reaching the Big Stone Beach Road with his innovative canal, Greco was prevented from crossing the road which led to his home mansion and cannery. The State legislature refused to build a draw bridge at Road 124 leading to Big Stone Beach and Greco

was unable to cross the road with his boats. He abandoned the steam dredge near the crossing point where it rotted in the marsh clearly visible until the 1960's.

Frank and Emilia Greco gave up the farming and canning business by 1920 and bought a home on Cedar Beach Road east of Milford near the former Humphrey's Landing site. By this time Greco was a broken man and was seen riding in Milford "staring off in space" as his wife drove the car.

In 1921 Greco purchased the Parson Thorne Mansion and 19 acres from George H. Draper, Jr. There is no evidence that Greco lived in the Mansion but he apparently was trying to continue a farming operation that had been conducted on the "Draper



**Frank Greco, construction engineer and cannery owner with his daughter, Filomena age 1, in 1912. Photo taken on porch of mansion home named "Ellerslie" near big Stone Beach, DE.**

Farm" for many years. Greco failed again and the property reverted to Geo. H. Draper, Jr. in 1923 after a default.

The sad end to Frank and Emilia Greco came September 27, 1923 in his home on Cedar Beach Road. The family was ardent believers in the faith of God to heal all ills. They shunned modern medicine and hospital procedures. The family ate toad stools, mistaking them for mushrooms, and became deathly ill. A doctor was summoned who recommended vomiting to eliminate the poisonous food ingested. The family refused treatment and died. Their only daughter, Filomena, remained alive, but critical. A local resident, Mrs. Ellener Uhler, claims her brother, Harry Bowen, saved the daughter by forcing her to drink salt water. The Bowens lived directly across the Mispillion from the Grecos at Bowen Landing and were friends. Other reports claim the Doctor induced vomiting. Regardless, the only surviving heir to the Greco estate was saved. She was 12 at the time.

Filomena Greco was sent to New York City where she was raised by her mother's sister and assisted by an officer of the Equitable Trust. She later graduated from Hunter College in New York City and returned to the home farm. The Mansion house had burned partially during a marsh fire in 1929 and the fields were in a state of disrepair. Filomena married William Muller a teacher and professor and later lived in Dover. Mr. Muller made some feeble attempts in the 1940's to reinvigorate the farming operation on the home farm near Big Stone Beach. Poor soil, drought, lack of fertilizer, and sparse working capital doomed Muller to failure.

By 1955 Muller and Filomena had separated and he returned to Dover to pursue his own life. Filomena Greco Muller retired to a reclusive life on her property at Big Stone Beach with only numerous cats to keep her company. Despite her poor condition and inability to pay taxes on her 3950 acres, Filomena was able to ward off the tax collector by leasing hunting rights on her vast holdings. Many efforts to induce Mrs. Muller to sell a portion of her holdings were all fruitless. She was convinced that a "trust was imposed on her lands prior to her birth" preventing her from selling or altering the property. Her

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desire was that her lands remain undeveloped and in their natural state.

During her last year of life she was confined to the Courtland Manor Nursing home in Dover where she was protected by a State of Delaware Guardian. The Court of Chancery approved a petition in July 1991 to sell the "Polk Farm" to assist with Mrs. Muller's debts. The Polk Farm was sold to Delaware Wildlands, Inc by a deed transfer granted in July 1991. An executor was appointed by the State following Mrs. Muller's death April 10, 1991 to determine the final distribution of the remaining 3,000 acres. The estate has not been finally settled as of this date, however attempts are being made to honor Filomena Greco Muller's desire that the land remain in its pristine and undeveloped state.

Plans currently are underway by Delaware Wildlands, Inc. to maintain the Polk Farm and the remains of "Ellerslie" in its original and unchanged state.

David W. Kenton  
September 18, 1991

1 - A History of Delaware Through Its Governors - 1776-1984  
Roger A. Martin - 1984 McCaffery Printing

2 - Runks Biographical Encyclopedia - 1899

3 - Kent County Recorder of Deeds - R-1-270 (1817), F-3-181 (1832)

## MANSION RESTORATION/REPAIRS

During the spring and summer major repairs have been made to the Parson Thorne Mansion. The building is the victim of the ravages of time (250 years), of heavy traffic on both road and rail, and of the demands of modern living.

The first work of a restoration nature was the construction of a guttering system on the rear of the building to stop water leakage in walls and cellar. Next came replacement of the shingles on the roofs of the two wings and repairs to the dormer.

Time, weather, and use had worn windows and frames in the attic and one on the second floor of the main section. On the ground floor, door

frames and sills of the rear wing have been repaired.

After such major repairs, the others appear to be slight but equally necessary. They include repairs to the floor of the front stoop; putting the rest room in service; re-setting the oil tanks and surrounding fence; and other jobs familiar to owners of historic properties and also of properties not so historic.

Neither grant money nor a major benefactor was available. Contributions in response to our appeal by mail are of great assistance but more is needed to pay the whole bill. A contribution in any amount is most welcome.

## BELL CONCERT

On Sunday, June 9th, the Society sponsored the second Bell Concert at the Parson Thorne Mansion. The bell choirs of Avenue United Methodist Church and Reformation Lutheran Church of Milford, and of St. Andrews Lutheran Church of Dover presented a concert on the front lawn. At the conclusion, refreshments were served on the side lawn.

The Society appreciates the generosity of these three choirs in sharing their music with our members and friends

## APPRECIATION

Mrs. S. P. Isaacs, Chairman of Docents, wishes to express her gratitude to those members who have served as Docents at the Parson Thorne Mansion during the 1991 season. Their welcoming presence adds to both enjoyment and understanding of our visitors to this historic property.

## IN MEMORIAM

The death of Alphonso E. Humes on April 2, 1991, has left memories of devoted service to the Society over several decades. When the Milford Historical Society was developing from a dream to reality, Al Humes was a member of the Pilot Committee which in January, 1962, planned its organization.

As Mayor of the City of Milford, he served as chairman of the observance of the 175th anniversary of the founding of the town. This celebration included compilation and publication of the book, "A History of Milford, Delaware", and a house tour, the profits of which events went to the new Milford Historical Society. An

additional feature was the dedication of the Vale-Williams City Hall at a ceremony attended by Mrs. Grace Vale Asche.

After completing his term as mayor, he was elected to the Society's Board of Trustees in 1965 and continued in that position until 1989. From 1965 to 1983 he served as Treasurer.

All of these contributions are specific and can be tabulated, even computerized, but his gifts of thoughtfulness, ideas, and caring cannot be enumerated, but live in the accomplishments of the Society and in the memories of his colleagues.

## PARSON THORNE MANSION SIGN

A beautiful new sign graces the front edge of the Parson Thorne Mansion lawn, giving the name and date of the building of the Mansion. This sign, beautifully and appropriately designed, executed and erected was the gift of Mr. Booker T. Bell of Greenwood.

This was not the first such contribution by Mr. Bell. He had painted and lettered the previous sign which had become no longer usable. On other occasions he has given generously of his talents and time to help the Society in times of need. We are very grateful to him