A Historic Saga of Settlement and Nation Building

First State National Historical Park

Historic Resource Study

Prepared by:
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Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc.
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In partnership with
The Organization of American Historians/National Park Service

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FIRST STATE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
New Castle, Delaware

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
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Northeast Region History Program
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Cover image: Detail from 1749 Lewis Evans “Map of Pensilvania, New-Jersey, New-York, and the three Delaware counties,” showing the 1701 boundary arc. Library of Congress.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In October 2014, the Organization of American Historians (OAH) contracted on behalf of the National Park Service Northeast Region with Paula S. Reed and Associates Inc. of Hagerstown, Maryland, to prepare a Historic Resource Study (HRS) for First State National Historical Park (FSNHP). The Scope of Work for the project requested a synthesis of information from different cultural resource disciplines in a narrative designed to serve managers, planners, interpreters, cultural resource specialists, and the interested public. The HRS provides “the necessary historical contexts for completing National Register documentation and for cultural resource inventories for the park, will inform completion of the park’s Foundation Document, and will produce prioritized recommendations for future cultural resource research and planning” (Scope of Work). The First State National Historical Park HRS will serve as a tool for integrating the interpretation of the park’s various historic resources.

Within that broad scope, there was a more specific request to develop the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract history and associated historic contexts in order “to understand the history and significance of the property, as well as to relate this analysis to the ‘first settlement’ and ‘first state’ contexts identified for the rest of the properties to be examined in the study” (Scope of Work). The research project entailed documentary research at local, regional, and national repositories, oral history interviews, and online sources. Among the leading regional sources of information were the Delaware Public Archives in Dover, Delaware, and the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware. The staff at First State National Historical Park arranged for us to interview Irenée Du Pont for his memories of growing up on the Brandywine Creek adjoining the Woodlawn Tract.

The National Significance of First State National Historical Park

As this HRS will show, the three counties of Delaware have witnessed a parade of significant movements and moments in American history. It was this extensive history in Delaware that prompted the United States Congress in 2009 to authorize a Special Resource Study for a potential National Historical Park in Delaware. The study identified two areas of national significance represented by Delaware history: (1) “the colonization and establishment of the frontier, which would chronicle the first European settlers in the Delaware Valley”; and (2) “the founding of a nation, which would document the
contributions of Delaware to the development of our constitutional republic.” In 2013, President Barack Obama authorized the establishment of First State National Monument, a discontiguous collection of sites located throughout Delaware, including the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, the New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff's House (NHL), and The Green in Dover. The enabling document identified the national significance of First State National Monument as “the settlement of the Delaware region by the Swedes, Finns, Dutch, and English, the role that Delaware played in the establishment of the Nation, and the preservation of the cultural landscape of the Brandywine Valley.” In December 2014, the U.S. Congress passed legislation creating First State National Historical Park, adding four additional sites: Fort Christina Park (NHL), Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church (NHL), John Dickinson Plantation (NHL), and the Ryves Holt House (Figure 1). The enabling legislation further detailed the two primary areas of national significance: (1) “early Dutch, Swedish, and English settlement of the Colony of Delaware and portions of the Colony of Pennsylvania”; and (2) “the role of Delaware (i) in the birth of the United States; and (ii) as the first State to ratify the Constitution.”

Historic Contexts Reveal the Shared Significance of the Seven Sites of First State National Historical Park

This Historic Resource Study is arranged in a broadly chronological order (to the extent to which that can be achieved given the long histories of the various sites). This study addresses the site-specific history of each of the seven sites that comprise the First State National Historical Park. While each of the park sites exemplifies one or more of the nationally significant areas cited in the legislation, each site’s individual history adds to the larger story of American history, connected through overarching historical contexts.

The complex web of historic associations between the noncontiguous park sites is revealed through these contexts. Foremost is the extended timeline of settlement history in the Delaware River drainage. This context extends from the American Indian

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4 An explanation of the chronology may be helpful. The four chapters of Section One (Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract) are clearly chronological. Section Two, in which each chapter addresses the history of one of the associated sites, is less-clearly chronological as each of the sites cover relatively long histories. We identified the chronology according to the primary significance of the site: Fort Christina (1638) is first; Old Swedes Church (1698 but representing the early Swedish colonists) is second; Ryves Holt House (1686) is third, representing the next wave of settlement; New Castle Court House (1731–32) also covers settlement, but is placed here for its key role in the establishment of the Delaware State (1770s); John Dickinson Plantation, representing a key player in the Revolutionary War period; and Dover Green (1787) is last for its significance during the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.
(pre-European contact) occupation on the land through European explorations and trade relationships and to the establishment of the earliest farms, village/town settlements, and manufactures. All of the FSNHP sites illustrate important periods or episodes in the settlement of the Mid-Atlantic region, which include the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract; Fort Christina Park; Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church; Ryves Holt House; the New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House complex; the John Dickinson Plantation; and The Green in Dover. The New Castle Court House, John Dickinson Plantation, and The Green in Dover, are significant not only to the history of nation building but also encompass important moments in our nation’s struggle with slavery and its eventual demise. The development histories of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, John Dickinson Plantation, and the Ryves Holt House as they relate to agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce also illustrate the economic drivers that underpin much of American history. The following historic contexts are included in the HRS to elucidate these connections among the park sites:

1. American Indian homelands and encounters with some of the earliest European colonists;
2. The political, economic, and social history of the Delaware River region—Dutch, Swedish, and Finn settlements—and the development of the English colony (the semi-autonomous “Three Lower Counties”);
3. The establishment of the United States of America and of Delaware as a state;
4. Ratification of the U.S. Constitution and subsequent events significant in its interpretation, revision, and expansion; and
5. The institution of slavery in Delaware and the culture of resistance.
Executive Summary

Purpose and Scope of this Historic Resource Study

The purpose of this Historic Resource Study is to provide an overview of the history of First State National Historical Park’s individual cultural resources and how these resources work together to tell the nationally significant stories of settlement and nation building. The HRS is a comprehensive document designed to address or identify relevant themes in the history of the Park’s varied resources. The completed document will aid in the management and interpretation of cultural resources throughout First State National Historical Park.

The scope of this Study is extensive. It encompasses the prehistoric settlement of the region by Lenape bands, exploration and settlement by European emigrants, and the political and social upheavals of the Revolutionary War and Civil War periods. It also extends through the twentieth-century preservation of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract to the establishment of the First State National Monument in 2013 and National Historical Park in 2015. This Study is divided into two sections. Section One addresses the history of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract cultural landscape. It is arranged chronologically by chapter, with some inevitable overlap. Significant historical context development in this section sets the stage for understanding both the significance of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract and its thematic association with the other FSNHP sites. Section Two is dedicated to the individual histories of the associated FSNHP sites. It is also arranged chronologically according to the date or period of primary significance of each site. The reader is referred to appropriate historical contexts in Section One. Additional historical context is provided as needed.

Chapter 1.1, “First Americans of the Delaware River and Brandywine Creek Drainages,” includes a discussion of the extensive prehistoric human occupation of the landscape through the archeological record. Lenape oral history and European explorers’ and colonists’ records provide the earliest documentation of the lifeways of the Lenape who occupied and utilized the Lenapewihittuck (Delaware River) drainage. Contact with European explorers, traders, and emigrants significantly altered Lenape lifeways, leading eventually to their involuntary removal to Ohio, Kansas, and finally, Indian Territory.

Chapter 1.2, “European American Settlement Patterns,” details the period of early settlement of the Delaware River region by Dutch, Swede, Finn, and English traders and emigrants. This chapter provides the broader context of European exploration and colonization known as the “Age of Discovery” and the competing Dutch, Swede, and English claims on the lower Delaware River and Bay region.

Chapter 1.3, “Developing the Brandywine and Beaver Valley Landscape,” is a comprehensive history and description of the post-1681 English/Quaker development of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract. It traces the agricultural, architectural, and manufacturing developments along the Brandywine and Beaver creeks.
Chapter 1.4, “William Poole Bancroft and the Woodlawn Plan,” traces the history of Quaker industrialist William Poole Bancroft, his evolution as a philanthropist and conservationist, and the establishment of the Woodlawn Company (Trustees). It was Bancroft’s plan for the preservation of the Brandywine Valley landscape, along with careful planning for nearby residential and commercial development, that made possible the remarkable cultural landscape preservation found on the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract.

Section Two begins with an introduction that will tie the history presented in Section One to the individual site histories in Section Two, which include Chapter 2.1, “Fort Christina Park” (with a broader context of the American Revolutionary War); Chapter 2.2, “Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church”; Chapter 2.3, “Ryves Holt House”; Chapter 2.4, “New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House”; Chapter 2.5, “John Dickinson Plantation”; and Chapter 2.6, “The Green in Dover and the United States Constitution.”

The Conclusion completes the study with a discussion of the overarching significance and contextual associations of the First State National Historical Park cultural resources. It also highlights additional important historical themes that suggest avenues for further research that may supplement current interpretation at the various park sites, but which, for want of space and time, could not be covered within the scope of this HRS document.

A Summary of Delaware’s Landscape and its Unique History

The state of Delaware is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, Delaware Bay, and Delaware River on the east, by Pennsylvania to the north around the unique twelve-mile arc boundary, and by Maryland to the west and south. Much of the state is drained by rivers and creeks, some tidal and many of them historically navigable, which empty into the Delaware River and Bay. The three counties of Delaware lie in a north-to-south alignment, with each county encompassing a remarkably different environment. The northermost county of New Castle includes the eastern edge of the Piedmont, transitioning to the Upper Coastal region at the fall line. Thus, New Castle County was historically rich in woodland resources and water power useful for manufacturing. The floodplains and level Upper Coastal lands provide excellent agricultural opportunities. Additionally, New Castle County included important routes between port cities to the northeast and the fertile agricultural lands of the inland Mid-Atlantic region. Kent County, the middle-tier county in Delaware, is an Upper Coastal Plain with rich farmlands that served as the early nation’s grainery. The fertile soil of Kent County, historically the least populated of the three counties, was conducive to the large plantation economy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The southernmost Sussex County has the longest coastline, touching both the Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Though the west side of the county includes rich farm land, much of the land in Sussex County is marshy (including the northermmost bald
cypress swamp in the U.S.) and influenced by tidal estuaries. Historically, the population of Sussex County settled largely along the coast and focused on maritime occupations.

The significant and varied historic resources that form First State National Historical Park are spread throughout the three counties of Delaware (Figure 1). New Castle County resources include the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn tract with 1,100 acres of preserved natural and cultural landscapes, the New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House in the historic town of New Castle and Fort Christina Park and Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Wilmington. In Kent County, The Green and John Dickinson Plantation are located in and near the state capital of Dover. In Sussex County, the seventeenth century Ryves Holt House is located in the historic coastal town of Lewes at the mouth of the Delaware Bay.

Stretching from the Piedmont fall line to the tidewater lowlands, the land that became Delaware was occupied for hundreds of years prior to European “discoveries” of the New World. By the late sixteenth century, it was the Lenape who greeted the first visitors to the Lenapewihittuck (Delaware River) region. Dutch traders explored the river as early as 1616 and identified its potential for the lucrative peltries trade with the American Indian inhabitants of the land. Claiming the region as part of their New Netherland territory, the Dutch established a few posts along what they called the South River (Lenapewihittuck or Delaware River), most notably Fort Nassau opposite the mouth of the Schuylkill and the failed settlement of Zwaanendael at the mouth of the Delaware Bay along the tidal creek known as the Hoeren Kill (Whorekill, today’s Lewes Creek). Swedish and Finnish emigrants who arrived after the Dutch found the area sparsely populated, occupied by the indigenous Lenape bands and a few Dutch traders. Despite the still-active occupation and use of the land by the Lenape and the prior claim of the Dutch, the Swedes claimed the territory as New Sweden by right of occupation and built Fort Christina near their landing at The Rocks (later Wilmington). The Dutch reclaimed the area in 1654 and built Fort Casimir and the adjoining New Amstel village (later New Castle).

Just as the Dutch and Swedes began to settle their territorial dispute, in 1664 the English took control of the Delaware River region. In 1682, the region became a part of William Penn’s vast proprietary commonwealth called Pennsylvania. As the English colony grew outward from the burgeoning Quaker settlements of southeast Pennsylvania, the Lenape were pushed further and further west, their influence fading. Penn’s “Three Lower Counties,” in particular the northernmost New Castle County, was altered under Quaker influence, developing tidy farms and successful manufactures along the creeks and streams of the lower Delaware River drainage. The two southern tidewater counties instead developed a plantation economy based upon enslaved labor.

The Delaware counties, to which Penn gave a semi-autonomous legislature in 1704, were strong advocates for colonial independence. In 1774 and 1775, the Delaware
Executive Summary

legislature sent representatives to the First and Second Continental Congress. Then, in a 1776 meeting in the New Castle Court House, the Delaware Assembly voted to form the “Delaware State” and joined the twelve other colonies-turned-states in declaring their independence from Great Britain. Delaware earned its “First State” title in 1787 when the Delaware delegation, meeting in The Golden Fleece Tavern along The Green in Dover, was the first to ratify the new United States Constitution. Ironically, some of the Delaware leaders in the fight for independence were slaveholders. While some such as John Dickinson recognized the disconnect between the enslavement of other human beings and their own fight for freedom, it would be years before the slavery issue in the U.S. would resolve.

During the mid-nineteenth century sectional dispute over slavery in the United States, the New Castle Court House provided the setting for a dramatic chapter in American history leading up to the Civil War. In the 1848 Hunn-Garrett trials, Quakers Thomas Garrett and John Hunn stood trial under the federal Fugitive Slave Act for their roles as conductors on the Underground Railroad. Presided over by U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, the trial set a legal precedent by applying a $500 fine for each fugitive given assistance. Despite the strong, Quaker-influenced culture of resistance to slavery in New Castle County, Delaware remained a “slave state” during the American Civil War along with the other “border states” of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri.

Delaware’s rich history is peopled by a diverse cast of men and women whose daily lives intersected with significant episodes in American history. Their stories are preserved in the historic sites they occupied and amplified within the larger contexts of settlement and nation-building along the Delaware River drainage.
SECTION ONE

BEAVER VALLEY–WOOLAWN TRACT: THE EVOLUTION OF A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
INTRODUCTION

The Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract is a uniquely preserved natural and cultural landscape of exceptional beauty that exemplifies significant episodes in American history (Figure 2). On this land lies evidence of the seasonal activities of the Lenape bands, who utilized the abundant natural resources of the Brandywine Valley for hundreds of years prior to European encroachment. The farms dotting the hills and valleys harken to the early eighteenth-century settlement of the landscape by industrious Quaker planters, who followed William Penn to his proprietary commonwealth formerly claimed by Dutch and Swedish traders. Here, the singular twelve-degree arc marking the boundary between Delaware and Pennsylvania passes through the pastoral landscape, identified by monuments set at half-mile intervals in 1892. The mill remnants along the banks of Beaver Creek reveal some of the earliest industries of the American colonies associated with the remarkable Brandywine Creek corridor. In the end, it was the conservation foresight of Quaker industrialist William P. Bancroft and his unfulfilled community planning vision that serendipitously served to preserve the whole of this significant landscape for future generations.

The Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract is part of the larger entity that is First State National Historical Park. It serves as the land anchor for the multi-site park that stretches from the northern Delaware border (and into Pennsylvania) south to Wilmington (Fort Christina, Holy Trinity-Old Swedes Church), New Castle (Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House), Dover (The Green, John Dickinson Plantation), and Lewes (Ryves Holt House) at the southern end of the Delaware Bay. More than an anchor, the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract provides a visual historical context for the related individual sites, a context for the cultural and natural landscape of the Brandywine Valley, and a natural landscape in many ways unchanged from the time of its occupation by the Lenape. It also embodies the cultural accretions of European colonization and development. Thus, the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract derives its national significance from its exceptional “preservation of the cultural landscape of the Brandywine Valley” (2013 establishment of First State National Monument) representing some of the earliest “English settlement of the Colony of Delaware and portions of the Colony of Pennsylvania” (2015 legislation creating the First State National Historical Park).
Figure 2: Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, outlined in white. (National Park Service)
CHAPTER 1.1

FIRST AMERICANS OF THE DELAWARE RIVER AND BRANDYWINE CREEK DRAINAGES

The Mid-Atlantic coastline from New York to North Carolina saw the earliest sustained contacts between the “first Americans”—American Indian groups who already occupied the “discovered” land—and European (Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, and English) traders and colonists. Over the thousands of years before these contacts were made, American Indians in the Mid-Atlantic region had established a well-developed network of territories in which they lived, hunted, traded, and over which they waged wars. Alliances between groups formed over shared language, kinship, trade, or common enemies.

Much of this earliest American history is recorded in the archeological record or in tribal oral traditions handed down over the millennia. Tracing the history of America’s first occupants is more than merely piecing together the past. The American Indian journey prior to European contact is the foundation of the continuum of American history. Modern roads often trace historic Indian paths along the easiest, driest, or most direct routes, following rivers and creeks or over mountains. Many American place names and other common words draw heavily upon indigenous languages. Corn, beans, squash, and tobacco were American Indian cultivars adopted by European emigrants. These products helped the new European arrivals to survive and even became the basis of a thriving colonial economy.

The Lenape (Lenni Lenape or Delaware), a loose affiliation of kinship bands, called the land they occupied Lenapehoking. Much of that land was located along the Lenapewihittuck (Delaware River) and its drainages. They viewed the land as sacred, given to them by their Creator, whom they called Mannito. John Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary among the Lenape in the eighteenth century, described the Lenape view of the link between their physical and spiritual world:

That he [Mannito/Creator] has given them a fertile extensive country well stocked with game of every kind for their subsistence, and that by one of his inferior spirits he has also sent down to them from above corn, pumpkins, squashes, beans and other vegetables for their nourishment; all which blessings their ancestors have enjoyed for a great number of ages.2

1 There were earlier contacts between American Indians and explorers, particularly from Spain; however, it was the Dutch who first established permanent trading relationships with American Indians.
Heckewelder, who spent more than thirty years among the Lenape, came to admire Lenape spirituality, despite his mission to convert them to Christianity. In 1817, Heckewelder wrote his manuscript, *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States*, “for the information of those who are desirous of knowing the true history of those people, who, for centuries, have been in full possession of the country we now inhabit.” Perhaps it was his hope that European Americans, who by that time were residents of the United States of America, might feel the same dedication to the land they now occupied.

**Algonquian Roots**

This is a tortoise, lying in the water around it ... so at first was the world or the earth, when the tortoise gradually raised its round back up high, and the water ran off of it, and thus the earth became dry. ... The earth was now dry, and there grew a tree in the middle of the earth, and the root of this tree sent forth a sprout beside it and there grew upon it a man, who was the first male. This man was then alone, and would have remained alone, but the tree bent over until its top touched the earth, and there shot therein another root, from which came forth another sprout, and there grew upon it the woman, and from these two are all men produced.

—Lenape Creation Story told by Tantaque (Munsee Lenape) in 1679.

The Algonquian language group, of which it is said the Lenape are “the Grandfathers,” is the largest American Indian language group in North America. Today described as “the Algic family of languages,” some linguists locate the genesis of the language somewhere in the area of the Great Lakes. From there, dialect groups fanned out through much of southern and eastern Canada, along the length of the Mississippi as far south as Tennessee, to eastern New York and New England, the Mid-Atlantic and south along the coast to North Carolina, and even as far west as the Great Plains and California. Thirty-nine Algonquian dialects have been identified by linguists, including Lenape (Munsee and Unami), “Cree (which comprises some nine languages ...), Ojibwe (which contains seven), Kickapoo, Menominee, Meskwaki Sauk (Sac and Fox), Miami-Illinois, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Abnaki-Penobscot ... Maliseet-Passamoquoddy, Mi’kmaq,

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1 Heckewelder, *Account of the History*, xxiii.
Arapaho, Gros Ventre, Blackfeet, and Cheyenne, as well as Wiyot and Yurok… Virginian and Carolinian Algonquian, Mohegan-Pequot, Mahican [Mohican], Massachusett-Narragansett, and Wampanoag.” Eighth-century missionary John Heckewelder described the Lenape Unami language spoken by the Lenape who lived primarily in southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware as “the purest and most elegant dialect” and thus likely “the head of the national family” or the “grandfather” of other Algonquian-speaking tribes.

In tracing the roots of human occupation along the Delaware River, this study follows the archeological chronology developed by University of Delaware archeologist Dr. Jay F. Custer for the Delmarva Peninsula, which is based upon “common cultural adaptations and similar biosocial environments.” The Paleo-Indian period begins around 12,000 BCE (before common era) and continues to approximately 6,500 BCE; the Archaic period begins around 6,500 BCE through about 3,000 BCE; the Woodland I period begins approximately 3000 BCE and runs to about 1000 CE (common era); and the Woodland II covers the pre-European contact period from 1000 CE to around 1600 CE when the first meaningful contact between American Indians and Europeans took place.

**Paleo-Indian Period: 12,000 BCE to 6,500 BCE**

Paleo-Indian occupations are identified by cultural markers that survive in archeological contexts. Most commonly these are stone (lithic) tools, particularly projectile points which appear to follow identifiable stylistic trends. The earliest such identifiable points at sites on the Delmarva Peninsula are Clovis fluted points. These lanceolate-shaped spear points with long hafting channels called “flutes” were particularly well-suited to hunting the large game found in the cold, mixed grassland/boreal/deciduous environment of the Mid-Atlantic at the end of the Pleistocene Epoch.

In 1989, Jay F. Custer identified six sites in northern Delaware with fluted points present. Paleo-Indian tool assemblages do not include “specialized plant food processing tools” such as grinding stones, leading archeologists to postulate that hunting played a larger role in the Paleo-Indian diet than the gathering of plant foods. Custer notes, however, evidence of plant remains in a hearth at the Shawnee-Minisink site, where Clovis points were found in a similar environment in the Upper Delaware Valley of Pennsylvania. Plant

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7 Campbell, *American Indian Languages*, 361. Some languages formerly considered “extinct” are now being revived through tribal efforts.
9 Jay F. Custer, *Prehistoric Cultures of the Delmarva Peninsula: An Archaeological Study* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 36. Custer’s Delmarva chronology correlates with traditional chronological divisions in the following way: Paleo-Indian refers to Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic; Archaic refers to Middle Archaic; Woodland I refers to Late Archaic, Early, and Middle Woodland; and Woodland II refers to Late Woodland.
10 David J. Grettler, Scott C. Watson, and Jay F. Custer, “Final Archaeological Investigations of the Replacements of Bridges # 17 and # 18, on New Castle #221 (Beaver Valley Road), New Castle County, Delaware,” 1988, no. 62, Delaware Department of Transportation Archaeological Series, Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware, p. 7.
remnants found in the hearth included grape, amaranth, blackberry, smartweed, ragweed, sedge, hackberry, and hawthorne plum. Fish bones were also found. Other types of sites found in northern Delaware associated with this period include quarry sites and hunting/processing sites. Thus, it appears that Paleo-Indians of the Mid-Atlantic subsisted following a highly mobile, seasonal hunting and gathering lifeway, requiring a small group social organization likely structured around family units.

**Archaic Period: 6,500 BCE to 3,000 BCE**

The Archaic Period is marked by new adaptations to the environmental changes associated with the Holocene Epoch (from approximately 9,700 BCE to present). After the glaciers receded sufficiently far north to no longer effect the environment of the Mid-Atlantic, a period of warmer temperatures accompanied by a wetter climate altered the landscape. The open grasslands favored by large grazing animals such as bison and moose gave way to deciduous forests that were home to elk, deer, and other smaller animals.

Lithic tools found at Delmarva Archaic sites reflect the changing environment. The appearance of relatively small, bifurcate (stemmed with a bottom notch) spear points, possibly associated with the development of the atlatl or spear-thrower, were more effective with smaller, faster game. Heavy ground stone tools appear in Archaic Period assemblages that also reflect the resource-rich deciduous environment. Axes and adzes were woodworking tools; grinding stones (mullers) and mortar and pestles served to process a variety of plants and possibly nuts.

The addition of the less-portable ground stone tools is indicative of a somewhat more settled lifeway made possible by improved environmental conditions. Archaic Period “macro-band base camp” sites in the Mid-Atlantic indicate larger groups than the Paleo-Indian encampments. Sites are found in floodplain settings along many of the larger creeks and rivers, including the Brandywine Creek, White Clay Creek, and the Cristina and Delaware Rivers. From these larger group sites, smaller units, termed “micro-bands” by Custer, fanned out to seasonal camps focused on hunting and gathering plant materials. Custer postulates a “more elaborate, and more carefully planned, seasonal scheduling than the earlier system.”

**Woodland I Period: 3,000 BCE to 1000 CE**

The earliest phase of the Woodland I period (termed Late Archaic in the traditional chronology) coincides with an environmental change known as the Sub-Boreal Episode in

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14 AECOM, “Native American Context.”
which the climate became markedly warmer and drier. As a result, grasslands returned and reliable water sources were altered. Custer identifies “the development of estuarine and riverine adaptations that are stable and intensive enough to produce large macro-band basecamp sites in the zone of freshwater/saltwater interface and along the floodplains of major drainages.” He notes “more intensive site utilization,” population growth, and increasing sedentism through the Woodland I period.\(^\text{16}\)

While the subsistence pattern revolving around the macro-band base camps and micro-band procurement sites appears similar to the Archaic Period, there was a marked increase in activities at the macro-band base camps. Among such activities may have been early attempts at plant cultivation identified at several sites in the region:

Recent data from Calver Island in the lower Susquehanna Valley, indicates that *chenopodium*, a native seed-bearing plant, was utilized and possibly cultivated by 3900 BP [before present, 1,950 BCE]. In addition, two pepo gourd rind fragments from the Memorial Park Site on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River were directly dated to 5404± 522 BP [3,454 BCE], indicating a very early, though certainly limited, use of Mesoamerican cultigens.\(^\text{17}\)

Chesapeake region archeologist Richard Dent notes evidence of “fish processing, nut gathering, and other related activities” at the Delaware Park site near Dover, Delaware.\(^\text{18}\) The Woodland I period also included the introduction of steatite (soapstone) bowls or cooking vessels and, later, the early production of ceramic vessels.\(^\text{19}\)

In northern Delaware, significant macro-band base camps include the Clyde Farm site at Churchman’s Marsh, the Crane Hook site on the Delaware River in Wilmington, the Naaman’s Creek site, and the Mitchell Farm site. Additionally, Custer notes a large site on the Brandywine Creek north of Wilmington, which was identified and collected in the mid-nineteenth century by Henry A. du Pont prior to construction of the DuPont Eleutherian Mills.\(^\text{20}\) The Beaver Valley Rock Shelter has been tentatively identified as a Woodland I site, containing crushed stone-tempered ceramic sherds and a straight-stemmed point. It was used likely as a short-term shelter during hunting or gathering forays, possibly from the base camp at Naaman’s Creek.\(^\text{21}\) The nearby Queonemysing village site has not been archeologically investigated, so it is unknown if the site was occupied during the Woodland I period. Its location on the floodplain of the Brandywine

\(^{16}\) Custer, *Prehistoric Cultures of the Delmarva Peninsula*, 143–44.

\(^{17}\) AECOM, “Native American Context.” Archeologists calculate BP (before present) from 1950 CE.


\(^{19}\) Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory*, 226–27.


Creek, however, fits within the predictive model for Woodland I base camp sites developed for the region.\textsuperscript{22}

Beginning around 500 BCE, evidence of advancing trade networks in which specialized artifacts, including “large bifaces, exotic material tubular pipes, slate gorgets, and copper artifacts,” and relatively elaborate mortuary practices appear to have flowed from the Ohio-Mississippi region.\textsuperscript{23} This influence is found in the archeological record from western Pennsylvania through western Maryland along the Potomac River and across the Chesapeake to the mid-Peninsula region—there called the Delmarva Adena Complex. Sites in Delaware include the Frederica site on the Murderkill River, the nearby Killens Pond site, and the Saint Jones site near Dover, each containing ritualized burials and trade items. Archeological evidence appears to indicate far less influence in northern Delaware and southeastern Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{24} Adena culture was a precursor to the Hopewell culture centered in the Ohio River drainage. The Adena/Hopewell trade networks east of the Allegheny Mountains disappeared around 0 to 200 CE.\textsuperscript{25} Groups in the Mid-Atlantic region returned to their established Woodland I subsistence pattern that continued to intensify around the semi-sedentary macro-band base camps with increasing use of ceramics and plant-processing tools.

**Woodland II Period: 1000 CE to 1600 CE**

The Woodland II period marks the shift to a broad range of subsistence strategies in the Mid-Atlantic region. In general, settlement patterns change only slightly with continued use of high productivity areas (floodplains and marsh/swamps) for extended occupations during the Woodland I period. However, over much of the region there is evidence of increased sedentism associated with the development of agriculture. Ceramics proliferate and take on more regional identities. The small triangular points associated particularly with the bow and arrow become nearly exclusive in hunting toolkits.\textsuperscript{26}

Though many groups in the region appear to have embraced agricultural production as a significant source of their subsistence, evidence of cultivated plants appears far less frequently in Woodland II sites in northern Delaware and southeastern Pennsylvania. Custer postulates that smaller population densities, coupled with sufficient game and wild plants, precluded the necessary incentives to develop agriculture. These groups do exhibit increased use of ceramics, the adoption of the bow and arrow, and possible cursory plant cultivation in the area around the Christina River, White Clay Creek, and Brandywine Creek as well as the lower Delaware River identified as the Minguannan Complex. Thus,

\textsuperscript{23} AECOM, “Native American Context.”
\textsuperscript{24} Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory*, 234.
\textsuperscript{25} Custer, *Prehistoric Cultures of the Delmarva Peninsula*, 275; and AECOM, “Native American Context.”
\textsuperscript{26} Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory*, 222.
though the lifeway among the groups living in this area changed very little from the Woodland I period, there were some marked alterations found in common with the rest of the region.²⁷

**Northern Delaware Landscape at European Contact, about 1600 CE ²⁸**

The temperate climate we experience today in the Mid-Atlantic region has been largely the norm since the beginning of the Holocene Epoch around 9,700 BCE. By the early Woodland I period (about 3,000 BCE), the Chesapeake Bay, and presumably the Delaware Bay, achieved its current size and appearance along with the adjoining tidewater environment known as the Coastal Plain. Above the fall line, the point at which the relatively flat Coastal Plain ends and the land begins to rise, the hills and valleys of the freshwater Piedmont stretched toward the Allegheny Mountains.²⁹

The Piedmont landscape of northern Delaware occupied by Lenape bands around the time of European contact (1600 CE) was covered with dense deciduous forests, dominated by the American chestnut and varieties of oak. Nuts, berries, and foliage in the undergrowth provided food for wild turkeys, deer, elk, bear, squirrels, beaver, and other small animals.³⁰ The forests were broken by swift flowing creeks and rivers—including those later called Beaver, Brandywine, and Christina—leading finally to the Lenapewihittuck (Delaware River). Freshwater creeks and rivers teemed with fish throughout the year, joined by the annual spawning runs of anadromous fish. This was an environment fully suited to a seasonal hunting and gathering lifeway but equally suited to agricultural adaptations, which allowed for longer stays at summer basecamps.

**Lenape of the Mid-Atlantic Region at European Contact, about 1600 CE**

The Lenape groups that lived along the eastern seaboard (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania east of the Susquehanna, Maryland, and Delaware) are today known largely by the descriptions from the sixteenth through the seventeenth century by European explorers, traders, and missionaries and from Lenape stories that recall traditional lifeways.³¹ The available literature describing the Lenape at the time of European contact reveals a system of community subsistence that generally matches the patterns described in the archaeological record within Custer’s Woodland I and Woodland II chronologies.

²⁸ Some explorers passed through earlier. However, permanent settlement in Virginia began in 1608.
²⁹ Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory*, 5.
University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace estimated approximately 8,000 Lenape lived along the Delaware River drainages before European contact (around 1600 CE), that number gleaned from a review of contact period literature. New Jersey archeologist Hebert Kraft estimates band or village sizes ranging from 150 to 600 inhabitants along the east bank of the Lenapewihittuck (Delaware River). Village bands were formed by the gathering of several family lineages with each lineage numbering as many as fifty men, women, and children.

Lenape family lineages are traced through the maternal line. The matrilineage, notes Kraft, “consisted of a female matron (a grandmother or eldest woman) and her male and female descendants and collateral relatives in the female line.” Though bands generally governed themselves by consensus, “the matriarch in consultation with other women of the lineage” would choose a male sakima or “sachem” to serve as mediator or spokesman for the family when the need arose. As Kraft notes, “The sakima was not exalted; in most instances he was regarded merely as the first among equals.” Europeans mistakenly identified these village bands as “nations” and often called the chief sakima “king.” In reality, the sachem could make no decisions on his own and only carried out the directions of his council of “wise men.” It was these village-band “nations” with whom the Dutch and Swedish traders and later Pennsylvania proprietor William Penn negotiated for trade and land.

Descriptions of the Lenape living on the Lenapewihittuck drainage written by European explorers and missionaries are most certainly colored by their belief in European/Christian superiority. However, the information provides us with a window on traditional Lenape lifeways. In the case of Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524, the peoples he encountered were still living within the Woodland II chronological period as most were yet unaltered by European trade goods and diseases. Verrazano’s explorations began on the Carolina coast. Sailing north, he stopped only briefly on the Delmarva Peninsula, a land which he called “Arcadia” and described as “much more beautiful and

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33 Kraft, *Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*, 219.


35 Kraft, *Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*, 249.

36 Kraft, *Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*, 250.

37 Kraft, *Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*, 250.

38 The King of France paid for Verrazano’s exploration. He was looking for the passage to Cathay but instead found the unbroken east coast of North America. First landing at South Carolina, he turned north to avoid running into the Spanish, stopping on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, the Delmarva Peninsula, New York, Rhode Island, and as far north as Newfoundland.
full of great forests.”  

There he encountered only a few frightened inhabitants, among them two women with six children hiding in the grass. Their fear was well-founded as Verrazano reported that he “took the boy from the old woman to carry back to France.”  

Farther north, in the area of Rhode Island, Verrazano described a seasonal village:

> We saw their houses, which are circular in shape, about XIII [fourteen] to XV [fifteen] paces across, made of bent saplings; they are arranged without any architectural pattern, and are covered with cleverly worked mats of straw which protect them from wind and rain … They move these houses from one place to another according to the richness of the site and the season. They need only carry the straw mats, and so they have new houses made in no time at all. In each house there lives a father with a very large family, for in some we saw XXV [twenty-five] to XXX [thirty] people. They live on the same food as the other people pulse [beans] (which they produce with more systematic cultivation than the other tribes, and when sewing [sic] they observe the influence of the moon, the rising of the Pleiades, and many other customs derived from the ancients), and otherwise on game and fish.

These were likely Narragansett or Wampanoag villages—northern Algonquian-speaking tribes who were distant relatives of the Lenape.

Eighty-four years later, in 1608, Captain John Smith began his explorations around the Chesapeake Bay. Smith found very similar lifeways among the southern Algonquian speakers of the Powhatan, Conoy, and Nanticoke groups settled along the tributary rivers of the Bay. In 1612, he recorded his observations for publication in England, in which he described the people he found living in the Chesapeake region. In what would later be called Virginia, the village bands were affiliated with the Powhatan Confederacy, which was the southernmost Algonquian language group. On the Delmarva Peninsula, Smith interacted with several Nanticoke village groups. Their lifeways were likely quite similar to the Lenape groups living just to the north:

> Their buildings and habitations are for the most part by the rivers or not farre distant from some fresh spring. Their houses are built like our Arbors of small young springs [sprigs] bowed and tyed, and so close covered with mats or the barkes of trees very handsomely, that notwithstanding either winde raine or

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weather, they are as warme as stoves, but very smoaky, yet at the toppe of the house there is a hole made for the smoake to goe into right over the fire.\footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 104.}

Smith noted the summer camps were located “in the midst of their fields or gardens” and numbered anywhere from two to 100 houses with six to twenty occupants in each. The seasonal hunting camps, according to Smith, were “commonly 2 or 300 [people] together.”\footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 95–97.} Smith also detailed their methods of cultivation:

The greatest labour they take, is in planting their corne, for the country naturally is overgrowne with wood. To prepare the ground they bruise the barke of the trees neare the roote, then do scorch the roots with fire that they grow no more. The next yeare with a crooked peece of wood, they beat up the woodes by the rootes; and in that [those] moulds, they plant their corne. Their manner is this. They make a hole in the earth with a sticke, and into it they put 4 graines of wheat [corn] and 2 of beanes. These holes they make 4 foote one from another. Their women and children do continually keepe it with weeding, and when it is growne midle high, they hill it about like a hop-yard. In Aprill they begin to plant, but their chiefe plantation is in May, and so they continue till the midst of June. What they plant in Aprill they reape in August, for May in September, for June in October… They plant also pease they cal \textit{Assentamens}, which are the same they cal in Italye, \textit{Fagioli}. Their Beanes are the same the Turkes call \textit{Garnanes}, but these they much esteeme for dainties… In May also amongst their corne, they plant Pumpeons, and a fruit like unto a muske millen, but lesse and worse; which they call \textit{Macocks}… They plant also \textit{Maracocks} a wild fruit like a lemom… When all their fruits be gathered, little els they plant, and this is done by their women and children; neither doth this long suffice them: for neere 3 parts of the yeare, they only observe times and seasons, and live of what the Country naturally affordeth from hand to mouth, &c.\footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 100–101.}

Smith identified many of those naturally occurring resources, including fish, shellfish, bear, deer, and smaller animals, birds, fruits, berries, roots, barks, and other plants.\footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 90–95.} “The men,” wrote Smith, “bestowe their times in fishing, hunting, wars.” Accordingly, their chief weapon was the bow and arrow. In addition to planting and gathering, the women and children “make mats, baskets, pots, morters, pound their corne, make their bread” and prepare the meals.\footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 100–101.}

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\item \footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 104.}
\item \footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 95–97.}
\item \footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 90–95.}
\item \footnote{Smith, “Map of Virginia,” 100–101.}
\end{itemize}}
When Dutch explorer Cornelis Hendricksen sailed up the Lenapewihittuck in 1616, he only identified two Lenape settlements on his map, including the Stankektans to the north and the Sauwanew farther south. The Sauwanew village was indicated on the map by a single, large long house, while the Stankektans village consisted of numerous smaller long houses located on both sides of the river. To the west were the Minqua (Susquehannocks) with whom the Lenape would soon be at war over trade with the Dutch. Certainly, there were more villages not observed by Hendricksen likely located out of view from the river. As historian Jean R. Soderlund explains, “because the Susquehannocks burned Lenape towns and drove the inhabitants to the east bank of the Lenapewihittuck in the late 1620s and early 1630s, some of the first evidence from Europeans depicts the Lenape population in flight.”

Thus, early maps, such as Joan Vingboons’ map from around 1639, *Caert vande Svydt Rivier in Niew Nederland*, show numerous villages on the east side of the river with few on the west side (Figure 3). But with the cessation of Lenape-Minqua hostilities in 1638, the western drainage of the Lenapewihittuck was reoccupied. Peter Lindstrom’s 1654–55 map of New Sweden reflected the numerous creekside villages with each named for the *kyl* (creek, also spelled kill) on which they resided (Figure 4).

In 1654, Swedish engineer Peter Lindstrom described the Lenape communities he encountered along the Lenapewihittuck drainage, though many were “diminished through war and also through diseases.” He noted the Sickoneysincks at Cape Henlopen (later Lewes, Delaware) were “a powerful nation and rich in maize plantations.” Lindstrom was particularly impressed with the Schuylkill area communities of Poaetquessingh, Pemickpacka, Wickquaquenscke, Wickquakonick (on the Lenapewihittuck), Passyunk, and Nittabokonck (on the Schuylkill) “who own this River and dwell here . . . [h]ave their dwellings side by side one another,” and “cleared and cultivated [their land] with great power.”

Mattahorn of Passyunk was among the sachems of this group of villages, possibly the chief sachem, who was later a signatory to a sweeping land transaction with the Swedes presumed to include the Wawaset (Fishekyl or Brandywine Creek). Naaman was also identified among the local sachems, who spoke in favor of peace with the Swedes at a 1644 conference with Swedish Governor Printz. Naaman’s village might have been located along today’s Naaman’s Creek.

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First Americans of the Delaware River and Brandywine Creek Drainages

Figure 3: Detail from Joan Vinboons, Map of the South River in New Netherland, about 1639. Library of Congress.
Figure 4: Peter Lindstrom, Map of New Sweden and Pennsylvania, 1654, as reproduced by Tomas Campanius, 1702. www.mapsofpa.com.
First Americans of the Delaware River and Brandywine Creek Drainages

Europeans Bring Change to Lenape Lifeways

In 1616, when the Dutch traders arrived on the Lenapewihittuck, which they called the Zuydt Rivier (South River), they found the Lenape who were living there ready to trade. Rumors from Lenape allies to the north—the Manahatta and the Navesink—told of the wampum (in the form of glass beads), clay pipes, clothing, blankets, metal items, and guns to be had from the Dutch in exchange for animal hides. Though the Lenape certainly prized the meat of the animals they hunted in the Mid-Atlantic woodlands and utilized the hides for clothing and other items, they likely were surprised by the European traders’ interest in the pelts, in particular that of the beaver. The Lenape of the lower Lenapewihittuck drainages quickly adapted their hunting patterns to provide the Dutch with local beaver skins as well as the skins of otter, deer, and other animals.

The Minqua too forged a path to Dutch trading partners on the Lenapewihittuck at Fort Nassau. The thick, luxurious Susquehanna beaver pelts were prized by the Dutch over the inferior pelts of the Lenapewihittuck drainages. This unfortunate reality soon led to a trade war between the Lenape and Minqua which lasted from 1626 to 1636. A peace was finally settled in which the two agreed to share the Dutch trade with the Minqua dominating the beaver pelt market while the Lenape shifted to trading corn and other provisions.

Dutch relations with the Lenape soured in 1631 when the “plantation” settlement called Zwaanendael (Swanendael) was established at Cape Henlopen. The local Lenape Sickonesinck band destroyed the agricultural settlement, as Soderlund explains, “demanding instead that the Dutch obtain goods only through trade.” The Dutch attempted no further settlements but carried on their trade in the region at various posts, including Fort Nassau opposite the mouth of the Schuylkill (east side of the river in today’s New Jersey) and Fort Casimir (at New Amstel, today’s New Castle) on the Lenapewihittuck. In 1638, the Swedish ships Kalmar Nyckel and Fogel Grip sailed into the Minquas Kill (Swedish name Elb, later Christina River) to establish a trading partnership with the Lenape and the Minqua. There the Swedes built their trading post, Fort Christina, on land conveyed by several Lenape sachems, such as Mattahorn, who had previously made land agreements with the Dutch on the Schuylkill River in 1633.

53 Paul A. W. Wallace describes “Fort Manayunk” on the west bank of the Schuylkill. “Old Swedes Path” led from the Minquas Path near Swedes Mill (near Fort Manayunk) to Fort Trinity, formerly the Dutch Fort Casimir, soon to be New Castle. The “Conestoga-Newport Path” reportedly led from the Minquas Path to Newport on Christina River near both Fort Christina and Fort Trinity. Paul A. W. Wallace, Indian Paths of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1965), 64, 120, 36.

54 Soderlund, Lenape Country, 30.

55 For more information on Zwaanendael, see Chapter 2.3.

56 Soderlund, Lenape Country, 7, 39.

It is important here to reiterate the Lenape view of land and territory. John Heckewelder wrote of the Lenape belief in collective possession:

He [Mannitto] made the earth and all that it contains for the common good of mankind; when he stocked the country that he gave them with plenty of game, it was not for the benefit of a few, but of all. Every thing was given in common to the sons of men. Whatever liveth on the land, whatsoever groweth out of the earth, and all that is in the rivers and waters flowing through the same, was given jointly to all, and every one is entitled to his share.  

Based upon this view, Soderlund observes that each village group held rights to a particular territory for their subsistence, some of which they appeared to “sell” to the Europeans. Yet the Lenape viewed any agreement as an act of “sharing” resources:

When the Lenapes made agreements with the Europeans during the seventeenth century, they had no intention of transferring all rights to the area in question. They aimed to stay in their villages and retain free access for farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering. With an agreement, in return for annual gifts, they allowed the Europeans to establish a fort and small settlement to support trade.  

Thus, the Lenape believed that the various deeds and land treaties made with the Europeans were agreements only to share the land—land that nurtured and sustained them and without which they could not survive. The Dutch, Swedes, and later the English, on the other hand, believed that they were purchasing the land in a permanent conveyance of ownership. These opposing cultural views of the land transactions between Lenape and European colonizers formed the basis of recurring disputes and Lenape resistance and ultimately led to Lenape loss of the land they occupied.

Despite their differing views of land ownership, the Dutch and Swedish occupations of the Lenapehittuck region had a relatively low impact on the daily lives of Lenape bands largely because of the small population numbers among the European immigrants (Figure 5). All of this would begin to change in 1664 when the English King Charles II claimed all of the Dutch territory as his own and granted it to his brother James, the Duke of York. The English presence around the Lenapehittuck permanently altered Lenape-European relations. Now living in the declared English colonial borders of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, the Lenape found the English governors much less willing to accommodate long established traditions of annual renewals (gifts) for land, shared common lands for hunting, and death compensations. Unlike the Dutch

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and Swedish colonial governments before them, the English were less focused on trade with the Lenape, which required cooperation and diplomacy. Rather, the English intent was to generate income from land sales and quitrents by importing emigrants who would develop the land for export agricultural production. Such an intention would leave little room for Lenape bands to remain on their ancestral lands. Just as the Nanticoke, Conoy, and other groups living around the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland had found, in the realm of English colonialism there would be no room for the Lenape.

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<th>Estimated Population of Colonies (European and African American)</th>
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**Figure 5:** Population estimates for Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, 1640 to 1780. Dr. Stephen Davies, Vancouver Island University.

The first decade of British proprietorship under Governor Francis Lovelace was a learning experience. Lenape bands rebelled against his heavy-handed policy of land acquisition. Taking matters into their own hands, the Lenape attempted to stem the tide of encroaching settlements by killing ten English colonists. They additionally bolstered their position through an alliance with the “old settlers.” These were largely Swedish and Finnish homesteaders who were neither inclined to pay the new quitrents and other fees imposed by the Duke of York nor participate in any military actions against the Lenape. Still, English settlements moved steadily inland and up the river and creek valleys, slowly displacing the native inhabitants from their ancestral lands.

In 1664, the Duke of York granted the proprietary of West New Jersey to Sir John Berkeley. Berkeley sold the grant to Edward Byllynge through a trustee, John Fenwick, both of whom were Quakers. In 1675, Fenwick established a Quaker settlement in West Jersey called Salem followed two years later by a settlement called Burlington, both located on the west side of the Lenapewihittuck. Though the Lenape helped the Burlington people through the winter of 1677–78, they were wary of the new colonists, telling them, “they were advised to make war on us [Burlington], and cut us off whilst we were but few,

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and said, they were told, that we sold them the smallpox, with the matchcoat they had bought of us."63

By this time, some Lenape bands had begun to consolidate in villages on the east side of the Lenapewihihtuck in the New Jersey colony still largely unoccupied by Europeans. Soderlund notes that the Arnowamese vacated the Passyunk area (later Philadelphia) in the late 1660s. By 1675, at least one Navesink group had removed to West Jersey.64 The Minqua too moved to join Lenape villages to the east, having been defeated and scattered by the English in Maryland during Bacon’s Rebellion.

In 1675, the Dutch briefly overthrew English rule in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware but were driven out in 1676. A new English governor, Governor Edmund Andros, was installed at New York. His governing style reflected a better understanding of Lenape tradition and protocol. Andros’ tenure brought a relative calm to the region. Still, it was under Andros that the West Jersey Quaker settlements grew by an additional 230 Quaker souls with the Burlington settlement.65 Andros would soon be overshadowed by Pennsylvanians’ proprietor, William Penn, whom the Lenape would come to call Mikwën (meaning feather, spelled “Miquon” by the English).66

William Penn’s Relationship with the Lenape

The great and good Miquon came and brought us words of peace and good will. We believed his words, and his memory is still held in veneration among us.67

The above quote is taken from John Heckewelder’s recounting of the Lenape complaints against the Europeans who eventually forced them into their displaced condition in Ohio by the 1770s. Yet even after their migration westward from their homeland on the Lenapewihihtuck, the Lenape appeared to recall with fondness “the great and good Miquon,” William Penn, who was ultimately, in fact, the author of their diaspora. The Dutch and Swedes who preceded Penn left a relatively small imprint on Lenape territory. Beginning in 1681, Penn’s highly successful recruitment of mostly Quaker emigrants was largely responsible for the Lenape’s loss of control over their land, particularly after Penn’s death in 1718.

63 Soderlund, Lenape Country, 141–43.
64 Soderlund, Lenape Country, 113, 136.
65 Soderlund, Lenape Country, 143.
67 Heckewelder, Account of the History, 78. It should be remembered that although Heckewelder admired Lenape culture, his writings were still influenced by his European world view.
William Penn is perhaps best known for his determination to legally purchase Lenape land located in the proprietary boundaries of Pennsylvania. However, like the Dutch and Swedes who believed they purchased, and re-purchased, Lenape land for decades prior to Penn’s arrival, Penn failed to comprehend the differing view of land ownership among the Lenape. Penn’s land deeds or “treaties” included the standard English phrases indicating a permanent transfer of ownership, including the “reversion” phrase in which the Indians were said to have given over “all the Estate, Right, Tytle, Interest, use, property Clayme & demand whatsoever.” Again, the Lenape signers of these documents interpreted the agreements quite differently, viewing it as an agreement to share the use of the land. Still, despite his determination to permanently acquire their land, it appears that Penn won the hearts of the Lenape of southeastern Pennsylvania and Delaware by his ability to relate to them in a way that few Europeans before him had done. Though still deeply materialistic, Penn’s spiritual belief in Quaker ideology reflected some of the Lenape views of the world and how humans should treat each other.

Writing his own observations of the Lenape in 1681, William Penn admired their language and the simplicity of their lifeways although clearly he did not fully understand their complexity. Penn seemed almost envious when he observed:

They care for little, because they want but little; and the Reason is, a little contents them. In this they are sufficiently revenged on us; if they are ignorant of our Pleasures, they are also free from our Pains. They are not disquieted with Bills of Lading and Exchange, nor perplexed with Chancery-Suits and Exchequer-Reckonings. We sweat and toil to live; their pleasure feeds them, I mean, their Hunting, Fishing and Fowling.\(^69\)

Penn learned the Lenape language and attended treaty (deed) conferences personally, an effort of his that particularly impressed the local sachems. He recalled a speech given by one sachem at the conclusion of a land agreement, saying “many Governors had been in the River, but that no Gouvernour had come himself to live and stay here before; and having now such a one that had treated them well, they should never do him or his any wrong.”\(^70\) In 1682, “William Penn’s Great Law” was passed by the first Pennsylvania Legislature. It was enacted “that no person within this Province doe from hence forth presume to Sell or exchange any Rhum or brandy or any Strong Liquors at any time to any Indian within this Province.”\(^71\) Lenape leaders had been seeking such a regulation since their early dealings with the Dutch and Swedish regimes. And though the prohibition was


\(^{69}\) Quoted in Albert Cook Myers, ed., \textit{William Penn’s Own Account of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians} (Wallingford, PA: The Middle Atlantic Press, 1970), 31.

\(^{70}\) Myers, \textit{William Penn’s Own Account}, 39.

\(^{71}\) Myers, \textit{William Penn’s Own Account}, 59.
unsuccessful, the Lenape appear to have valued Penn’s efforts to quell the destructive liquor trade.

Despite this good will, it must be remembered that William Penn had taken on his Pennsylvania proprietorship in order to make money through land sales. The land he aimed to sell was Lenape land—land Penn believed he had purchased from the Lenape but which the Lenape still believed they had ancestral rights to occupy. He aggressively recruited colonists and began land sales even before his first “purchase” from the Lenape, offering choice parcels with river frontage—the same locations preferred by Lenape village bands.72 And though Penn claimed to admire Lenape culture, he held a very European view of cultural superiority and land ownership that was antithetical to the Lenape’s communal and seasonal traditions.73 Additional confusion arose from the Lenape’s seasonal occupation of their village sites and use of their woodland territories for hunting purposes. Pennsylvania colonists viewed the empty village sites as “abandoned” and the woodlands as “unimproved” tracts. They considered vacant land ripe and available for settlement.

By 1700, Penn had sold over 800,000 acres of Lenape land in Pennsylvania with more than 9,000 colonists in place (Figure 6).74 By the time William Penn died in 1718, his various agreements with the Lenape had, in his mind, extinguished their title to the land area comprising the southeast corner of Pennsylvania (Figure 7).75 Beginning in 1682, when the Duke of York conveyed his three Delaware counties to Penn, additional transfers of Lenape land occurred in Penn’s “Lower Counties.” The determination of the rising tide of colonists would become too great for the Lenape to hold back.

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73 Sugrue, “Peopling and Depeopling of Early Pennsylvania,” 23. Penn did follow the Lenape custom of annual renewal gifts for the use of land for nearly a decade but discontinued the practice in 1700 when it became a financial burden for him.


First Americans of the Delaware River and Brandywine Creek Drainages

Figure 6: Thomas Holme, "A mapp of ye improved part of Pensilvania in America, divided into counties, townships, and lots," 1687. Library of Congress.
First Americans of the Delaware River and Brandywine Creek Drainages

Figure 7: Pennsylvania "Genealogical Map of the Counties"
Queonemysing: The Story of a Lenape Village on the Brandywine

Significant to the history of the Brandywine Valley and the Lenape village of Queonemysing is the 1683 agreement between Seketarius and other Lenape sachems and William Penn for the land between the Upland (Chester) and Christina creeks. The land agreement included the length of the Brandywine Creek and its tributaries and reached into New Castle County in Delaware.

The Lenape village of Queonemysing, located on the Big Bend of Brandywine Creek on the Delaware-Pennsylvania border, was never specifically mentioned in the records prior to 1683. Still, the village was likely there before and during the time of Swedish settlements in the area (1638–1655). The Swedes called Brandywine Creek Fiskekylen (Fish Creek). Queonemysing, translated as “place where there are long fish,” was a seasonal fishing village. Occupied during the summer season, the village would also have been where the occupants grew corn and other produce. The nearby rock shelter located on Beaver Creek was likely associated with this band of “Brandywine Indians,” possibly on a path leading to the Naaman’s Creek village.

The Queonemysing village serves as an important example of the changes that occurred to the Lenape as Europeans claimed and occupied the Atlantic coast of North America. The village of Brandywine Lenape was located relatively far back from the primary waterways that were navigable and therefore considered important to Dutch and Swedish traders. As a result, the Queonemysing village band apparently remained undisturbed through the Dutch and Swedish occupations. It was not until English colonists, primarily Quakers, began to penetrate the interior drainages that the Queonemysing Lenape felt the impact.

Following Penn’s directive to “purchase” land from the Lenape, even if it had been part of a previous transaction with the Dutch or Swedes, in 1683 Penn’s representative William Markham entered into an agreement with a group of Brandywine sachems:

I Seketarius & Kalehickop Nochotamen &Toonis & Leleghana & Wippais do hereby promise & Engage to give or sell our Land lying between Christina & Upland [Chester] Creek unto William Penn Proprietary & Governor of ye Province of Pennsylvania after ye same manner as Keklappon & others sell theirs in ye Spring next.

76 Myers, William Penn's Own Account, 90.
77 Peter Lindstrom, “Delaware River,” Office of Coast Survey, Historical Map and Chart Collection, accessed Oct. 11, 2016, https://historicalcharts.noaa.gov/historicals/preview/image/00-A-00-1655. Touching Leaves (Nora Thompson Dean) translated the word Queonemysing as “place where there are long fish.” In 1953, Weslager reported surface finds of quartz arrow points, flakes, and “rejects” from the knapping process, at the village site and a quartz quarry on the nearby du Pont estate of Granogue. Weslager, Red Men, 144, 110–11.
Of which I have already received a very good gun, some Powder & Lead, two pairs of Stockins, one Match Coat & Tenn bitts Spanish money in witness whereof I have sett hereto my hand & Seal.

Seketarius his Mark

According to Weslager, Seketarius was “a principal sachem of the Indians living along the Brandywine” and might have lived at Queonemysing, one of the largest villages on the Brandywine. In the two previous months of 1683, two other land agreements were made by sachems of the nearby creek villages, Minguanan (by Machaloha) on White Clay Creek and Passyunk (by Keklappon) on the Schuylkill River.

The following year, in 1684, Penn reportedly identified an area of land encompassing the length of the Brandywine Creek and extending one mile on either side of which the Brandywine Lenape retained exclusive use. This agreement provided for the Lenape’s continued seasonal occupation of Queonemysing as well as land to the south located in Penn’s Proprietary Manor of Rockland on the east side of the lower Brandywine. Oddly, the Thomas Holmes “Map of the Improved Part of Pensilvania [sic],” dated 1687, shows the Queonemysing tract within the Big Bend of the Brandywine Creek under the ownership of Edward Baly (Figure 4).

In 1699, Penn sold two thousand acres of his Rockland Manor to the Pennsylvania Land Company (the proprietary land office). The Company then began selling smaller parcels mostly to Quaker colonists. Two years later, George Harlan (or Harland), a Quaker who had purchased a piece of the former Rockland Manor, was granted the 200 acres on which the Queonemysing village stood in the Big Bend. The tract adjoined his Manor land on the opposite side of the creek. In his 1701 request to the Commissioners of Property for the land grant, Harlan claimed he had “been Long helpful to the Indians in fencing and Improving a Settlem’t made by them for some years in a Neck or Bend of Brandywind Cr…where the said Indians were Settled, but have now left it.” Harlan was allowed to purchase the “vacated” land, much to the surprise of the Queonemysing village band who would have returned the next summer season. In 1705, the village band “laid claim to all the land from the mouth of the Brandywine up the West Branch to the head, in breadth a mile on each side of that branch” based upon the 1684 agreement with William Penn reserving the acreage to their exclusive use. According to a 1725 Commissioners of Property investigation, “afterwards [1706] the commissioners of property purchased of the Indians all the land from the mouth of Brandywine up to a certain rock by Abraham

79 Myers, William Penn’s Own Account, 90.
80 Weslager, Red Men, 52.
83 Weslager, Red Men, 64.
Marshall’s land for the sum of one hundred pounds. Marshalls land was located on the West Branch adjoining the village of Northbrook in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

By the time of the 1725 commissioners’ investigation, it appears the Queonemysing Lenape had moved to a village site just above Marshall’s land. The investigation was brought about by Lenape complaints concerning Nathanial Newlin, who claimed to own the land and was selling off parcels. “We are molested and our Lands surveyed out, and settled, before we can reap our Corn off,” complained the Brandywine Lenape, “and to our great Injury the Brandy-wine Creek is so obstructed with Dams, that the Fish cannot come up to our Habitation.” They cited Penn’s reservation, “for a Mile on each Side of the said Creek, and to a certain Place up the same Creek,” although the paper containing this agreement with Penn had burned in a cabin fire. The investigation also detailed the story of the loss of the Queonemysing village including the deposition of two neighbors regarding the existence of the Brandywine reservation. As historian Amy C. Schutt recounts:

In 1725, Alphonsus Kirk and Samuel Hollingsworth, two area residents, suggested that indeed there had been some land set aside for the Brandywine Indians. Kirk remembered that “above thirty years Since he saw two Papers which Saccatarius or some other of the Chiefs of the Indians on Brandywine had in their possession.” “The first,” Kirk said, was “sign’d by Governor Penn recommending the Indians to the Regards and Friendship of the English.” The second document indicated that the Indians were to retain their “Town on Brandywine . . . and one or two Miles round it.” Although Kirk was unsure of the details in this second agreement, he had a “Notion . . . that there was more Land reserved to the Indians by the same Instrument besides the Town.” . . . Hollingsworth could recall that “about one or two & forty Years Since [i.e. about 1684] Saccatarius the Indian Chief of Brandywine Shew’d to his father Valentine Hollingsworth and others[,] of whom the Said Samuel was one[,] a Paper Signed by Governor Penn declaring what Land the said Saccatarius had sold.” Hollingsworth added that “he thinks there was Some reservation in it, which is all he knows further than that the Indians many years after claimed the Lands on Brandywine on which George Harland & himself & others lived.”

Despite this, it was found that the Property Commission’s purchase in 1706 had ended the Lenape rights to the land on the Big Bend.

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87 “Pennsylvania, Published Archives Series, 1664–1902.”
Enoch Hollingsworth (Jr.), whose grandparents were Samuel and Hannah (Harlan) Hollingsworth, appears to have inherited or acquired the 200-acre Big Bend tract by 1754, when William Penn’s sons, who inherited the Penn proprietary in 1718, sold Hollingsworth an adjoining parcel. The Brandywine Lenape removed to land on the Susquehanna River and as far west as the Ohio River by the 1730s. They joined the Shawnee, Conoy, Nanticoke, and others who left their Maryland territories decades earlier.

**Penn’s Sons and Subordinates Alter the Relationship**

The troubles experienced by the Queonemysing village band reflected the changing relationship between the proprietary and the Lenape following William Penn’s death in 1718. Penn’s sons, Thomas and John Penn, along with proprietary secretary James Logan, famously acquired a large segment of Munsee Lenape land at the Forks of the Delaware River. In this so-called “Walking Purchase,” the Lenape reportedly agreed to convey the amount of land a man could walk in a day-and-a-half. The Lenape claimed that the Penns and Logan cheated by clearing the track to be covered by the “walkers,” who in the end covered sixty-eight miles in the allotted time with a boundary encompassing over one million acres. The Penns are said to have reworked an old draft deed dated 1686 from the Munsee to William Penn, who claimed the conveyance price had already been paid but the land not yet been surveyed. The contested survey occurred in 1737. As Paul A. W. Wallache notes, the resulting boundary was “as if a man bought a farm in York County, Pennsylvania, and measured it to include the state of Maryland.”

The Lenape not only protested the survey of the Walking Purchase, as it became known, they also claimed the “purchase” price was never paid. They refused to vacate the land, threatening violence. In the meanwhile, Thomas Penn was already selling the land to eager emigrants. The Lenape bands that remained were viewed by the Pennsylvania government as in the way of progress and profit. Seizing upon the historically subordinate status of the Lenape to the powerful Iroquois Confederacy, also known as the Six Nations, the Penns orchestrated their removal. On July 9, 1742, Pennsylvania Governor George Thomas, James Logan, and others, met in council with the Chiefs of the Six Nations. The Lenape sachem Sassonan represented the Delawares or southern Unami Lenape and

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93 C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 183, 186–87, 192. The Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, including the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, Tuscarora nations, dominated a number of smaller nations by right of conquest, including the Susquehanocks or Minqua and the various Lenape bands. While this so-called “Covenant Chain” promised protection, it also demanded loyalty to the confederacy and subordinate status.
Nutimus represented the northern Munsee Lenape or “ffork Indians.” The governor spoke to the Six Nation chiefs and insisted that the confederacy punish the Lenape by ordering their removal: “Being loth from our Regards to you to punish them as they deserve … We now expect from You that you will cause these Indians to remove from the Lands in the fforks of the Delaware and not give any further Disturbance to the Persons who are now in Possession.” Three days later, the Iroquois chiefs responded by chastising the Lenape and instructing them to remove to land claimed by the Six Nations along the Susquehanna River. The removal cleared the way for a flood of largely German and Scots-Irish emigrants. By 1750, the European population of Pennsylvania, including the Lower Counties, had grown to 150,000 people.95

The Pennsylvania government had been carefully cultivating their relationship with the Iroquois Confederacy or Six Nations in a strategy aimed at preventing French incursions into western Pennsylvania territory. A growing tension between the French and British over the Ohio River drainage, which lay west of the Allegheny Mountains, would soon engulf the Lenape and other tribes living on the colonial frontier of Pennsylvania.

**The French and Indian War, 1754–1762**

As historian Clinton A. Weslager discusses, at the start of the French and Indian War, “the Indians held the balance of power between France and England in North America.”96 By 1754, when war broke out between the English and French on the American continent, the remnants of the eastern Lenape bands, along with Shawnee, Conoy, Nanticoke, and others, had long since been pushed to the Susquehanna River and beyond into territory claimed by the Iroquois Confederacy. While mostly northern (New York/New Jersey) Munsee Lenape settled in the Wyoming and Shamokin areas on the Susquehanna, the southern Unami Lenape (by then known as Delawares), including the Brandywine bands, were among those who migrated as far west as the Ohio River following Shingas, son of Sassoonan. Teedyuscung, called the “King of the Delawares” by European Americans who did not understand Lenape culture, became the spokesman for the Forks and Wyoming bands.97

At the outbreak of war between the French and the English in 1754, British Major General Edward Braddock summoned the Ohio Lenape to join the fight against the French. Shingas asked General Braddock if the Lenape would be given Ohio land on which to live and hunt unencumbered by European colonists. Braddock reportedly replied, “no Savage Shoud Inherit the Land,” to which Shingas responded, “That if they might not have Liberty to Live on the Land they woud not Fight for it…”98 Though the Ohio Lenape remained

95 Schutt, Peoples of the River Valleys, 64.
96 Weslager, Delaware Indians, 221.
97 Kraft, Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage, 456–57.
98 Weslager, Delaware Indians, 225.
neutral through the fight for Fort Duquesne, the British defeat there indicated their future might be more secure with the French. At the same time, Teedyuscung’s bands living on the Susquehanna were in the midst of a severe drought and potential famine and faced French incursions. Repeated requests for aid and protection to the Pennsylvania colonial government went unanswered. The British distain for the American Indian occupants of the land now claimed by the British crown would turn potential Indian allies in the war into dangerous enemies aligned with the French.99 Joined by Teedyuscung and some of his followers in 1755, the Lenape who aligned with the French against the English laid waste to the Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia frontier.

In 1757, Teedyuscung entered into a peace agreement with Pennsylvania governor William Denny.100 Though the Ohio Lenape did not officially make peace with the English, the fall of Fort Duquesne in 1758 brought a relative quiet to the frontier. In 1759, the Ohio Lenape, now represented by Shingas’ brother Beaver, agreed to release their prisoners, who were mostly women and children taken from frontier farms of Pennsylvania. By 1762, the war was officially over. The peace was interrupted in 1763 by Pontiac’s Rebellion, which was largely in reaction to renewed English incursions into tribal territories and unfair trading practices. As European colonists continued to pour into the Pennsylvania frontier, Lenape bands moved westward and farther into the Ohio territory.101

**Lenape Forced to Migrate Farther West**

By 1774, now permanently driven from their ancestral land along the Lenapewiheituck, Lenape territory touched only the westernmost border lands of Pennsylvania (Figure 8). In 1778, a treaty “of perpetual peace and friendship” between the newly created Continental Congress and “the Delaware Nation,” was the first treaty enacted by the newly minted United States government. The treaty conference took place at Fort Pitt and was forged to ensure both the safe passage of American troops through Lenape territory and an alliance with Lenape warriors to aid U.S. troops. The treaty even went so far as to suggest that in the future (should the U.S. defeat Great Britain) they might “invite any other tribes who have been friends to the interest of the United States, to join the present confederation, and to form a state whereof the Delaware nation shall be the head, and have a representation in Congress.”102 The latter did not occur, however.

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100 Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 233.
In 1792, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appropriated cash to purchase the last of the Lenape lands adjoining Lake Erie, known as the “Purchase of the Triangle.”

John Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary among the displaced Lenape, moved in 1773 with the mission group known as the “Moravian Indians” to the Muskingum Valley in what would soon be the Ohio Territory. Heckewelder recounted the Lenape lament repeated to him on numerous occasions, of their bewildering experience with “the white people” over the preceding 175 years:

We and our kindred tribes, lived in peace and harmony with each other before the white people came into this country; our council house extended far to the north and far to the south. In the middle of it we would meet from all parts to smoke the pipe of peace together. When the white men arrived in the south, we received them as friends; we did the same when they arrived in the east. It was

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104 “Mr. Heckewelder was appointed [David] Zeisberger’s assistant in the autumn of 1771, and when in the spring of 1773 Friedensstadt was evacuated (it stood on the Beaver, between the Shenango and the Slippery Rock, within the limits of the present Lawrence county), and the seat of the mission was transferred to the valley of the Muskingum, Mr. Heckewelder became a resident of the Ohio country. Here in succession were built Schonbrunn, Gnadenhütten, Lichtenau and Salem, flourishing towns of Moravian Indians.” Heckewelder, *Account of the History*, viii, ix.
we, it was our forefathers, who made them welcome, and let them sit down by our side. The land they settled on was ours. We knew not but the Great Spirit had sent them to us for some good purpose, and therefore we thought they must be a good people. We were mistaken; for no sooner had they obtained a footing on our lands, than they began to pull our council house down, first at one end and then at the other, and at last meeting each other at the centre, where the council fire was yet burning bright, they put it out, and extinguished it with our own blood! ... Their blood ran in streams into our fire, and extinguished it so entirely, that not one spark was left us whereby to kindle a new fire; we were compelled to withdraw ourselves.\(^{105}\)

The territory west of the Ohio River was still in British hands until the conclusion of the American Revolution when the Lenape found themselves once again at the mercy of American governance.

In anticipation of the cession of British land at the successful conclusion of the war, in 1777 the Continental Congress laid claim to the rights of “Discovery” over what was then known as the Northwest Territory. Article IX of the Articles of Confederation gave Congress “the sole and exclusive right and power of ... regulating the trade and managing all affairs with the Indians.” The implication was that Congress would control the acquisition of American Indian land.\(^{106}\) Following the signing of the Treaty of Paris, General George Washington stated in a letter to Congress his view that the American Indian land of the new territories was indeed the property of the central government. Washington believed that government should play a principal role in American Indian policy regarding trade, land, and perhaps eventually, American Indian removal:

[Trade] would be the most likely means to enable us to purchase upon equitable terms of the Aborigines their right of preoccupancy; and to induce them to relinquish our Territories, and to remove into the illimitable regions of the West.\(^{107}\)

Congress prohibited settlement on land “inhabited or claimed by Indians” and made land purchases from American Indian tribes the sole authority of Congress in 1783 (later codified in the U.S. Constitution of 1787).\(^{108}\) But the vast tracts of “vacant” land were too much of a temptation and European American emigrants began taking up lands despite the prohibition, which caused inevitable conflict with the American Indian residents.

In 1795, following the treaty at Greenville, Ohio, which ended hostilities there, the Lenape were forced to withdraw again. They moved from eastern Ohio to a new Indian


\(^{107}\) Miller et al., *Discovering Indigenous Lands*, 43.

Territory established between the Cuyahoga River and the Mississippi River. Many had already chosen to remove to Canada. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 provided a vast new territory west of the Mississippi River, which then President Thomas Jefferson viewed as a solution to the “Indian problem.” Jefferson initiated his Indian removal policy to the territory west of the Mississippi by offering land exchanges to delegations from the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes in 1805 and to the Cherokee in 1808. Early removals of groups from the Northwest Territory into what later became the state of Missouri included Delaware (Lenape), Shawnee, Illinois, and Kickapoo. In two treaties dated 1829 under the ruthless Indian removal policy of President Andrew Jackson, the federal government removed the remaining Ohio Lenape and those in Missouri to a reservation of over two million acres in Kansas Territory, which stated “the foregoing Treaty stipulates that the United States shall provide for the Delaware Nation, a country to reside in, West of the Mississippi, as the permanent residence of their Nation.”

The Kansas Lenape’s “permanent” residence lasted only as long as European American emigrants—and the railroads—did not want the land. That development was slowed by the American Civil War; however, in 1866, the Kansas Lenape signed their final treaty with the U.S. government. They relinquished their Kansas land and agreed to remove to the Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). The Lenape land in Kansas had already been sold by the government to the Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western Railroad Company with the remaining land to be sold to the Missouri River Railroad Company. In 1867, most of the Kansas Lenape removed to land purchased from the Cherokee reservation where they reside today as The Delaware Tribe of Indians.

Significance of Lenape Relations with Colonies, States, and the U.S. Government

If we ought, or wish to know the history of those nations from whom we have obtained the country we now live in, we must also wish to be informed of the means by which that country fell into our hands, and what has become of its original inhabitants.

—John Heckewelder, 1817

109 Kappler, Indian Affairs, 2:39–40; and Weslager, Delaware Indians, 322.
111 Kappler, Indian Affairs, 2:303–5.
112 Kappler, Indian Affairs, 2:937–42.
113 Weslager, Delaware Indians, 423. There are two federally recognized Delaware (Lenape) tribes located in Oklahoma: the Delaware Tribe of Indians (Bartlesville, OK) and the Delaware Nation (Andarko, OK). The “Kansas Delaware Tribe of Indians” is a branch of the Oklahoma tribe and are the descendants of Lenape who remained in Kansas and became U.S. citizens. The Stockbridge-Munsee Community of Wisconsin is also federally recognized. The Nanticoke Lenni Lenape Tribal Nation is recognized by the state of New Jersey and the Lenape Tribe of Delaware is recognized by the state of Delaware.
114 Heckewelder, Account of the History, xviii.
There is little dispute that the Lenape occupied the land from southeastern New York through New Jersey, southeastern Pennsylvania, and Delaware for hundreds of years prior to the arrival of European explorers, traders, and colonists. Their interactions with those first European traders—the Dutch and Swedes—and later with William Penn’s proprietary set precedents of formal agreements for trade and land “sales” that would influence future U.S.–American Indian policy.\(^{115}\) Perhaps appropriately, in 1778, the Lenape, by then known as the Delaware, became the first American Indian nation to enter into a treaty with the new United States government that the Continental Congress ratified. This treaty essentially brought to a close the 175-year history of Lenape-European relations in Delaware and Pennsylvania.\(^{116}\)

The Brandywine Creek and its Beaver Creek tributary, partly encompassed by the Beaver Creek–Woodlawn Tract of First State National Historical Park, encapsulates a segment of that Lenape experience over the first 100 years of Lenape-European relations. The close proximity of the Queonemysing village in the Big Bend of the Brandywine Creek and the Beaver Creek Rock Shelter in the Beaver Creek–Woodlawn Tract provides potential for interpretation of the Lenape lifeways those sites represent as well as the ensuing European arrogation of the Brandywine Lenape land. These interpretations speak to the larger American Indian experience across the United States. Many Americans are familiar with the better known western tribes, many of whom had migrated or were removed from more eastern locations. Yet few know the important story of these initial seventeenth and eighteenth century contacts and the repercussions across the country through the nineteenth and twentieth and continue today in the twenty-first century.

\(^{115}\) As noted previously, while the Dutch, Swiss, and English, including William Penn, assumed the land agreements they made with the Lenape (and other Indian groups) were permanent and binding deeds of sale, the Lenape (and other Indian groups) did not view land ownership in the same way. They did not “own” their territorial land, but rather they were given the use of it by the grace of Mannitto (the Creator). They would have viewed their deed or treaty agreements with the Europeans as land-sharing agreements for which they received gifts and which were renewed annually with gifts.

In 1809, Washington Irving chided his readers to take heed the lessons of history in *Knickerbocker’s History of New York*:

[L]et me point out a solemn warning, furnished in the subtle chain of events by which the capture of Fort Casimir has produced the present convulsions of the Globe…

By the treacherous surprisal of Fort Casimir then, did the crafty Swedes enjoy a transient triumph, but drew upon their heads the vengeance of Peter Stuyvesant, who wrested all New Sweden from their hands.

By the conquest of New Sweden Peter Stuyvesant aroused the claims of Lord Baltimore, who appealed to the cabinet of Great Britain, who subdued the whole province of New Netherland.

By this achievement the whole extent of North America from Nova Scotia to the Floridas was rendered one entire dependency upon the British crown.

But mark the consequence: the hitherto-scattered colonies being thus consolidated and having no rival colonies to check, or keep them in awe, waxed great and powerful, and finally becoming too strong for the mother country, were enabled to shake off this bond, and by a glorious revolution became an independent empire.

But the chain of events stopped not here; the successful revolution in America produced the sanguinary revolution in France, which produced the puissant Bonaparte, who produced the French despotism, which has thrown the whole world in confusion!

Thus have these great powers been successfully punished for their ill-starred conquests; and thus, as I asserted, have all the present convulsions, revolutions and disasters that overwhelm mankind, originated in the capture of little Fort Casimir.

Washington Irving’s early theory of the “butterfly effect” as it related to the capture of Fort Casimir in 1651 was a light-hearted take on what were, in fact, world events that played out on the shores of the Delaware River. The European settlement of North America, as it began in earnest in the seventeenth century following the European “Age of Discovery,” reflected the ebb and flow of wars and alliances among the dominant European nations of the time.
European American Settlement Patterns

Delaware’s unique settlement history—from Lenape to Dutch, Swede, Finn, English, and others—along with its role in early American politics and the evolution of American industry, opens an important window onto the foundations of American culture. The Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract is a remarkably preserved landscape that encompasses much of the long and colorful history of Delaware and the nation.

The European Age of Discovery

Discovery and exploration of new lands has occurred throughout human history as humans evolved and spread from Africa and Asia across the European continent and finally peopled the Americas. In this context, the European “Age of Discovery,” from approximately 1400 CE through about 1600 CE, came late in the history of the world and occurred over a relatively brief span of time. Its impact on the world, however, was disproportionately greater than the number of years it spanned. Over a period of just two hundred years, the Age of Discovery encompassed the rapid advancement of seafaring technology and world geographical knowledge, linking “the oceans of the world into a single system of navigation.” Additionally, it elevated comparatively small and resource-poor nations to positions of wealth and power in the world, and perhaps most importantly, heralded several centuries of significant population shifts from Europe—and Africa—to the New World. Historian David Arnold notes that the implications of the Age of Discovery reached far into the future: “The wealth derived from overseas trade helped to finance further empire-building in the Americas and Asia . . . [and] contributed, directly and indirectly, to the further developments of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution, and eventually to the western imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”

For centuries, Italian merchants had been the middlemen for a lively land-based trade network between Asia, North Africa, and Europe. The rise of the Ottoman Empire effectively closed those trade routes and, according to Arnold, reignited “the crusading spirit of Christian Europe.” At the same time, Portugal and Spain, two strongly Catholic states located on the Iberian Peninsula, were solidifying their national identities and seeking ways to increase their trade and influence. They were motivated by the need for the resources necessary for trade in Asia, particularly gold and silver, and a post-Crusades religious fervor aimed at the spread of Christianity.

Portugal initiated the Age of Discovery with seafaring explorations along the west coast of Africa, eventually rounding the Cape of Good Hope and finding the eastern route to the East Indies. While the Portuguese focused on Africa, the Spanish explored westward across the Atlantic. Christopher Columbus, who was unable to convince the Portuguese of

his belief in a western route to Asia, sailed in 1492 under the Spanish flag. Columbus “discovered” the inhabited islands of the Caribbean, exploring the Bahamas, Cuba, and later colonizing Hispaniola. Believing he had found the western route to Asia, he called the group of islands the West Indiess.\(^5\)

Shortly thereafter, in 1494, the newly “discovered” world outside of Europe was divided between Spain and Portugal by the Treaty of Tortesillas. The treaty drew a line from the North to South poles “370 leagues (about 1200 nautical miles) west of the Cape Verde islands.”\(^6\) The Spanish territory on the west side of the line included the discoveries made by Columbus and everything to the west. This encompassed the continental mainland of North and South America. Though the enormity of that territory was still unknown, soon Spanish conquistadors and Jesuit priests would penetrate as far north as the North American southwest and Florida. The Portuguese gained everything to the east of the line, which in fact cut through the soon to be discovered east coast of Brazil, later colonized by Portuguese sugar planters (Figure 9). With new lands discovered in Africa, the Caribbean, and in South and Central America, the spread of Christianity to the “heathens” who occupied the land underpinned the explorations, while the appropriation of American gold and silver, along with sugar production and the sale of African enslaved people, enlarged the profitability of the trans-Atlantic trade.\(^7\)

Significantly, other emerging European seagoing nations, including England, France, and the Netherlands, would completely ignore the Treaty of Tortesillas as they pursued explorations of what Amerigo Vespucci identified as the “New World.” Even for these relatively new countries on the exploration scene, this New World, soon known as the Americas, was at first viewed as an obstacle to reaching Asia by a western route. But soon accession of the new territory became the objective of their explorations. As early as 1497, Italian explorer Giovanni Caboto, better known as John Cabot, sailed across the Atlantic under the British flag in search of a northern passage to Asia. Instead, he “discovered” Newfoundland, which Cabot claimed for England. In 1498, Cabot’s largely undocumented second trans-Atlantic voyage may have turned southward along the eastern coastline of North America possibly as far south as the Chesapeake Bay.\(^8\) Another Italian explorer named Giovanni da Verazanno made his voyage of discovery under the French flag in 1524. Verazanno explored the North American Atlantic coast from North Carolina north to the Canadian Maritimes, making landfall and meeting native occupants along the

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\(^6\) Arnold, *Age of Discovery*, 46.

\(^7\) Lavery, *Conquest of the Ocean*, 94, 146.

\(^8\) Arnold, *Age of Discovery*, 18; Lavery, *Conquest of the Ocean*, 118. In 985 CE, the Vikings actually “discovered” North America at Newfoundland, which they called Vinland. The island was already occupied by Inuit people. Lavery, *Conquest of the Ocean*, 32–33.
route (see Chapter 1.1). A French explorer, Jacques Cartier, claimed Canada for France in 1535 after charting the St. Lawrence River.⁹

In about the middle of the sixteenth century, the balance of power in Western Europe began to change. In 1568, the seventeen Dutch provinces rebelled against the rule of Spain’s King Philip II. By 1581, the northern seven provinces, predominantly Protestant and led by William of Orange, declared their independence as the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. During the bloody war, Spanish troops sacked the merchant center at Antwerp, initiating a mass immigration to the northern port city of Amsterdam and establishing it as the new merchant center of Europe.ⁱ⁰ At the same time, Spain’s King Philip II inherited the crown of Portugal, effectively combining the two rival nations. Philip’s war against England, begun in 1587, was dealt a significant loss when in 1588 Spain’s massive Armada of ships bound for an invasion of the British island was defeated by the British navy off the coast of France.ⁱ¹ Each of these profound events set the stage for a new period of exploration and settlement in North America dominated by the Dutch, French, and English.

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¹¹ Kennedy, *Concise History of the Netherlands*, 137.
European American Settlement Patterns

Figure 9: 1622 map showing 1794 Treaty of Tordesillas division line. Library of Congress.
European American Settlement Patterns

Establishing European Settlements

In 1584, England’s Queen Elizabeth I began the process of establishing British sovereignty in North America by issuing a charter to Sir Walter Raleigh. It authorized him to discover and occupy land “not actually possessed of any Christian Prince, nor inhabited by Christian People.”

Raleigh was given seven years to establish a colony on his proprietary land in exchange for one-fifth of all the gold and silver discovered there. His Roanoke Colony, located on the island between today’s North Carolina mainland and the Outer Banks, failed after several attempts. The colony’s occupants (or their remains) were never found, and it became known as the Lost Colony. More than a decade passed before another attempt was made by the English to colonize North America, largely due to its ongoing war with Spain.

English explorations to North America differed from the Spanish and Portuguese in that their aim from the start was to establish permanent colonies on the new lands that they claimed. Trade still played a large role in the plan, as the settlements were intended to produce profitable trade items, particularly gold and silver, for their sponsors back home. Colonists were enticed with promises of land, a valuable commodity for the land-poor lower classes in England, and an important feather in the cap of the land-rich gentry.

England returned to the Mid-Atlantic territory they called Virginia after 1606 when the Virginia Company of London received a royal charter to establish a new colony. The charter’s boundary stretched between the 34th and 41st parallels (from today’s southern border of South Carolina to the northern border of New Jersey), where they could “place theire plantacions and habitacions.”

In May 1607, three English ships carrying 104 colonists, among them Captain John Smith, landed at the mouth of the James River and established the Jamestown colony. Under the guidance of John Smith as the colony’s third leader beginning in 1608, the struggling settlement began to stabilize. They produced glass, potash and, after 1612, tobacco for trade.

Dutch explorations reached the New World two years after Jamestown was settled. Sailing under the Dutch flag, Henry Hudson explored the South Bay and South River (later the Delaware Bay and Delaware River) before navigating north to the bodies of water later named for him, the North (Hudson) Bay and North (Hudson) River. Hudson claimed the North River drainage for the Dutch East India Company in 1611 despite a British royal charter for the territory issued to the Plymouth Company in 1606. The Dutch returned several years later when Cornelius Hendricksen sailed into the South (Delaware) Bay in

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13 “Boundaries and Charters of Virginia,” Virginia Places, www.virginiaplaces.org/boundaries/charters.html; an overlapping charter was given the same year to the Plymouth Company, whose territory stretched from the 38th to the 45th parallel. This so-called “Seconde Colonie” landed a settlement at the mouth of the Kennebec River in Maine in 1607, which was abandoned in 1608.

1616. By then the English settlement in Virginia had already logged nearly a decade of struggle and fitful progress. Hudson and Hendricksen’s explorations of the North and South Rivers formed the basis for the Dutch claim to their “right of discovery” of the land they called New Netherland. As previously noted, this claim ignored the prior British claim via Cabot’s 1497 explorations, as well as the 1606 royal charters given to the Plymouth and Virginia Companies, and the permanent settlement at Jamestown. The Dutch and British claims, of course, both also ignored the prior Spanish claim (the Treaty of Tortesillas), and all ignored the Lenape as the actual occupants of the land (Figure 10). Britain reportedly protested the Dutch claim at The Hague, though apparently to no avail.\(^{15}\)

The primary purpose of New Netherland for the Dutch was to develop a trans-Atlantic fur trade. Immediately after Hudson’s visit in 1611, independent Dutch traders (not associated with the East India Company) began trading with the Lenape living in the North (Hudson) River area. European items—cloth, metal, and glass beads (for wampum)—were exchanged for peltries, particularly beaver. Operating largely from their ships, this early phase of the Dutch presence in North America did not include any permanent occupation of the New Netherland territory. In 1614, the United New Netherland Company was granted a charter that provided the company with a monopoly on trade in region. Again, no settlements were planned, though at least one trading fort was constructed near today’s Albany on the upper North (Hudson) River.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{16}\) Kraft, *Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*, 369.
In 1621, the Dutch West India Company (WIC) replaced the New Netherland Company and was granted the trade monopoly. Three years later, the Dutch staked their claim in North America by sending thirty emigrant families, many of them French Protestants known as Walloons, to establish colonies on the North (Hudson) River, the Fresh (Connecticut) River, and the South (Delaware) River. In 1624 (1623 by the old calendar), Cornelis Jacobsz Mey (Cornelius Jacobson May), first director of the WIC colonies, built Fort Nassau on the east bank of the South River (approximately four miles north of today’s Philadelphia), with a tiny Walloon settlement consisting of two families and eight unmarried men.\(^{17}\) There they began to trade in peltries with the Lenape living along the South River drainage and the Minqua along the Susquehanna River. Fort Amsterdam (later New Amsterdam), located on the island of Manhatta (later Manhattan) on the North (Hudson) River, became the primary seat of Dutch trade and provincial government after

\(^{17}\) Kraft indicates that the 1623/1624 settlement on the South River was at High Island and that Fort Nassau was constructed later, in 1626. There was also an earlier Fort Nassau constructed on Castle Island in the North (Hudson) River, which suffered from repeated flooding and stood only a few years. Kraft, *Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage*, 403; Fernow, *Documents*, 7:1.
1626. That year, Peter Minuit was appointed Director of New Netherland. It was Minuit who purchased the island from the native Canarsee tribe of Lenape.\textsuperscript{18}

By 1628, two of the Walloon settlements were abandoned. Indian attacks caused one settlement at Fort Orange (in New York) to be abandoned. Colonists were removed from a second settlement on the South (Delaware) River in 1626 to bolster the population at New Amsterdam.\textsuperscript{19} Nicholaes Janszoon van Wassenaer, a journalist in Amsterdam who chronicled the progress of New Netherland in semi-annual narratives, reported that by March 1630, WIC was having trouble recruiting additional colonists. The Company prepared a new plan to colonize New Netherland:

\begin{quote}
[T]he said Directors of the West India Company, the better to people their lands, and to bring the country to produce more abundantly, resolved to grant more diverse Privileges, Freedoms and Exemptions to all patroons, masters or individuals who should plant any colonies and cattle in New Netherland.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Proprietors could secure land anywhere in New Netherland, except Manhattan Island, on which they were required to settle fifty colonists within four years. Though these developers, known as patroons, were given a great deal of latitude in the management of their colonies, articles acquired in trade were required to pass through the Company at New Amsterdam where they paid “five percent duty” on the items. No one was “permitted to make woolen, linen or cotton cloth, or weave any other stuffs there, on pain of being banished.”\textsuperscript{21} Historian John Franklin Jameson, who edited the \textit{Narratives of New Netherland}, identified the resulting patroonships:

Forthwith Samuel Godyn and Samuel Blommaert secured a patroonship on the west side of Delaware Bay, other associates another on the east side, Michiel Pauw one which he called Pavonia, extending along the west side of the North River from the Narrows to Hoboken and including Staten Island. All these proved temporary.\textsuperscript{22}

Only the patroonship of Kiliaen van Rensselaer, who called his colony Rensselaerswyck, achieved permanence. It was located along the Hudson River, “above and below Fort Orange.”\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{19} Jameson, \textit{Narratives of New Netherland}, 84, 88.

\textsuperscript{20} Jameson, \textit{Narratives of New Netherland}, 89.


\textsuperscript{22} Jameson, \textit{Narratives of New Netherland}, 96n1.

The lone Dutch patroonship established on the west side of the South (Delaware) Bay was called Zwaanendael (or Swanendael, valley of swans). Established as a colony of approximately thirty men, it was intended to be primarily a whaling community, though colonists were expected to produce their own food. There were, according David Pietersz de Vries, five director/owners of the Zwaanendael patroonship, “namely Samuel Godyn, Guilliame (Kiliaen) van Renselaer, Bloemart [sic], Jan de Laet, and myself, David Pietersz De Vries.”24 Godyn recruited De Vries to command the colony as a “sub-patroon,” but according to De Vries, “I gave him for answer that the business suited me well, but I must be a patroon, equal with the rest.”25

Article XXVI of the West India Company’s Privileges and Exceptions for Patroons codified the land purchase precedent set by Minuit in his 1626 Manhattan purchase, stating, “Whosoever shall settle any colony . . . shall be obliged to satisfy the Indians for the land they shall settle upon.”26 In 1629, patroon Godyn secured a patent for a tract of land “from Cape Hinlopen to the mouth of the South river aforesaid for about eight great miles [about 32 miles] and inland half a mile in width.” Lenape signatories to the conveyance included “Quesquaekous, Eesanques and Siconesius,” whose village was located “on the South hook of the South river bay” (Cape Henlopen on Delaware Bay).27 In December of 1630, the ship De Walvil sailed to deliver twenty-eight colonists, cattle, supplies, and brick to the west shore of the South (Delaware) River along the Hoeren (or Hoere) Kill (often spelled Whorekill, today’s Lewes Creek). According to one report, “They engaged in whaling and farming and made suitable fortifications, so that in July of the same year their cows calved and their lands were seeded and covered with a fine crop.”28 The original colonists were joined by five others and a brick house was constructed in the fort. The boundaries of the patroonship were staked out with posts “to which was fastened a piece of tin, whereupon the arms of Holland were painted.”29

It was this demarcation of the Zwaanendael property that caused the demise of the small colony. According to accounts provided to De Vries in December 1632 (more than a year later) by several Lenape informants:

One of their chiefs took this [piece of tin] off for the purpose of making tobacco-pipes, not knowing he was doing amiss. Those in command of the house made such an ado about it, that the Indians, not knowing how it was, went away

26 Jameson, Narratives of New Netherland, 95. Jameson cites the Company’s Privileges and Exceptions pamphlet.
29 Myers, Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, 16.
and slew the chief who had done it, and brought a token of the dead to the house to those in command, who told them that they wished they had not done it, that they should have brought him to them, as they wished to have forbidden him to do the like again. They then went away.

The friends of the murdered chief incited their friends . . . to set about the work of Vengeance. Observing our people out of the house, each one at his work . . . and going among them with pretensions of friendship, struck them down. Thus was our young colony destroyed, causing us serious loss. 30

On December 9, 1632, De Vries, who had only just arrived from Holland, made peace with the Lenape by giving them gifts, noting, “we saw no chance of revenging it as they [the Indians] lived in no fixed place.” 31 It appears that the patroonship thereafter abandoned the Zwaanendael plantation, selling the land rights back to the West India Company in 1635. 32

The Dutch were not long at their trade on the South River before their rival England would again dispute their claim. Shortly after 1628, George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, sought and obtained from the English King Charles a charter for the proprietary province of Maryland. Located north of the Potomac River and running east to the Atlantic Ocean, the charter encompassed much of the South River region. 33 The English called the river and its bay Delaware after the first Virginia governor Lord De La Warr. George Calvert died in 1632, and though his charter transferred to his son Cecil Calvert, it would be many years before the English-Dutch dispute over the land along the Delaware (South) River would again rise to the surface.

Although the Dutch continued their trade operation intermittently at Fort Nassau on the South (Delaware) River, their failure to colonize left the region open to Swedish designs to join in the profitable American peltries trade. In 1638, an expedition chartered by Swedish Queen Christina arrived on the western shore of the South (Delaware) River at a landing they called The Rocks. Led by former New Netherland director Peter Minuit, the Swedish ships Kalmar Nyckel and Fogel Grip carried twenty-four Swede and Finn soldiers and traders representing the New Sweden Company. Minuit reportedly treated with the local Lenape sachems, acquiring deeds to land stretching from “Cape Henlopen to the Falls of the Delaware.” 34 It was, according to New York archivist Berthold Fernow, nearly

31 Myers, Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, 18.
33 This land was formerly part of the Virginia Company of London’s 1606 charter.
identical to the purchase made eight years earlier by Dutch patroon Samuel Godyn. Director William Kieft of the New Netherland government protested, declaring “in case you proceed with the erection of fortifications and cultivation of the soil and trade in peltries or in any wise attempt to do us injury, we do hereby protest against all damages, expenses and losses, together with all mishaps, bloodsheds and disturbances, which may arise in future time therefrom and that we shall maintain our jurisdiction in such manner, as we shall deem most expedient.”³⁵ Despite this subtle threat, no action was taken by the Dutch to prevent the Swedish incursion.

The Swedes proceeded to build Fort Christina at their landing site on the Christina River (called Minquas Kill by the Dutch), where a town called Christinehamn (Christine Harbor) was laid out (Figure 11). Rev. Reorus Torkillus (his Latinized name), who arrived with the first group of colonists, established Swedish Lutheran religious services in the fort. When he died in 1643, he was laid to rest in a graveyard reportedly located on a hill north of the fort.³⁶ In 1640, the Kalmar Nyckel returned with the first families, “including those of Sven Gunnarsson and Lars Svensson,” and additional single men including “Peter Rambo, Anders Bonde, Mans Andersson, Johan Schaggen, Anders Dalbo and Dr. Timen Stidden.”³⁷

By 1643, more than one hundred men, women, and children had joined the New Sweden settlement. Also onboard the ship in 1643 was Johan Printz, the first royal governor of New Sweden, who was reportedly “six feet tall and weighing 400 pounds.”³⁸ Printz constructed Fort Elsenborgh (Elfsborg) on the east bank of the Delaware River. Both Fort Christina and Fort Elsenborgh were located lower on the river than the Dutch Fort Nassau, creating trade competition and even impeding Dutch access to their fort via the river. Under the leadership of New Sweden governor Johannes Printz, Swedish colonists acquired patents for tracts and began farming their land. New Netherland Commissary Andreas Hudde (stationed at Fort Nassau) noted in his 1645 report:

About 2 leagues farther up [from Fort Christina] on the same side begin some plantations, continuing about 1 league, but there are only few houses and these scattering.

³⁵ “Protest of Director Kieft against the landing and settling up the Swedes on the Delaware,” May 6, 1638, in Fernow, Documents, 7:19.
³⁸ Craig, “Chronology of Colonial Swedes.” Craig lists the names of some of the 64 people who came in 1641, “including the families of Mans Lom, Olof Stille, Christopher Rettel, Hans Mansson, Olof Thorsson and Eskil Larsson. Also such single men as Peter Cock, Matts Hansson and his brother Anders Hansson, Ivert Hendricksson, Johan Ericksson, Matts Hansson from Borga, Johan Stalkofta, Lucas Petersson, Knut Martenson, Lars Bjur, and four orphans, including Israel Helm.” In 1643 there arrived, “50 new settlers, including Captain Sven Skute, soldiers Jonas Nilsson, Jürgen Keen, Johan Gustafsson, Anders Andersson Homman, Peter Jochimsson and the family of Anders Andersson the Finn.”
They extend as far as Tinnekonck which is an island, and back from the river are surrounded by creeks and copses.\textsuperscript{39}

Printz built his house on Tinnekonck Island. In 1646, a church was constructed on the island.\textsuperscript{40}

Swedish traders quickly made inroads into the peltries trade with the Minqua and Lenape after the young Queen Christina’s government instructed Printz to sell goods to the Indians “at lower prices than the Dutch at Fort Nassau or the English,” according to Hudde’s 1645 report.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39} “A Brief, but True Report of the Proceedings of Johan Prints…,” Nov. 1645, in Fernow, \textit{Documents}, 7:29. The Swedish colonists included many Finns, whose homeland was then a part of Sweden.

\textsuperscript{40} Craig, “Chronology of Colonial Swedes.”

\textsuperscript{41} “A Brief, but True Report of the Proceedings of Johan Prints…,” in Fernow, \textit{Documents}, 7:28n. The editor notes that the instructions were issued in 1642 prior to Printz’ arrival in New Sweden in February 1643.
The Swedes additionally constructed a fort known as Fort New Gothenburg on Tinnekonck Island at the mouth of the Schuykill, blocking Dutch access to the creek on which they plied their trade with the Minqua. Further inland, Hudde reported, the Swedes placed a blockhouse at the Minqua trading place called Kinssessing and “Half a league farther through the woods, Governor Printz has built a mill on the Kil [Mill Creek], which empties into the sea a little south of Matinnekonck [Tinnekonck], and a blockhouse beyond the Kil, right on the path of the Minquase.”  

Fernow, Documents, 7:30. Fernow identified Kinssessing as “near Upland, Pa., on the Schuylkil,” this is today’s “Kingsessing” section of southwest Philadelphia. In 1648, Hudde reported that the Passayunk sachems gave or sold him a tract of land on the east bank of the mouth of the Schuykill insisting that he build a fort there for the Dutch trade, and thus Fort Beversreede was constructed. In answer, the Swedes built Fort Manayunk on the west bank, effectively blocking access to Beversreede. Fernow, Documents, 7:36–8.
There are few historic records detailing the properties owned or occupied by the Swede and Finn colonists of New Sweden. Peter Lindstrom’s 1655 map of New Sweden identifies some of the settlements along the Delaware River and its tributaries, though it is somewhat inaccurate and fails to include Fort Christina (see Figure 4). Most of the farms and plantations were located along the navigable waters of the Delaware River and the lower drainages of the navigable creeks from the Christina River to the Schuylkill River. A census recorded in 1671, shortly after the English took possession, provides another indication of where the early colonists were located (see Appendix I). Among the colonists listed on the census in the area of the Christina was Anders Andersson Vinam (also called Anders Brainwinde or Andren Brainwinde), who owned a tract on Christina Kill on the south side of Brandywine Creek (called Fish Kill by the Dutch). Though there are competing stories concerning the genesis of the name of Brandywine Creek, there is compelling documentary evidence that Anders Brainwinde may have been the source of that moniker. Sometime before 1670, Brainwinde sold his tract to Robert Jones, described in a 1670 confirmation patent as, “lyeing and being to ye South of Brainwend Kill or Creeke.”

A compilation of later land patents and confirmations helps to identify some of the New Sweden plantations. The tract formerly occupied by Olof (Olle) Stille, who arrived on the third Swedish ship in 1641, was conveyed to Rev. Lars Carlsson Lock (latinized as Laurentius Carolus) after his arrival in 1648. This was confirmed by English commissioner Edmund Andros about 1676, noting “part of this said land hath been granted Laurentius Carolus by a former patent.” The Stille/Carolus tract, identified on the 1686 Thomas Holme map under the name “Preest,” was located on the west side of the Delaware River between Crum Creek and Olle Stille Creek (“Stillensland” on Lindstrom’s 1655 map, “Preest Creek” on the 1686 Holme map, and today’s Ridley Creek). Another deed, dated 1668, conveyed the land “heretofore belonging unto Moens Andriss”—probably Mans Andersson who arrived on the second Swedish ship in 1640—adjoined the land of “Laars

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43 Peter Stebbins Craig, 1671 Census of the Delaware (Philadelphia: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 1999), 40. This book appears to be the most complete record of the early Swedish, Finn, and Dutch colonists along the Delaware River.

44 Original Land Titles in Delaware Commonly Known as The Duke of York Record (Wilmington: Sunday Star Print, 1899), 144, https://archive.org/details/originallandtit00delagoog/. Federal Writers Project, Delaware: A Guide to the First State, 1938 (New York: Viking Press, 1938), 301. In 1665, one of the earliest land patents granted by Richard Nicolls, the Duke of York’s principal commissioner, was located “by a Creeke commonly called Brandywine Kill” (Original Land Titles in Delaware, 26). “Anders Andersson Vinam, born in Sweden, arrived at the Delaware as a bachelor and was living at Christina, south of the Brandywine, in 1669–1670, when (as Andries Andriessen or Andres Brainwinde) he was named in patents for adjoining land. His alias (Weinam or Vinam) may have been derived from venna [the correct Finnish word is viina], the Finnish word for brandy, and arguably the Brandywine River was named after him. Brännvin is the Swedish equivalent. He first moved to Crane Hook, but in 1679 joined Matthias Jönsson Hutt and Lars Cornelisson Vinam in the move to Chestnut Neck in Penn’s Neck.” Peter Stebbins Craig, “New Sweden Settlers, 1638–1664,” Part 8 (1663–1664), Swedish American Genealogist 19 (no. 4, 1999), 305.

45 These patents and confirmations were confirmed by the Duke of York, proprietor of the Delaware region after the 1664 British seizure of New Netherland and recorded in Original Land Titles in Delaware.

46 Original Land Titles in Delaware, 109–110. Rev. Lock served the Swedish Lutheran congregations at Tinicum, Fort Christina, and later Crane Hook.
Somewhat surprisingly, the New Sweden occupation of the South (Delaware) River region was allowed to grow for more than a decade before New Netherland governor Peter Stuyvesant, who replaced Director Kieft, determined to more forcibly counter the Swedish presence. In 1651, Stuyvesant ordered Fort Casimir to be constructed on the west bank of the South River, below both Fort Christina and Fort Elsenborgh, abandoning Fort Nassau. In 1654, New Sweden governor Johan Rysingh ordered the capture of Fort Casimir, which was renamed Fort Trinity by the Swedes. The Swedish insurgents would soon pay for their aggression:

> When the news of the capture of Fort Casimir reached the West India Company at home they were greatly incensed and instructed Stuyvesant to take immediate steps for the utter extermination of the Swedes from the South river. In the following year an expedition was fitted out of which Stuyvesant took the command; so overwhelmingly strong that when it arrived, the Swedes surrendered the Delaware territory to the invaders without a blow.  

The land adjoining the reclaimed Fort Casimir was laid out for a town called New Amstel where many of the region’s Dutch occupants resided. Fort Christina was renamed Fort Altena and garrisoned with sixteen Dutch soldiers. The region, part of which was ceded by the WIC to the City of Amsterdam (from New Amstel to the west side of Christina Kil), was left under the governance first of Vice-Director Jean Paul Jacque, followed by Jacob Aldrich in 1657, and finally Vice-Director Alexander Hinijossa.

Since the Dutch interest in the South River region was primarily for the lucrative Indian trade, Stuyvesant allowed the Swede and Finn farmers to remain on their land under Dutch authority. They were required, however, to swear allegiance to the United Netherlands:

> All and every one who are inclined, [to take] of their own free will the oath of allegiance in the hands of Mr. Petrus Stuyvesant Director-General of New-Netherland and to live up to it, may remain as freemen at this Southriver of New-Netherland and gain their livelihood as good and free inhabitants; on the other side those, who may have some scruples or conscientious fears regarding the oath of allegiance may leave this province of New-Netherland, after disposing of their private property to their best advantage and shall have free passage for their removal.

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47 Original Land Titles in Delaware, 134.
48 Fernow, Documents, 7:viii.
49 Fernow, Documents, 7:175, 172–73.
50 Fernow, Documents, 7:106.
Nineteen men signed the oath in 1655 (Figure 12), while others signed later or relocated to Maryland. Johan Andersson Stalcop, who was a Swedish soldier in the defense of Fort Trinity (Casimir) at the time of the Dutch attack in 1655, must have also taken the oath at some point. In 1662, Stalcop, Luckas Piterson (Peterson), and Hans Block were granted permission to build a gristmill on Turtle Kill (Shelpot Creek) by then-Vice Director William Beeckman. Significantly, Stuyvesant also permitted and in fact encouraged the establishment of Swedish “villages” beginning in 1657. Stipulating specific locations, Stuyvesant’s order directed the Swedes “to concentrate their houses and dwellings and henceforth to erect them in shape of a village or villages either at Upland, Passayonck, Finland, Kingsessing, [or] on the ‘Verdrietige hoeck’ [Trinity Hook, Pa.].” Requests to establish settlements at other locations had to be cleared by the Director General (Stuyvesant) and Council of New Netherland. In 1658, the Dutch repurchased from the Lenape the “Horekil,” stretching from Cape Henlopen to Bombay Hook, to protect shipping in the bay and as a buffer against the English in Virginia. Then, in 1663, the WIC turned the entire South River territory over to the City of Amsterdam.

The return of Dutch rule along the Delaware River in 1655 came a year after the conclusion of the first Anglo-Dutch War, which occurred between 1652 and 1654 in Europe. Two other brief wars between the British and Dutch occurred between 1665 and 1667 and between 1672 and 1674. Though the Dutch and the English had been allies against the Spanish in the late sixteenth century, their growing dominance in mercantile trade and colonizing new lands repeatedly set the two countries at odds through much of the seventeenth century. While the battles were primarily fought by their respective navies, England actively sought to seize Dutch colonial ports and settlements in Africa, the East Indies, and America in an effort to extend its trading powers.

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Figure 12: Men who signed the oath in 1655. Fernow, Documents, 7:106.

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51 Fernow, Documents, 7:368.
52 Fernow, Documents, 7:191.
53 Fernow, Documents, 7:215, 449. This was the third purchase of the Hoerkil or Whorekill, former location of Zwaanendael, two by the Dutch and one by the Swedes.
Thus, in 1664, just prior to the start of the second Anglo-Dutch War, King Charles II determined to capture the New Netherland territory, including the South River region. When Richard Nicholls sailed into the New Amsterdam harbor with four English warships, he met no resistance from Governor Stuyvesant. The Dutch settlement along the North (Hudson) River, still under the control of the West India Company, had languished under Indian attacks and boundary disputes with their New England neighbors, with no assistance from the Company despite their pleas for protection. “That assistance,” wrote Stuyvesant in his 1665 Report on the Surrender of New Netherland, “appears to have been retarded so long (wherefore and by what unpropitious circumstances the Honorable Directors best know) that our abovementioned too powerful neighbors and enemies found themselves reinforced by four royal ships, crammed full with an extraordinary amount of men and stores.”

Stuyvesant negotiated a “Capitulation” agreement in which little actually changed for the Dutch (and Swede, Finn, etc.) residents under English control.

In March 1664, six months prior to Nicholls’ actual conquest of the New Netherland territory, King Charles II granted the land to his brother James, the Duke of York. New Amsterdam was renamed New York in his honor. His proprietary grant extended to the south to include the land east of the Delaware Bay and River, soon to be known as New Jersey. Perhaps as an oversight, the land on the west side of the bay did not appear to be included in the Duke of York’s grant. Nevertheless, he assumed control. In September of 1664, York’s “Deputy Governor” Richard Nicholls instructed Sir Robert Carr to travel to the Delaware region where, “the Dutch have seated themselves … on his Majestie of Great Brittaines territoryes, without his knowledge or consent,” and “to reduce the same,” bringing all of the Delaware River region under English control. Carr’s instructions additionally noted that any claim on the territory by Lord Baltimore was voided by “the reduction of the place being at his Majesties Expense.” The City of Amsterdam Burgomasters, representing the South Bay colony, surrendered under essentially the same terms as those in the north. The Swedish mill owners Hans Block and Lucas Peterson were among those who signed the agreement on October 1, 1664.

By April 1668, the seat of government for the Delaware region was established at New Castle, formerly New Amstel, under the watchful eye of a small garrison commanded by Capt. John Carr. Dutch and Swede residents Hans Block, Israel Helme, Peter Rambo, Peter Cocke, and Peter Aldricks advised and assisted Carr in administering justice. In 1669 the order was given to confirm earlier land patents, a move intended to keep the Dutch and Swedish farmers on their land and producing agricultural products. The

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54 Jameson, Narratives of New Netherland, 460.
56 Original Land Titles in Delaware, 22–23.
57 Original Land Titles in Delaware, 24.
58 Fernow, Documents, 7:462.
confirmation process proved to be valuable for Olle Olleson and Niels Nielsen. After the English takeover, their tracts were granted “by misinformation” to William Tom, who then “by order of the Court at Delaware forbadd them to cutt hay or to make bridges for their Cattle to goe into that Marsh without his leave.” In 1670, Olleson and Nielsen received a confirmation deed for their earlier land patents on Trinity Hook, evicting William Tom from his occupation of their land.

Other problems surfaced in 1669, including the Swede-and-Finn-led insurrection known as “the Long Finn rebellion.” Marcus Jacobsen, who used the aliases John Binckson and Mathew Hinks and styled himself “Coningsmarke” claiming to be the son of a Swedish General, led the rebellion. It apparently never got beyond “incendiary” remarks and the assemblage of confederates in the plan. Armgart Prins [sic], daughter of former Swedish Governor Prinz, was implicated, along with a long list of others, including John Stalcop as a “Chiefe fomenter” (Figure 13). While the confederates were fined for their role in the affair, Jacobsen was sentenced to a public whipping, branded on the face with the letter “R” for rebellion, and then sold into slavery in Barbados. Jacobsen’s punishment appears to have had its intended effect as his confederates paid their fines and assimilated themselves into Delaware society under English rule.

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59 Fernow, Documents, 7:474. For William Tom’s 1665 patent for the land in which it is noted that the tract is bounded on the “backside” (north) by “Brandywine Kill,” see Original Land Titles in Delaware, 26.
60 Fernow, Documents, 7:465–73.
61 Fernow, Documents, 7:469–72.
In 1671, New York Governor Francis Lovelace ordered a census of the Delaware River settlements, largely to begin collecting quitrents from the property owners in the region. Census-taker Walter Wharton was clearly challenged by the mostly Swedish, Finn,
and Dutch names. In his introduction to his transcription of the 1671 Census, genealogist and historian Peter Stubbins Craig shares information on many of the individuals listed on the census and provides a remarkable window on the world of the earliest colonists along the Delaware River (See Appendix I: Names in the 1671 Wharton Census of the Delaware).62

Traveling through the region in 1679, Jasper Danckaerts described some of the houses he stayed in, which varied greatly according to the nationality of the builder. Describing the former home of Swedish Governor Printz as an example of the Swede-built dwellings, he wrote:

The house, although not much larger than where we were the last night, was somewhat better and tighter, being made according to the Swedish mode, and as they usually build their houses here, which are block-houses, being nothing else than entire trees, split through the middle, or squared out of the rough, and placed in the form of a square, upon each other, as high as they wish to have the house; the ends of these timbers are let into each other, about a foot from the ends, half of one into half of the other. The whole structure is thus made, without a nail or a spike. The ceiling and roof do not exhibit much finer work, except among the most careful people, who have the ceiling planked and a glass window. The doors are wide enough, but very low, so that you have to stoop in entering. These houses are quite tight and warm; but the chimney is placed in a corner.63

Of the English houses, Danckaerts described a far less comfortable design:

Most of the English, and many others, have their houses made of nothing but clapboards, as they call them there, in this manner: they first make a wooden frame . . . they then split the boards of clapwood, so that they are like cooper’s pipe staves, except they are not bent. These are made very thin, with a large knife, so that the thickest end is about as thick as a little finger, and the other is made sharp, like the edge of a knife. They are about five or six feet long, and are nailed on the outside of the frame, with the ends lapped over each other. They are not usually laid so close together, as to prevent you from sticking a finger between them, in consequence either of their not being well joined, or the boards being crooked. When it is cold and windy the best people plaster them with clay.64

Danckaerts described the English that he met in his travels south through New Jersey and into the lower Delaware River region as Quakers, noting they “live hereabouts in great numbers, and daily increase.”65

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The presence of Quakers along the Delaware River was largely due to the 1674 purchase of a large tract known as West New Jersey by English Quaker Edward Byllynge, through his trustee John Fenwick, also a Quaker. In early 1675, Fenwick and Byllynge had a disagreement about the ownership of the land. The dispute between Quakers went to arbitration and, according to historian Albert Cook Myers, “the foremost of all Quakers was called in as arbiter . . . William Penn, son of the Duke’s favorite admiral in the Dutch War, and the future Founder of Pennsylvania.” Penn despaired at the prospect of Friends disagreeing and at their competing claims on the land: “The present difference between thee and E. B. fills the hearts of Friends with grief,” wrote Penn to Fenwick. “I took care to hide the pretences on both hands as to the original of the thing, because it reflects on you both and which is worse on the truth” [i.e., on the profession of Quakerism]. When Penn awarded them their legal shares, Fenwick only grudgingly agreed and proceeded to bring the first colony of Quakers on the ship Griffin. Byllynge, however, was already in debt and in order to satisfy his creditors, transferred his share to trustees, including William Penn the arbiter, and Gawen Lawrie and Nicholas Lucas to whom he owed money. Fenwick also eventually conveyed his land to the trustees due to financial trouble. Thus did the English Quakers find an initial home in the New World and William Penn become involved in its settlement.

In 1681, in response to a request by William Penn for vacant land on which to create a Quaker commonwealth, King Charles granted Penn an extensive proprietary province. The grant stretched from the west bank of the Delaware River (its border with West New Jersey) to a vaguely defined boundary of five degrees longitude to the west, and from the south at the fortieth degree of latitude (the northern boundary of Maryland) running three degrees northward. The Pennsylvania charter included an unusual boundary line at the southeast corner, beginning on the bank of the Delaware River:

[A] Circle drawne at twelve miles distance from New Castle Northward and Westward unto the beginning of the fortieth degree of Northern Latitude.

This boundary delineated the Duke of York’s land to the south and on the west side of the Delaware River. The King named Penn’s new province “Pensilvania,” in honor of Penn’s father Admiral Sir William Penn, despite Penn’s protestations that the title would “be looked on as a vanity to me and not as a respect in the King, as it truly was, to my father whom he often mentions with praise.”

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66 Myers, *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania*, 183. This date is often shown as 1673, by the old calendar. The Duke of York’s “Province of New Jersey” was originally granted by the Duke to his friends John Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. Berkeley sold his interest in 1673/1674 to John Fenwick as trustee for Edward Byllynge, creating the West New Jersey province.


In August of 1682, the Duke of York recorded three “Indentures of Release,” the first confirming the conveyance of the province of Pennsylvania. The second, called a “Deed of feoffment,” conveyed “All that the Town of Newcastle, otherwise called Delaware, and all that Tract of Land, lying within the Compass or Circle of 12 Miles about the same, situate, lying, and being upon the River Delaware in America, and all Islands in the said River Delaware, and the said River and soil thereof, lying North of the Southermost Part of the said Circle of 12 Miles about the said Town.” And the final indenture conveyed the land extending from twelve miles south of New Castle “to the Whorekills, otherwise called Capin Lopen.” This land was known as the “Three Lower Counties” (New Castle, Kent, and Sussex), which became a southern extension of Penn’s Pennsylvania proprietary.

**William Penn and the Quakers Develop the Landscape**

William Penn’s Pennsylvania became a sanctuary for many “non-conformist” Protestant sects from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Europe. In 1664, the British Parliament passed the Conventicle Act which “made illegal all religious gatherings other than those which were according to the ‘National Worship.’” Quakers in particular, whose simple and unadorned religious beliefs were a reaction against the “established” Anglican Church of England, faced excessive institutionalized discrimination:

> To deal specially with the Quakers there had been passed in May 1662 … the “Quaker Act” imposing penalties for refusal to take oaths and for holding meetings for worship in the Quaker way.

Quaker and Presbyterian emigrants seeking freedom from religious persecution quickly populated the initial Pennsylvania counties, Bucks, Philadelphia, and Chester, along with New Castle County of the “Lower Three Counties.” Later, refugees from the German Palatinate flooded into the Philadelphia harbor.

The Quaker, Presbyterian, and German colonists in the area in and around New Castle County came from a tradition of small family farms based upon grain production and the associated milling industries. Their imprint on the landscape was functional and tidy, and appeared humble relative to the grand plantations of the tobacco regions to the south and west.

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70 The Breviate: In the Boundary Dispute between Pennsylvania and Maryland (Harrisburg: Edwin K. Meyers, State Printer, 1891), 363.
72 Breviate, 366.
74 Nightingale, Early Stages of the Quaker Movement, 198.
Chapter 1.3

Developing the Brandywine and Beaver Valley Landscape

Settlement in Penn’s proprietary progressed from fur trading and subsistence farming to more substantial farming. Grain farming was prominent, and as a result grist and flour mills flourished. The mills took advantage of the ample waterpower from Beaver Creek and the Brandywine Creek to convert grain into more easily transportable and marketable flour or meal. Saw mills often stood near or with grist and flour mills, clustered at places where the water had enough fall to provide sufficient power.

The prominence of milling was a significant feature of the local New Castle County economy. It reflects a general agricultural economy with emphasis on small grains, particularly wheat, rye, and barley, rather than the staple economy focused on tobacco followed early on in the southern counties. Geographer James T. Lemon asserts that the region’s general farm economy resulted from the markets that opened up when Pennsylvania and New Castle County were being settled. Export trade with the West Indies, New England, southern Europe, and Ireland, as well as to ships’ provisioners, created a demand for flour, bread, wheat, as well as corn, lumber, and flax seed.¹ These trade markets opened up after older colonies such as Virginia and Maryland had established bilateral trade with England, which limited their ability to develop an exchange in new commodities. Pennsylvania was founded about the same time as these new extended trade mechanisms were developed, causing its agricultural system to be significantly shaped by the contemporary market situation.²

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Wilmington was a major flour and grain export center and a leader in four-milling technology. The Brandywine and Beaver Valley flour mills provided their products to Wilmington shippers. Eventually, competition from the vast Piedmont and Great Valley grain belt, and later grain and flour production in the Midwest, removed the flour market from Wilmington and local producers. Distinctive to the Brandywine and Beaver Valley milling clusters were companion textile and paper mills established in the eighteenth century. Eventually textile mills dominated, concentrating in and near Wilmington.

² Lemon, Best Poor Man’s Country, 29.
Defining Delaware’s Boundary

Delaware’s boundary with Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey confused residents, surveyors, and governments for generations. Conflicting and overlapping land grants and claims in part created the problem. In 1638, the Swedes established Fort Christina along the Delaware River at the present site of Wilmington. In 1651, the Dutch purchased the land north of Christina Creek southward to Bombay Hook from the Lenni Lenape, and, by 1655, forced the Swedes to surrender their claims to lands in present-day Delaware. Then in 1664, England’s King Charles II granted to his brother, James, the Duke of York, lands occupied by the Dutch, from the Connecticut River to the Delaware River. After capturing and recapturing the Dutch settlements, Charles II confirmed title to the lands granted to James.3

In 1680, William Penn asked King Charles II for a grant of land in America, north of Maryland, in payment for debts owed to his father. The king consulted two of the region’s stake-holders, Lord Baltimore and the Duke of York. Lord Baltimore’s only concern was that the boundary be kept at or above the fortieth parallel. The Duke of York wanted to retain lands around New Castle and southward and proposed a circle with a radius of twenty to thirty miles around New Castle as a boundary. Penn was able to get the radius reduced to twelve miles, which gave him closer access to the Atlantic Ocean. The problem was that if Lord Baltimore’s stipulation of the fortieth parallel was used, its line was well above the twelve-mile arc, putting Maryland between the arc line and Pennsylvania. Charles II made the grant but said that Lord Baltimore and William Penn had to meet and work out the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland. Disputes and litigation followed over Pennsylvania’s and Maryland’s boundary claims.4

Complicating the situation, on August 21, 1682, the Duke of York granted to William Penn all of his New Castle (present-day Delaware) lands, adding further conflict over the boundary with Maryland along the border with Delaware. In 1685, Penn and Lord Baltimore met before the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations in England. The commissioners served the government of the new king, James II, the former Duke of York. They recommended that the peninsula between the Delaware River and the Chesapeake Bay be divided between Maryland and Pennsylvania. King James II issued a decree to that effect. Then in 1688, the king granted to Penn the Delaware territory.5 Eventually the residents of the Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania (later Delaware) petitioned the Pennsylvania Assembly for a separate administration and assembly. They were at odds with the Pennsylvania government for a number of reasons, including cultural and religious differences, commercial rivalries and protection. Penn granted the request. In 1701, he hired

4 Nathan, East of the Mason-Dixon Line, 11.
5 Nathan, East of the Mason-Dixon Line, 15, 16.
Isaac Taylor from Chester County and Thomas Pierson of New Castle County to survey a boundary between the two counties. The boundary line would be a 120-degree arc (one-third of a circle) beginning on the west bank of the Delaware River, with a radius running twelve miles from New Castle and starting from the Horse Dyke, a Dutch-built levee at the north edge of the town (Figure 14). They set a meridian north from the dyke to an “S” bend in the Brandywine Creek. This line was later found to be about 2,000 feet too long. From there they measured to the east and to the west. They marked the line with blazes cut into trees.6 Within the arc, for twelve miles above and below New Castle, Delaware’s boundary extended across the Delaware River to the New Jersey shore, which to this day marks the boundary between Delaware and New Jersey. Below the arc, the Delaware–New Jersey boundary was, and is, the thalweg—the middle of the primary navigable channel of the waterway. The division of the land between Pennsylvania and Maryland was to extend northward from the middle point of an east-west line drawn from the Atlantic Ocean to the Chesapeake Bay, to a point twelve miles west from the New Castle court house cupola, where the northerly tangent line would meet.

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As a result of continuing disputes between Maryland and Pennsylvania, in 1738 the king ordered that a temporary line be run, to be fifteen-and-one-half miles south of Philadelphia to the Susquehanna River and then fourteen-and-three-quarter miles south of Philadelphia from the river west. This boundary and the arc remained in place until 1763, when Mason and Dixon took over the task of making official boundaries. Colonial surveyors did not appear to be up to the task of running the boundaries and the complicated intersection with the arc. In England, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon carried expert
credentials and had the most sophisticated and up-to-date equipment, including an astronomical tall case clock and a six-foot telescope mounted on a pendulum on which to base their measurements.\footnote{David S. Thaler, “Mason and Dixon & The Defining of America,” Maryland Historical Society, accessed Oct. 26, 2017, https://www.mdhs.org/sites/default/files/MdHSmasonDixon.pdf.} The Astronomer Royal recommended them for the job and the Penns and Sixth Lord Baltimore agreed to hire the pair. They arrived in Philadelphia on November 15, 1763.\footnote{Nathan, \textit{East of the Mason-Dixon Line}, 29.}

As they worked, Mason and Dixon marked the boundary with stones quarried and cut in England. They placed the stones at every mile, with crown stones marking every fifth mile. The crown stones had the Calvert coat of arms on the Maryland side of the stone, and the Penn coat of arms on the Pennsylvania side. The smaller merestones had only an “M” or a “P” marking. Mason and Dixon established the boundary between Maryland and present-day Delaware with the north-south line, and then tackled the arc where the north-south line intersected it. Where the arc intersected the north-south line, the surveyors placed “arc stones” to mark the curve and the two intersection lines. The north-south boundary line does not run exactly north-south.\footnote{John Mackenzie, “A brief history of the Mason-Dixon Line,” APEC/CANR, University of Delaware, accessed May 3, 2017, http://www1.udel.edu/johnmack/mason_dixon/.} It was intended to divide the peninsula evenly in two from a mid-point established in an east-west line across it, called the trans-peninsular line. Surveyors William Parsons and John Watson from Pennsylvania and John Emory and Thomas Jones from Maryland ran the trans-peninsular line in 1750 and 1751.\footnote{John A. Munroe, \textit{Colonial Delaware: A History} (Wilmington: Delaware Heritage Press, 2003), 134.} Local surveyors worked on the north-south line from 1760 to 1763, but difficulties led to the selection of Mason and Dixon to complete the job.\footnote{Munroe, \textit{Colonial Delaware}, 135.} From the trans-peninsular line, the north-south line runs slightly to the northeast to a point where it meets the arc line. From there it heads straight north, following a meridian line. While the meridian line went due north, the arc curved to the northeast, away from the corner of Mason and Dixon’s north line and their west line forming the border of Maryland and Pennsylvania. This there was a small wedge of land, containing about 800 acres that lay between the arc and the Maryland border. This wedge, along with the three lower counties, was a part of Pennsylvania but always administrated through Delaware. The wedge did not legally become a part of the State of Delaware until 1921.\footnote{Nathan, \textit{East of the Mason-Dixon Line}, 55.}

Mason and Dixon’s contract was with the Penns and the Calverts and so it did not include any work with the existing arc boundary between the three lower counties and the rest of Pennsylvania. They only measured that portion of the arc that their north-south boundary intersected. Nevertheless, the arc has since been re-measured more than once, correcting errors and replacing lost markers from the 1701 initial survey.
Captain W. C. Hodgkins of the Office of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey undertook the most definitive arc survey in 1892. A joint commission contracted Hodgkins to survey and monument the Delaware-Pennsylvania boundary. Hodgkins extended the northern boundary of Maryland eastward across the top of the Wedge to the twelve-mile circle. This created the Top of the Wedge Line. Hodgkins then marked the twelve-mile circle every half-mile. Including the initial point and a terminal point, there are forty-six monuments. The initial and terminal stones are made of dark gneiss of the Wilmington Complex and bear the names of the commissioners representing Pennsylvania and Delaware. The rest of the stones are pyramidal frustums of gray gneiss monuments that measure ten inches square at the top and project from twenty to thirty inches above the ground. The half-mile stones bear a “1/2” on their west side. The mile stones bear a “P” on the north face, a “D” on the south face, the mile number from the initial stone on the west face, and the date 1892 on the east face (Figure 15).\(^\text{13}\) The Hodgkins survey with its markers bearing the date 1892 is the current border, but numerous maps show both the “old” and the “new” (1892) boundary lines (Figure 16).

Long before the official boundaries took shape, settlements formed in the three lower Delaware River counties. While the focus of these Swedish and Dutch settlements was fur trading, eventually agriculture developed, at least to a limited extent.

\(\text{Figure 15: Arc boundary monument, 1892 near Beaver Creek.}\)

Figure 16: Detail of the Wilbur T. Wilson 1938 plat of the Delaware boundary survey. University of Delaware.
Developing Agriculture

Forty years before William Penn arrived to establish his proprietary, several waves of Swedes and Finns settled along the Delaware River. The third and fourth landings in 1641 and 1643 brought farmers and attempts to establish an agricultural base. New Sweden’s new governor, Johan Printz, who arrived on the fourth voyage, brought livestock, seeds, and implements to help sustain the colony’s agriculture. Tobacco was among the first agricultural exports from New Sweden. Farm produce gradually improved with the introduction of the crops rye and barley and an array of livestock providing meat and dairy products. These farm products were typical of what the colonists grew in Sweden. The colonists also established a brewery to process the grain into beer and ale.14

After the Dutch takeover of New Sweden in 1655, ordinances for fencing required enclosure of farms and town lots due to the straying of hogs and goats. The fencing rules indicate that farming and livestock production had increased along the Delaware River.15 Nevertheless, there was a shortage of farmers. The new colony floundered because of too few farmers to work the land and too few sawyers, brick makers, and carpenters to build the necessary infrastructure.16 The Dutch tried to improve their situation by importing families and farm hands, some of them enslaved, to work the land.

By 1663, the Delaware Valley hosted 110 plantations kept by Swede, Finn, and Dutch farmers. There were 2,000 cows and oxen, twenty horses, eighty sheep, and several thousand swine. The land could yield many varieties of grain and fruit. Two or three breweries operated to meet high demand in Maryland. One thousand tubs of tobacco could be purchased each year from Maryland and about ten thousand furs from the Indians.17

Two years later, in 1665, the Duke of York directed English forces to drive the Dutch from the territory along the Delaware and claimed the lands for England. The Swede, Finn, and Dutch colonists were permitted to remain on their lands as long as they took an oath of allegiance to the Duke of York. The daily routine of agricultural production continued much as before. Yet English religious and governmental institutions took root in the Delaware settlements. After William Penn received his grant from King Charles II for Pennsylvania in 1681, he turned to the Duke of York who in 1682 granted Penn land on the west bank of the Delaware River and Bay. New Castle, Kent, and Sussex County became known as Penn’s “Three Lower Counties.”

Penn’s access to the Delaware Bay assured a direct route to and from Penn’s port city of Philadelphia, which grew to become the dominant market and port city on the Delaware River. Under Penn’s government, New Castle also grew as a significant and

14 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 21–22.
15 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 40.
16 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 44.
17 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 52.
Prosperous port. Ready access to markets, fertile soil, and ample water power for mills encouraged waves of English emigrants to “Penn’s woods.” Largely comprised of Quaker farmers, these newcomers joined the Swedish and Finnish colonists and their descendants and remained a notable segment of the growing English Quaker population.

Whereas the farmers in Penn’s upper counties of Pennsylvania took their products to Philadelphia markets, those in the Lower Counties took advantage of the port at New Castle and, later, Wilmington. Penn established a weekly market in New Castle, which served not only the Delaware settlements but also the eastern shore of Maryland. Planters rolled barrels of tobacco from southern Delaware and Maryland plantations to New Castle for shipment to England and Scotland. New Castle County farmers exported their excess wheat and corn to the West Indies. Eventually grain and other products replaced tobacco as the dominant Delaware exports.

This shift in agricultural production in the lower counties took place through the eighteenth century. New Castle County had always been less attractive to tobacco planters as it offered good land for general farming and sites for mills along its waterways. Yet tobacco was the main crop in Kent and Sussex Counties through much of the seventeenth century. As tobacco faded in importance, however, it was replaced by wheat and corn and forest products such as shingles and construction materials for buildings and ships.

The dominance of grain production continued into the nineteenth century, with flour as the main commodity. Yet other agricultural industries flourished as well, including the production of flax for linen and raising of sheep for wool production. Most households kept at least one or two sheep for wool. There was not a large commercial wool industry before the American Revolution because England required that colonists purchase wool fabric from English manufacturers.

**Agricultural Labor**

Planters brought enslaved laborers into the lower counties particularly for the cultivation of tobacco in Kent and Sussex Counties. First State National Park’s John Dickinson Plantation near Dover in Kent County is an example of a property that depended upon enslaved labor. As tobacco production waned in importance and less of it was grown, maintaining people in bondage lost its economic benefit. Consequently, over time the number of enslaved individuals diminished while the number of free African Americans grew. According to James E. Newton’s research:

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18 In 1735, Andrew Justison and his son-in-law Thomas Willing laid out lots on their land on the Christina River. The new port town was called “Willingtown” and later Wilmington. With Wilmington lying to the southwest of Philadelphia, it was closer to the inland farms of New Castle County and to the north and west in Pennsylvania. Wilmington became a prominent port for the export of agricultural products, mostly flour, but also beef and pork, flax seed, lumber and wood products. Principal destinations for shipping from Wilmington were the West Indies and Ireland. Return trips brought rum, molasses, cotton, and coffee from the West Indies, and linen and glassware from Ireland. Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*.

19 Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 89.
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The number of slaves in Delaware decreased rapidly from almost 9,000 in 1790 to half that number in 1820. By 1860, the number had decreased to 1,798. The usual explanation given is humanitarianism and religious feeling, abolitionist efforts, and runaways. In reality, Delaware farmers found it cheaper to hire free black labor than to keep slaves. Furthermore, Delaware, the most northern of the slave states, had no great crop of tobacco or cotton to be looked after during all seasons of the year. The land was wearing out, and state law forbade the sale of slaves out of state. Thus, slave owners could not benefit from breeding slaves as in a state like Virginia.  

Farm work more frequently was performed by the farm family, black and white hired hands, or indentured servants. Indentured servants were also held in bondage, but their terms were for a finite number of years. They provided their labor in exchange for a contract, usually for payment by the owner of the indentured person’s passage to America. The indentured servant’s master could hire out his servant as a day or contract laborer.

**Industry**

The once lively industrial complexes along Beaver Creek are now archeological resources. Along Beaver Creek are a series of stone ruins and walls that are remnants of the activity that once flourished there. Support buildings such as houses and workshops are among the ruins. In addition, dams or ruins of dams mark the area as well as depressions that were once raceways and ponds. These features are visible on the landscape along with a road linking them all together.

In 1891, Amos C. Brinton prepared a hand written manuscript recounting the history of various industries on the Brandywine and Beaver Creek. Brinton mentions industries along Beaver Creek moving upstream from its confluence with the Brandywine. The first were William Smith’s sawmill, which was built around 1795, and a grist mill built in 1816. Both were in the Smith family for generations until in 1891 when William T. Tally owned them. The next mill on Beaver Creek was a grist and corn mill of John and Andrew Gibson, which was built around 1745. According to Brinton, this mill was very close to the circular line but stood in Delaware. It changed hands many times from Gibson to Smith and then in 1808 to John Farra who rebuilt and enlarged the mill. When Farra died in 1839, Louis Smith acquired the mill and, subsequently, Joseph Brinton. It was an established merchant mill, producing and shipping flour. Farther up the stream was a woolen factory that scoured and dyed wool and spun it into yarn. The factory produced “farm cloth.” This factory then became a paper mill that ran until it was destroyed by a flood in 1839.

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Upstream of the woolen and paper mill was a saw mill that Samuel Green operated around 1800. Daniel Farra operated the mill in about 1850 and Hinkinson in 1891.\textsuperscript{22}

The industrial tradition in Beaver Valley is strong, led by the production of woolens and textiles. According to the Federal Manufacturer’s Census of 1820, the market value of textiles produced in New Castle County was $146,000. Following close behind was flour and meal at $139,000. Third in value was paper production at $101,000.\textsuperscript{23} These three major manufacturing entities were well represented in Beaver Valley.

**Woolen Milling**

Woolen mills appear to have outnumbered cotton manufacturing in Beaver Valley. Woolen cloth production required several operations, beginning with shearing the wool from the sheep, cleaning the fleece, and spinning the wool into yarn and ending with weaving and fulling. Most households left the final processes to professional weavers and fullers. George Horner Gibson describes the fulling process in his article, “The Delaware Woolen Industry.”

The process known as fulling was the first breach in household self-sufficiency in making woolen cloth. Softening harsh and stiff woven cloth and bringing the threads closer together required further manipulation. This process consisted of washing the cloth in warm, soapy water, softening the surface by including short wool fibers, beating the cloth with mallets or sticks, and raising the nap with teasels or the heads of a plant whose flower is covered with sturdy, hooked spines. As the process called for strength and dexterity and experience, it became a specialized stage of textile manufacture outside of the home. The fuller used simple machines operated by men, animals, or water.\textsuperscript{24}

According to Gibson, Jonathan Strange built Delaware’s first known fulling mill in 1733 on the north side of Wil’on’s Run or Rockland Run, a tributary of Brandywine Creek, in Christiana Hundred.\textsuperscript{25} Christina Hundred is on the west side of the Brandywine, opposite Brandywine Hundred.

A 1770 tax document from nearby Birmingham Township in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, reveals that most farm properties had sheep. In fact, sheep outnumbered cattle and horses on most farms.\textsuperscript{26} Birmingham Township is along the east side of Brandywine Creek, north of Chadds Ford, and not far from Beaver Valley. The relatively large number of sheep suggests the importance of the woolen industry along the

\textsuperscript{22} Brinton, “Mills on Brandywine,” 37–39.
\textsuperscript{25} Gibson, “The Delaware Woolen Industry,” 3.
Brandywine in the eighteenth century. One such mill was along Beaver Creek, just below 701 Beaver Valley Road on the property that had been granted to William Hicklin and inherited by his grandson, Joshua. Louis Secriste established a woolen mill after he purchased the ninety-three-acre property from David McCullough and wife Sarah on March 28, 1825. Stone ruins of this mill remain along the south side of Beaver Creek. In November 1829, Nathaniel Wolfe, the High Sheriff of New Castle County, seized the property for debt. Charles I. DuPont purchased the house and woolen mill at the resulting sale and received a deed for the property on December 1, 1837. The mill was destroyed in a flood in 1843 and apparently was not rebuilt. Yet when du Pont sold the property in 1852, the deed referred to “mills” and “mill seats” on the land parcel. Amos C. Brinton reported that this woolen mill was converted to a paper mill.

By the 1830s, flour and saw milling overtook woolen manufacturing in value of product in New Castle County.

**Flour Milling**

Mills were constructed for a variety of purposes, such as the sawing of lumber and the grinding of grain as well as the grinding of bark for tanneries and flax seed for linseed oil, as well as for other industrial activities. Often several types of mills were clustered at one location, such as those along Beaver Creek. The position of the mills allowed them to take advantage of the same power source—the water-driven wheel.

A flour mill refers specifically to a mill that produced the highly refined grain product of flour. A grist mill made coarser meal and cracked grain. Wooden and later steel water wheels turned by water pushing against paddles powered the mills. The water either turned the wheel from above on an overshot wheel or from below on an undershot wheel. The turning wheel operated the machinery through a system of cog wheels and later by shafts and belts.

An important part of the process of grain milling was the pair of millstones that did the actual grinding. The stones were round disks that rested horizontally, one above the other. Although the two stones were close together, they did not touch. The bottom stone or “bed” stone was fixed in place. It was attached to the upper stone or “runner” by a wooden spindle that extended upward from the center of the bed stone. The runner rotated with the turning of the spindle, grinding the grain between the two stones. The spindle turned through a system of cogs and gears connected with the shaft from the mill wheel.

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27 New Castle County Deed Book C, Volume 4, Page 69.
28 New Castle County Deed Book Y, Volume 4, Page 413.
30 Hunter Research, “Pike Creek,” 4–6. This cites the 1832 McLane Report.
The upper surface of the bed stone and the lower surface of the runner were scored or cut with grooves radiating out from the center of the stone. These grooves helped to channel the flour off the stones through a chute into troughs below the mill stones. Grain to be ground entered the space between the mill stones through a hole in the center of the runner stone. To prevent flour and dust from escaping as the flour was propelled off the millstones, the stones were encased in a drum-like box which caught the flour and funneled it into bins in the basement of the mill building.

Millers produced a variety of flours depending upon the moisture in the grain, its quality, starch and gluten content, and the fineness of the grinding. Typically, the miller blended various types of wheat to achieve a particular product. Mills yielded several grades of flour. The best or most pure was pastry white followed by white then seconds, thirds, and middlings. The bran, which was the husk of the grain, and the pollard, or the part of the wheat next to the husk, were discarded or fed to animals.

The cleaning and preparation of the grain for grinding and separating the meal, bran, and flours after grinding were both important parts of the milling process. The miller first blended the types of wheat to achieve the variety of flour desired. This selection of wheats that is called “mealing” in England involved particular skill on the part of the miller. The miller mixed the wheat in a bin or hopper, then passed it through a blowing apparatus or fan to remove dust and lightweight particles. After this initial cleaning, the grain passed through another apparatus called a “smut-machine,” which consisted of iron beaters within a screen-covered frame. The holes in the screen were wide enough to allow impurities, smut and small imperfect grains of wheat to pass through as the beaters rotated four to five hundred times a minute. After this process, called “scrubbing,” the wheat was exposed to blown air from a fan that removed any remaining chaff and dirt. Then the wheat fell down a canvas tube or chute into a bin that supplied the mill stones. The bin vibrated or jigged to shake the grain evenly into the trough over the millstones. As the grain fell into the trough, a bell rang, indicating that the mechanism was working properly.

A mill with this machinery ground about eight bushels of wheat per hour. After leaving the mill stones, the ground grain was usually separated into three parts: flour, pollard, and bran. This portioning took place in a machine called a separator or bolter at the top of the mill. In order to convey the ground grain from the basement of the mill to the top, the miller’s helper carried it in sacks or in a mechanized bucket elevator called a “Jacob’s Ladder” after New Castle County inventor Oliver Evans created an automated milling system. The bucket elevator consisted of a network of vertical wooden chutes that housed long circular belts or bands with attached scoop cups. The bands reached from the basement to the top of the mill. As the belt moved, the cups filled with flour in the basement and clattered upward to the top of the mill where they dumped their contents for the separator. During the milling process, the grain made several trips from the basement to
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the attic of the mill. The number of trips up and down depended on how much refinement the grain received; flour took four trips whereas cracked corn and feed took fewer.  

Evans was the son of a cordwainer (shoemaker) and farmer from Newport on the Christina River who developed his fully automated flourmill in the 1780s. Evans invented his automated elevator system with augers and enclosed chutes and belts with cups to carry flour to the top of the mill. This bypassed the need for carrying bags of grain from the bottom of the mill to the top or hoisting sacks with ropes and pulleys.

He also invented a mechanical “hopper boy” or rake which stirred and dried the flour when it reached the top of the mill. Prior to Evans’ invention, a miller’s helper called a hopper boy would manually rake the flour in the mill’s upper story.

Evans had his automated mill patented in 1790. He receiving one of the first U.S. patents although the new system didn’t catch on right away. In 1790, Evans moved from Newport to Wilmington hoping to promote his milling machine to mill operators along the Brandywine. Eventually, a prominent local miller, Joseph Tatnall, installed Evans milling system and found that the efficiency of the automated milling operation saved him an estimated $37,000 in one year. After Tatnall, other millers followed suit along the Brandywine and throughout the eastern United States. “By 1790,” according to Hunter Research, “annual production of the Brandywine mills amounted to 54,154 barrels annually. Merchant milling was second only to lumbering as the most profitable industry in 18th century America.”

Paper Milling

Paper mills also dominated in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century New Castle County. Until a paper-making machine was invented by Brandywine paper manufacturer Thomas Gilpin in 1817, which produced paper in continuous rolls, paper was made by hand, one sheet at a time. According to Harold B. Hancock, the process of making paper began as “cotton and linen rags were sorted, washed, and macerated into fine shreds in a chemical solution. The resulting pulp was stored in a stuff chest for later use. For the next operation the four essential utensils were a vat, molds, felts, and a press, and the three principal operators were a vatman, coucher, and layman.” Hancock continued:

A vatman quickly and briefly submerged the mold in the pulp, which had been drained into a vat. The coucher removed the deckle from the mold and couched or laid the wet paper upon a woolen felt. Vatman and coucher worked together in unison until a post of 144 sheets of paper, each interleaved with a felt, had

34 Hunter Research, “Pike Creek,” ch. 4.
been built upon the coucher’s tray. The post of paper was then pressed in a screw press, and a layman separated the paper from the felts. Another pressing often followed. Spurs of paper of four or five sheets thickness were hung over ropes in a drying loft, and then the individual sheets were separated. Animal parings soaked in water usually provided the sizing to make the paper resistant to liquids. At a later period the paper was sometimes “hot pressed” between metal cylinders.\(^{35}\)

In Beaver Valley, John Farra’s Sunnydale Paper Mill began operation in 1811. It began first as a woolen mill, then, after a fire, converted to a paper mill and produced manila. By 1860, the paper mill passed from John Farra’s son Daniel to Francis Tempest, his son-in-law. Edward Garrett purchased the paper mill in 1901. In 1927, an official of the Curtis Paper Company acquired and operated it under the name of Beaver Valley Paper Company and made tissue.\(^{36}\) The Curtis Paper Company was based in Newark, Delaware, and operated until 1997. The Sunnydale/Beaver Valley Paper Mill was on the north side of Beaver Creek and Beaver Dam Road in Pennsylvania.

**Mining**

Feldspar, mica, and kaolin mining flourished in northern Delaware from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. Feldspar and kaolin were used to produce glazing material for fine china and porcelain. Mica was used for insulation in the production of ceramics.\(^{37}\) These materials were collected from shallow pit quarries. One such quarry known as Woodlawn Quarry is in the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract area just north of Ramsey Road along Ramsey Run and was active from 1850 to 1910. According to the Delaware Geological Survey, “there were many feldspar quarries or spar pits as they were commonly called scattered throughout the Delaware Piedmont in the early eighteen hundreds. The feldspar recovered from this spar pit was transported by horse and wagon to a factory in Philadelphia where it was used for making porcelain products such as dishes, figurines, false teeth, or sinks. The quarry eventually closed because machinery made other sites more accessible.”\(^{38}\) The Woodlawn Quarry is clearly visible in a wooded area on the former Ramsey Farm north of Ramsey Road. The quarry is a round deep pit that is currently filled with water. There is plenty of mica debris around the area and along the edge of the pit. There are other depressions around the site and piles of slag and other mining evidence.

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The industries described above were all represented along Beaver Creek in the Woodlawn section of First State National Historical Park. In the larger environs along the Brandywine there are significant “firsts,” notably Oliver Evan’s revolutionary automated milling machine that dramatically advanced the flour milling industry and the Thomas Gilpin paper making machine that revolutionized the paper making industry. Collectively, the Beaver Valley industries are reflective of the importance of eighteenth- and early- nineteenth century innovation as well as the development of manufacturing and its significance to Delaware’s early history.

Roads and Bridges

Although it lies outside and to the east of Beaver Valley and the First State National Historical Park boundary, the Concord Pike, also known as US Route 202, is an important highway bisecting Brandywine Hundred. The Wilmington and Great Valley Turnpike Company, chartered on January 23, 1811, built the toll road along the path of the earlier Concord Road. The road led from Wilmington through Brandywine Hundred and Concord Township in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, to West Chester and the Great Valley of southeastern Pennsylvania. The State of Delaware encouraged private turnpike companies to undertake road improvements to facilitate transportation of agricultural products from the farmlands of southeastern Pennsylvania and Delaware to the port and industries of Wilmington. In the 1930s, the road became US Route 202.

The first road through Beaver Valley appears to have been Beaver Valley Road, which was surveyed in 1751. The road led from Chandler’s Run/Beaver Creek to the Concord Road (US Route 202) and on to Naamans Creek Landing. There were subsequent petitions, surveys, and court-approved realignments of the road to make it straighter and more direct in 1797–1798. Despite the 1751 date for the petition and survey of the road that is mentioned in the road records, H. John Michel Jr. and Pam Rizzo indicate that Beaver Valley Road was initially laid out in 1712. They quote a survey record, but there is no citation for its source or location. If the land in Beaver Valley was claimed and being developed in the 1720s, there likely would have been some sort of road to provide access. As colonists established farms and mills, roads that were not formally surveyed but nevertheless present provided access to markets and suppliers in Wilmington, New Castle, and Philadelphia.

41 “Road Papers, Brandywine Hundred,” RG 2805, Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.
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In December 1814, New Castle County Court approved two sections of road. The first section was a part of today’s Smith Bridge Road from a point east of the Brandywine in a northeasterly direction to the arc line. The second section extended from the arc line in a southeasterly direction following today’s Ridge Road then turned northeast on the route of today’s Beaver Dam Road to its intersection with the arc line. Smith’s Bridge was built in 1816, destroyed in a flood in 1822, and rebuilt in 1828. A map of New Castle County from 1820 shows only today’s Beaver Valley Road, Beaver Dam Road, and Ridge Road in the Beaver Valley area.

Creek Road from Smith’s Bridge Road to Beaver Dam Road was laid out in 1846. It ran from Isaac Smith’s mill, which was located just south of Smith’s Bridge Road on the east side of the Brandywine, and passed Smith’s house, which still stands on the east side of Creek Road, south to intersect with Farra’s Road. Farra’s Road was the original name of what is today Beaver Dam Road. Farra’s Road led from the Brandywine Creek fording place to Farra’s (Farrow’s) mill on Beaver Creek. Creek Road followed Smith’s mill race and passed mostly through Smith’s land to its junction with Farra’s Road. Farra’s Road continued down along the creek to Hollingsworth’s or Harvey’s Ford, later Ely’s Ford. In 1846, a new road was laid out from near the ford southward to Young’s Bridge, which is the remainder of Creek Road that is today a trail.

Ramsey Road is probably contemporary with Creek Road. It appears on the 1849 map of Brandywine Hundred in essentially its current form. Thompson’s Bridge Road is neither shown on the 1849 map nor an atlas map from 1869, but it does appear on an 1881 map of New Castle County.

Settlements and Housing: An Eighteenth-Nineteenth Century Quaker Community

While the Swedes and Finns established settlements and built houses in the three lower Delaware counties, there are no known existing examples from the seventeenth century. Most of what we see today, especially in Beaver Valley, was built by English Quakers who dominated the population by the mid-eighteenth century. The Swedes settled near Fort Christina and along the Christina River as well as near Fort Casimir at New

43 “Road Papers, Brandywine Hundred,” RG 2805, Delaware Public Archives.
45 1820 New Castle County Map, State Map Collection, 1820–1968, Delaware Counties, New Castle County, 479594, Delaware Public Archives.
46 “Road Papers, Brandywine Hundred.”
47 “Road Papers, Brandywine Hundred.”

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Castle, yet little or no standing architecture reflects those early settlements. According to one archeological report, little information has been gleaned from underground remnants of the early sites either: “The archaeological record of early Swedish settlement is a complete blank, and that of the Dutch period exceedingly sparse.” The oldest known Dutch dwelling still in existence in Delaware is First State National Park’s Ryves Holt House in Lewes, which is believed to date from the seventeenth century.

The imprint on the landscape today, then, is essentially English or Irish Quaker. The Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract unit of First State National Historical Park was settled later than areas along the Delaware and Christina Rivers. The first establishments in Beaver Valley were along Beaver Creek where colonists developed farms and mills in the early to mid-eighteenth century. Many of the Quaker colonists came from England or Ireland and attended the Centreville Meeting and other nearby Quaker meetings in Chester and Delaware counties in Pennsylvania. According to research by local historians Michel and Rizzo who have conducted extensive research into the history of Beaver Valley, these colonists were “a tightly knit group of immigrant Irish and English Quaker families—the Harlins [Harlan], Dixons, Hollingsworths, and Chadsys, among them through the Centre, Concord, Birmingham, Kennett and New Garden Meetings.” For the most part they were yeomen farmers, that is, people of the middling sort and land owners but not members of the gentry.

The first lands taken up appear to have been those that bordered one or another branch of Beaver Creek, presumably with the thought of establishing mills and providing water for pasture and meadows. Second in desirability, although perhaps best suited for the long-term, were those lands that bordered the Great Road and were situated on relatively level ground with easy access to transportation and markets. Finally, the lands that bordered the geological valley itself with steep slopes and wet soils were the least desirable and left in woodlands the longest.

Colonists acquired farms and lands of 100–300 acres and grew crops, mostly the grains wheat and corn. The focus on grain agriculture fostered the development of grist and flour mills along Beaver Valley’s waterways, particularly Beaver Creek. Coming with the grain mills were saw mills and also fulling mills that processed woolen cloth. In the eighteenth century, most clothing in the Pennsylvania-Delaware-Maryland region was made from wool or linen or a combination of the two called linsey-woolsey. Thus, producing and processing wool was an important industry. Paper mills also shared water power

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52 Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley,” 10.
53 Paula S. Reed, Tillers of the Soil: A History of Agriculture in Mid Maryland (Frederick, MD: Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, 2011), 12.
from Beaver Creek in the eighteenth century. As such, the agricultural landscape spawned industries that depended on and interacted with the surrounding settlements.

Farms were typically divided into agricultural fields, meadows, and woodlots. The agricultural fields produced grain—mostly rye, wheat, and oats—to feed humans and livestock and to be processed and sold at the local merchant mills. Corn (maize) was also grown as feed for livestock and ground into meal for humans. Meadows provided pasture and hay. A general belief in the eighteenth century held that about fifty acres under cultivation were required to sustain a family. Woodlots might have been used as pasture, a practice that was common in the eighteenth century. This type of pasturage kept the understory of the forested area down and provided good forage for hogs, cattle, and sheep. Woodlots yielded construction materials, shingles, fencing, and fuel. The average household burned ten cords of wood a year for heat, although large amounts of wood were also required for fencing and as building material. Most farmed fields ranged between ten and fifteen acres in Pennsylvania and Maryland, which is what a farmer and a team of horses or oxen could work in a day. As a result, the tillable acreage was fairly small.\(^{54}\) The early farms were quite sustainable and had enough acreage to provide subsistence for the farm family and their livestock, plus commercial crops to sell. Unlike some other areas of Pennsylvania and Maryland, however, the Beaver Valley farms became reduced in size with divisions among heirs or upon the death of an owner until tract sizes were so small that they were no longer sustainable.

In their Beaver Valley research, Michel and Rizzo found the following trends in agriculture by roughly 1725: Most all land had been taken up; the earliest structures were replaced by more permanent and substantial housing; fields had been cleared and fenced; meadows established; boundaries surveyed and sometimes marked by fence rows and trees; and at least one and possibly two mills were operating. By 1800, all of the lands were under cultivation except for those that remained in woodlands on the steepest slopes and the wettest grounds. The number of mills had grown to at least three and possibly four. Over roughly the next fifty years, the population grew steadily, the number of mills increased, houses, barns, and cart and wagon sheds were built and rebuilt, and the Valley’s farms focused increasingly on the production of butter.\(^{55}\)

There are several surviving eighteenth-century homesteads in the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract. According to Michel and Rizzo, “five dwellings from the years 1725 to 1752 survive. A sixth is sufficiently well described in the 1798 Direct Tax to allow reasonable conjecture as to its form and date of construction.”\(^{56}\) These oldest surviving dwellings include:

1. The Hicklin House, about 1725 [not in FRST];

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\(^{54}\) Reed, *Tillers of the Soil*, 18.

\(^{55}\) Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley.”

\(^{56}\) Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley,” 16.
Developing the Brandywine and Beaver Valley Landscape

2. A hall and parlor stone house dated 1752 on the portion of the Hicklin property conveyed to Joshua Hicklin in 1801 (later Talley and Twaddle) [701 Beaver Valley Road; William Hicklin grant];

3. The Green Mill House, about 1740 [800 Beaver Valley Road?];

4. A brick hall parlor house appearing to date from about 1730 at the corner of Beaver Valley and Beaver Dam Roads on the north side of the road [137 Beaver Valley Road; Chandler, 1773?];

5. The stone hall parlor house on the “William Green” property; 140 Beaver Valley Road, about 1767? (HSRD, 2014); 1825? (Michel Display, Concord Twp. Hist. Soc.); and

6. A plank 18’ x 34’ house on the Robert Green property described (in addition to the 33’ x 30’ house) in the 1798 Direct Tax.

Two of the early dwellings were built of plank, one of brick, and the remaining three of stone.\(^57\)

These farmsteads were all developed by Quaker families, including Green, Hicklin, Chandler, Newlin, and Tally.

In 1711, Centre Meeting was established on Centre Meeting Road, a mile or so across the Brandywine in Delaware. The following year, Joseph Robinson, son of a first generation Irish immigrant, married Elizabeth Harlan of that Meeting and began constructing a mill on Buck Run near the Pennsylvania State line. A year later, Joseph was issued a Deed for 159 acres, including the mill lands . . . .

In 1712, also, Sarah Green, wife of Thomas Green, who had arrived with his father and mother in 1684, purchased the 150 acres patented by William Cloud in 1684. Later that same year, the land was described by an observer as “Thomas Green’s.” Over the next decade, most of the Valley’s lands would be acquired, typically in blocks of between 150 and 200 acres and settled shortly after their acquisition. When William Hicklin purchased 180 acres in 1723 from the Pennsylvania Land Company, the initial process of settlement was largely completed, although a few parcels remained in the hands of the proprietor or provincial investors.\(^58\)

Beaver Valley or Chandler’s Hollow were names used to describe the entire area drained by Beaver Creek. Chandler’s Hollow reflects ownership of the Chandler family in the nineteenth century. The hamlet known as Chandler’s Hollow or Beaver Valley was a small crossroads village with a store, blacksmith shop, and post office. It became the nucleus of the surrounding countryside and carried the same name as the surrounding area and grew at the intersection of

\(^57\) Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley,” 16.
\(^58\) Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley,” 8.
Beaver Valley Road, Beaver Dam Road, and Beaver Creek. The earliest detailed map of the area from 1849 shows the cluster of buildings along the north side of Beaver Valley Road located east of Beaver Dam Road and south of the creek. The map notes Tally and Claud’s Store along Beaver Valley Road.

The next detailed map was published in 1868. It shows the hamlet with a store and post office, a shoe shop, and a wagon and blacksmith shop. Nearby residents were Jonathan Chandler and H. Chandler. An 1881 map identifies a store and post office and adjacent residents Jonathan Chandler and H. Chandler, although they are linked to different properties than those in 1868.

According to J. Thomas Scharf’s 1888 History of Delaware, Beaver Valley was a hamlet on Beaver Run, also known as Chandler’s Hollow. It was known for its numerous mill sites. Although the stream was small, it had substantial fall and provided good power. A reduction in the water in the stream caused the milling operations to decline. Scharf reported that a woolen mill was in operation above the hamlet in the 1830s. Just downstream, Daniel Ferris (also Ferra and Farra) developed a mill that Frank Tempes (Tempest) operated by the 1880s and made manila paper. Next downstream was a woolen mill where Stephen Broadbent manufactured Turkey (knotted pile) carpets. After that, the building was used as a clover mill. By about 1860, it was used as a plow factory by William Morrison, Amor Jeffries, Horace Mousley, and others. Water power operated a trip hammer to manufacture the plows. Joseph Brinton and Isaac Smith had flour mills close to the confluence with Brandywine Creek. At the time of Scharf’s study, William P. Talley operated the flour mill, which served more as a local convenience than as a commercial operation.

Scharf noted that Armor Chandler had the first store in Beaver Valley. Following Chandler were Charles and Martin Palmer in 1835, and, subsequently, Lewis Talley who also manufactured shoes in connection with the store. John Chandler also had a store, which after 1876 was operated by A. H. Chandler. These store keepers were also postmasters for the area. At the time, according to Scharf, “The hamlet ha[d] about a dozen houses and shops.”

As flour milling waned in importance, dairy ascended, perhaps earlier in Beaver Valley than other places farther away from urban areas. Proximity to urban centers such as Philadelphia and Wilmington, and also New Castle, provided a ready market for fresh milk, butter, and cheese. It appears that butter was produced more than cheese in Beaver Valley. A similar pattern occurred farther to the west in Pennsylvania and Maryland after competition from Midwestern flour milling diminished commercial flour production in the Piedmont and Great Valley areas. There, farmers likewise turned to dairy and produced prodigious amounts of butter. Farmers converted and enlarged their grain barns to dairy use and maintained herds of up to twenty cows, which was the approximate number that a

60 Scharf, History of Delaware, 2:907.
family farm could support. The large quantities of butter produced allowed for shipping of the product as butter was less perishable than milk.

According to Michel and Rizzo, the steady development of the Beaver Valley cultural landscape began to falter after 1850:

In the last quarter of the 19th century all of the mills closed, the victims of natural disaster, inadequate capitalization, poor operations and of the limitations of the creek’s water power and the development of larger scale industrialization that produced cheaper products. Not too long after, agriculture ceased to be a viable occupation for all but a few. With soils that were limited, with a topography that was difficult to manage, with farms that had been subdivided over the course of the 18th century into parcels that were insufficient to amortize the capital costs of modern agriculture, they too ceased to operate.\(^{61}\)

After the turn of the twentieth century, abandoned mills fell into ruin while the Woodlawn Trustees purchased the farm remnants for conservation (see Chapter 1.4). “It is as if they and the society and economy that they once nourished had been placed in a time capsule.”\(^{62}\)

The original houses, support buildings, and mills of the earliest colonists are for the most part gone from the landscape, except possibly as components of larger later buildings. According to Michel and Rizzo, five houses (or house components) survive from the 1725–1752 period. Two of these were built of plank, one of brick, and two of stone.\(^{63}\) There are later houses from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, of stone construction and more recent dwellings, including vernacular representations of Victorian Gothic architecture, American Foursquare, and Bungalow/Bungaloid houses. In addition to the houses were an array of outbuildings, including barns and domestic and agricultural support buildings.

With the relatively small number of livestock on farms in the eighteenth century, barns were small. Larger barns came with the expansion of livestock in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Several barns survive on the Beaver Valley farmsteads. Most are frame bank barns resting on stone foundations with forebays. The forebays may be extended or recessed. One barn at 140 Beaver Valley Road is stone-ended with framed gables and an extended forebay (See Appendix II for the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract Cultural Resource Inventory).

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\(^{63}\) Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley,” 17n20. The surviving dwellings are: The Hicklin [also spelled Hicklen] House (approximately 1725) [located outside of the NPS Boundary], a second hall parlor stone house dated 1752 on the portion of the Hicklin property conveyed to Joshua Hicklin in 1801; the Green Mill House (approximately 1740), a brick hall parlor house appearing to date from about 1730 at the corner of Beaver Valley and Beaver Dam Roads on the north side of the road; the stone hall parlor house on the “William Green” property discussed above; and a plank 18 foot by 34 foot house on the Robert Green property described (in addition to the 33 foot by 30 foot house) in the 1798 Direct Tax.
Other outbuildings common in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were spring houses, wagon houses, smoke houses, hay houses, and corn cribs. Kitchens that were separate buildings from the dwelling house were also listed among outbuildings. Another type of outbuilding that appears to have been fairly common in Beaver Valley, but less so in other areas of the mid-Atlantic, were “chair houses.”64 A “chair” was a light weight, one-horse, two-wheeled vehicle that was similar to a sulky, essentially a chair on wheels.65 Presumably a chair house was a building where these vehicles were stored. Cart houses are also listed in early records. Cart house may be another term for chair house.

A number of sites of former occupation survive only as ruins or archeological features. Mostly these are mill sites along Beaver Creek and associated buildings and dwellings. None of the industries remain intact along Beaver Creek, but there are a few wall segments and remnants of raceways and ponds. Other ruins are scattered throughout Beaver Valley.

In the urban and suburban environment that surrounds Philadelphia and Wilmington, Beaver Valley stands out as a protected area. Today’s landscape essentially preserves its appearance from the nineteenth century as a result of the conservation vision of Wilmington industrialist William Poole Bancroft. Under his direction, the Woodlawn Trustees have been the stewards of the rural landscape since the early twentieth century. Though some of the land has grown up in forest with less pasture and cropland, it continues largely in agricultural production or as horse farms and equestrian facilities occupied by leaseholders. Significantly, commercial and residential development in the area has not overtaken the Beaver Valley landscape and is checked by the Woodlawn Trustees’ mission to provide “wise planning” and ample open space for the expanding city of Wilmington.

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64 Michel and Rizzo, “Beaver Valley,” 19.
The machine tender who is able to raise his or her eyes from the whirring monster which requires such lavish attention to the peaceful beauties of nature, drinks in life and strength from the view.

—Budgett Meakin, 1905

William Poole Bancroft, the son of a Quaker immigrant and successful cotton mill industrialist, left a legacy of “the peaceful beauties of nature” in and around his home city of Wilmington, Delaware. Building on the foundation of his Quaker faith and substantial wealth from the family’s milling business, Bancroft felt an obligation to help improve the lives of his Wilmington neighbors. His intellectual curiosity, innate business sense, and unwavering commitment to his vision led Bancroft and his Woodlawn corporations to be the charitable purveyors of carefully planned park and housing developments that would affect Wilmington citizens from all walks of life.

The Bancroft–Woodlawn story represents some of the earliest progressive experiments in quality low-income housing and careful, wise planning for future city expansion in the United States. Perhaps more importantly, the Bancroft–Woodlawn story is a confirmation of the import role of public parks in the lives of all citizens. Whether low-income city dwellers or suburban residents, or those who traverse the trails or picnic on the banks of Brandywine Creek, the beauty of “the Valley” and its significant cultural landscape is preserved for all to share because of Bancroft’s vision and the work of the Woodlawn Trustees.

**William Poole Bancroft: His Family and Religious Foundations**

Joseph Bancroft, father of William Poole Bancroft, was born in 1803. He was the youngest of three sons of John Bancroft, a furniture manufacturer and lumber dealer in Manchester, England. At age fourteen, Joseph was apprenticed to his uncle, Jacob Bright, at his cotton mill in Rochdale. At the conclusion of his apprenticeship in 1824, young Joseph immigrated to the United States to join his father and brothers at their recently established woolen mill on Brandywine Creek near Wilmington, Delaware. Three years later, the

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Bancroft manufactory moved to Pennsylvania. Nonetheless, Joseph Bancroft was determined to use the knowledge gained during his apprenticeship to establish his own cotton milling business. In 1828, he returned to Wilmington. In 1831, he founded the Bancroft Mill on the Brandywine.

The Bancroft family’s ancestral Manchester home was located in Lancashire in the British Midlands. It was there that Quakerism in Britain grew with the founding activities of George Fox in the mid-seventeenth century and became the most active. The Bancroft and Bright families were steeped in the Quaker philosophy of intentional, faith-directed living. Joseph Bancroft’s younger cousin, John Bright, who also apprenticed in his father’s mill, became a well-known reformer in English politics, was a champion of free trade and founder of the Anti-Corn League aimed at abolishing the restrictive “Corn Laws.” Joseph Bancroft himself became known as an advocate for reunification of the then-divided Quaker faith. Bancroft’s belief in the basic Quaker tenant of “Universal love” found its greatest manifestation in charity:

Universal love is that without which men cannot profitably meet together for the worship of God; neither for the proper and needful exercise of godly care or discipline to the help one of another; nor be joined together in meetings; in which joining of men consists that manifestation of God in the flesh which is the body of Jesus Christ in substance, the Church of the living God: wherein “abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

Joseph Bancroft’s influential book, *A Persuasive to Unity*, was initially published two months before his death in 1874. In 1877, it was reprinted and widely distributed for free, as per his bequest, by his son William Poole Bancroft.

Quakers have a saying, “Let your life speak,” in which the faithful humbly and without fanfare imbue every aspect of their life with their faith, particularly through acts of charity. Joseph Bancroft lived his Quaker faith even in the operation of his cotton mills on the Brandywine. From its establishment in 1831, Bancroft’s mill complex was at the forefront of providing equitable living conditions for the company’s laborers. In an age of rapidly expanding industrial development, squalid conditions for common laborers were a

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4 “Preface,” Bancroft, *A Persuasive to Unity*. This was dated 1878 and written by William P. Bancroft.

growing problem, which was often identified with the oppressive “company store” and tightly packed company housing. Joseph Bancroft sought to alleviate many of those problems by deemphasizing the company’s role in the worker’s personal lives, here described by Stuart Campbell:

He disliked the more egregious examples of “company town” paternalism because such practices discouraged the workers’ personal dignity and responsibility. Therefore, from the first week of operation in 1831, he paid his people weekly in cash. No company store, with its attendant evils, was established. Workers’ wives were encouraged to shop in town and a company wagon was dispatched to carry bulky articles… . In the same vein, he encouraged the laborer’s self-sufficiency by providing plots suitable for small gardens near their homes.  

In the 1850s, Bancroft added a school and library to the mill complex. As a humble pioneer of early American industrialist experiments with what would later be termed “Welfare Work” (for the welfare of workers), he likely considered his innovations just simply fair treatment of fellow human beings.

This lesson was not lost on his eldest son, William Poole Bancroft. Born in 1835 at the family’s Rockford home on Brandywine Creek, William Bancroft bore witness to his father’s conscientious relationship with his workers whose company-built homes formed several villages on the Rockford property. At the tender age of seven, William Bancroft began to work part time at his father’s mill. In 1849, at age fourteen, he began his seven-year apprenticeship at the mill. William was joined by his brother Samuel several years later. William and Samuel became partners in their father’s milling business in 1865 when the company was renamed Joseph Bancroft and Sons. When Joseph Bancroft died in 1874, his two sons took on the responsibility of the company’s management. The business prospered, largely due to Samuel Bancroft’s focus on the technical advancement of the cotton finishing process. Though William Bancroft remained an active participant in the administration of the mills, by 1880, his interests were drawn to the improvement of the lives of the “common steady working laborer.”

William P. Bancroft grew up immersed in the Quaker (Friends) community. He attended a Friends school in Wilmington and was a birth-right member of the Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends. Many of Wilmington’s leading businessmen were also members, including Bancroft’s cousin William M. Canby, president of the Wilmington Savings Fund Trust, as well as hardware merchant Thomas Garrett, who in the 1840s was an ardent

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abolitionist and Underground Railroad conductor. William Bancroft was also active in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for which he served as clerk for a number of years. His work in disseminating his father’s book, *A Persuasive to Unity*, put him in direct communication with the population of Friends located throughout the jurisdictions of the Yearly Meetings in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, Genesee, and Canada.

William Bancroft’s early forays into philanthropy focused on education not only for the Quaker community but also for the African American communities in Delaware, which was a former “slave state.” The Delaware Association for the Moral Improvement and Education of Colored People was formed after the Civil War and assumed the role previously filled by the African School Society, which was established in 1809. According to an entry in Bancroft’s 1909 journal, the Delaware Association successfully expanded African American schools throughout the state:

> The Association received very considerable contributions from individuals, and received funds from the Freedmen’s Bureau. Under it I think over thirty schools were carried on in the state.

Bancroft noted in his journal that, in 1873, he and other members of the Association were asked to join the African School Society to prevent that organization’s demise, observing, “I have been Secretary of it ever since.”

William Bancroft also provided financial support to a number of Quaker schools, including the Wilmington Friends School and the George School. Bancroft also supported nearby Quaker colleges, Swarthmore and Haverford, and even contributed to the Settlement for Religious Study at Woodbrooke in England, a project sponsored by fellow Quaker industrialist, George Cadbury.

Most of William Bancroft’s philanthropic endeavors were local in scope and confined to helping members of his extended family, friends, and the greater Wilmington community, which he described as “my neighbors.” As former Woodlawn Trustees employee, A. Stanley Ayers, recalled:

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8 See Herbert Standing, “Delaware Quaker Records: Early Members of Wilmington Meeting” (self-published manuscript, 1921), accessed April 11, 2017, https://archive.org/details/delawarequakerre00stan; “History of the Wilmington Friends Monthly Meeting,” Wilmington Monthly Meeting of Friends, accessed April 11, 2017, www.wilmingtonquakersfriendsmeeting.org/history.htm. When Garrett was convicted in 1848 for aiding fugitive enslaved people, the heavy fine imposed compelled him to auction off his business and personal property. Many members of the Wilmington Monthly Meeting purchased the items, “allowing him to use it and buy it back when he could.” Years later Emma Bancroft, wife of William P. Bancroft, purchased Garrett’s sofa at a rummage sale “promising to return it to the Garrett family upon her death.” Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 15. Mary Cadwalader Dickinson, wife of John Dickinson signer of the Declaration of Independence, was also a member there in the eighteenth century. Dickinson and his wife are buried there.


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[Bancroft] felt a rather special debt or obligation to the people of Wilmington and vicinity, all of whom he considered his neighbors. This feeling was partly due to his love of the Brandywine Creek Valley which had been despoiled in the Kentmere Rockford area by the Bancroft Mills.  

William Bancroft’s love of the Brandywine Valley landscape and his underlying feeling of responsibility to his Wilmington neighbors was the genesis of perhaps his greatest contribution to the community, the development of the city’s public parks.

**Bancroft’s Early Community Planning Work, 1880–1901**

When William Penn laid out his town of Philadelphia in 1681, he intentionally included green spaces in his plan, both as public squares and in the then-roomy private lots (Figure 17). His city design, including the use of public open space, is said to reflect the “Quaker ideals” of “religious, racial, and gender equality.” Philadelphia’s rapid expansion through the nineteenth century outpaced many of Penn’s Quaker ideals, but the concept of public open space remained an expression of equality among the city’s classes, if not the races, through the nineteenth century and into the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century. Frederick Law Olmsted’s Central Park in the center of New York City is a carefully designed public landscape laid out in the center of New York City beginning in 1857. It continues to be used by New Yorkers and visitors of all kinds. Olmsted believed deeply in the egalitarian aspect of the public park. As he wrote in his 1858 “Plan for the Park”:

> It is one of the great purposes of the Park to supply to the hundreds of thousands of tired workers, who have no opportunity to spend their summers in the country, a specimen of God’s handiwork that shall be to them, inexpensively, what a month or two in the White Mountains or the Adirondacks is, at great cost, to those in easier circumstances.

Olmsted and his design partner, Calvert Vaux, were at the forefront of public park design. The call for dedicated public parks in cities across the nation followed soon after the construction of Central Park.

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In Wilmington, a group of citizens proposed the creation of a public park along Brandywine Creek in 1869. The vacant creekfront land located along the city’s expanding northern boundary had long been a “favorite local picnic area.”15 Wilmington financier Joshua T. Heald and U.S. Senator Thomas F. Bayard formed the core of an unofficial five-man committee to “study the proposal”:

The committeemen, charmed by the idea of a Brandywine Park, drew up an elaborate plan for the site, including a playground “with mazes and labyrinths, miniature lakes pleasant for rowing in the summer and skating in the winter” and even a small zoo. They reported enthusiastically that a park would raise land values throughout the city and would help to improve “the culture, taste and morals of the community.” “Those who have faith in the future of Wilmington . . . expect to see here a large and thickly populated city,” they said. “Even now, in all the built up portions of the town, we have not a single Public Square, not a place where the mothers with their children, or the aged people can stroll, away from the noise and dust of the city, without being trespassers.”16

Most Wilmington citizens, however, were less enthusiastic about the public park idea. According to Wilmington historian Carol Hoffecker, residents cited the likelihood of higher taxes as their primary concern. Although the 1869 Brandywine Park proposal failed,

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16 Hoffecker cites “Report of A Committee of Citizens to the City Council on the Subject of a Public Park for the City of Wilmington” (Wilmington, Del., 1869). See Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 73–74.
the Wilmington City Council established an official “public park committee.” During its
tenure through the 1870s, however, the committee appears to have accomplished nothing.\textsuperscript{17}

Apparently, William P. Bancroft was not directly involved in these early attempts to
create a public park in Wilmington. Instead, he was involved in the 1870s push to improve
the city’s water system. By 1881, Bancroft also inserted himself into a renewed push for
public park development. In a March 1881 letter to the E. I. du Pont de Nemours Company,
Bancroft began:

\begin{quote}
I have another project for the benefit of the people of Wilmington. It is land, not
water this time. The city is growing to a considerable size, with scarcely any
provision for parks or open spaces of any kind—except cemeteries.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Bancroft’s ideas for public parks were likely influenced by the success of Olmsted’s
designs in other cities and apparently had been thinking about the problem in Wilmington
for some time (Figure 18). He continued in his letter to du Pont:

\begin{quote}
I have often thought that if I should be able I would like to do something for the
benefit of my neighbors in this way. The Thompson farm is for sale; and I have
thought that if it, and the Law place, could be reserved for that purpose, it
would perhaps be as desirable as anything else that could be done.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

The two farms, noted Bancroft, were outside the then-current city boundary
located between the Bancroft and DuPont mills. “And by the time the city is large enough
for a park to be of some importance,” he wrote, “it perhaps have grown around two miles
of these places.” Bancroft suggested donations of cash, or building lots (land) to generate
cash for the purchase of the farms. Though he did not directly ask for a donation from du
Pont, he offered $5,000 of his own money toward the project “and perhaps considerably
more if it should seem necessary.” Bancroft concluded his letter with a gentle suggestion:
“It is a daydream with me … that sometime some of your ground on the other side of the
creek, and some adjoingit lower down, can be used in the same way.”\textsuperscript{20} The letter apar-
rently never received a response.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] David Collins, “Preservation Profile: Brandywine & Rockford Parks, Sites Worthy of Historic Designation,” in
Michael C. Hahn, “Documentation of Adverse Effect and Memorandum of Agreement … for Rehabilitation of
State Bridge No. 698, Van Buren Street Bridge Located in Brandywine Park, Wilmington, New Castle County,
Delaware,” (Federal Highway Administration, 1997).
\item[18] William P. Bancroft to E. I. du Pont Co., March 4, 1881, Box 15, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. records,
Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE.
\item[19] Bancroft to du Pont, March 4, 1881.
\item[20] Bancroft to du Pont, March 4, 1881.
\end{footnotes}
As the owner of a rapidly expanding industrial mill complex, William Bancroft was keenly aware of the inevitable growth of the city’s population. By 1881, he had already determined that he would make public parks in Wilmington his mission. Bancroft made good on his promise to infuse his own money into the project when he personally purchased the Thompson and Law farms. He then offered the eighty-acre tract to the city “on the condition that the city add more contiguous land and administer the park through a nonpartisan commission.” In 1883, Bancroft invited prominent businessmen and government officials to meet and begin discussions about a future park system in the city. Bancroft and his “committee” sponsored the state legislation necessary to create the Wilmington Parks Commission, which again met with public resistance. In his remarks to the editor of the local newspaper *Every Evening*, J. Taylor Gause, a member of the committee and then-president of Harlan & Hollingsworth (builders of railcars and ships), remarked:

> I have watched to find the objections to the park scheme, and have yet to hear of but the single one, of increased taxation. If this consideration had been uppermost in the past we would never have had our water supply, our public

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21 Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 74.
schoolhouses, and the many other public improvements that have gone so far to make our city what it is.\textsuperscript{22}

According to Hoffecker, Gause “contended that the largest taxpayers in the city were united in support of the park proposal.”\textsuperscript{23} The bill passed and the Wilmington Board of Park Commissioners was formed with a membership including “William P. Bancroft, George H. Bates, Thomas F. Bayard, Edward Betts, Francis N. Buck, George W. Bush, William M. Canby, Joseph L. Carpenter Jr., Henry A. du Pont, J. Taylor Gause, the mayor of Wilmington, the president and the chairman of the Finance Committee of the City Council, and the chief engineer of the Surveying Department.”\textsuperscript{24} William M. Canby, the highly respected amateur botanist and businessman and cousin of William Bancroft, was appointed president of the commission.

As President, Canby made the initial contact with the Central Park landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. On behalf of the commission, Canby invited Olmsted to view the Brandywine tract they intended to purchase and prepare a report of his findings.\textsuperscript{25} Following his visit on December 22, 1883, Olmsted’s “Report to the Park Commissioners” reiterated his philosophy of open space within the urban environment. Noting “that the artificial circumstances of a city, walls, windows, roofs, flags, pavements, plants in pots and gardens, all sorts of fabrics, and the constant evidence of work, intercourse, and traffic, gradually and insensibly have a waring and depressing effect,” Olmsted continued:

[\textit{W}e must reflect that to enjoy natural scenery we must not only have escaped from all these artificial circumstances, and from the confinement of vision by walls and roofs, but that that which engages our admiration is the reverse of artificial. It is the result of nature working in a large, free, generous, and spontaneous way. Thus it supplies not simply relief, but a diversion or counteracting influence.}\textsuperscript{26}

Olmsted found “Brandywine Glen” (today’s Brandywine Park), “a passage of natural scenery which to a larger city would be of rare value,” and urged the commission to “obtain public rights in the scenery of the Glen, to protect and rehabilitate this scenery, and provide suitably for the public use of it.”\textsuperscript{27} Olmsted considered all other parcels under consideration, including the one offered for free by Bancroft, to be “of secondary importance to that of recovering the Brandywine walk.”\textsuperscript{28} In June 1885, the Park Commission

\textsuperscript{22} Hoffecker implies that Gause’s remarks are significant, describing him as “unsentimental,” because Gause was known for his strict control over the company’s laborers. Hoffecker, \textit{Wilmington, Delaware}, 76, 137.

\textsuperscript{23} Hoffecker, \textit{Wilmington, Delaware}, 137.

\textsuperscript{24} Scharf, \textit{History of Delaware}, 2:671.

\textsuperscript{25} Chas. E. Beveridge et al., eds., \textit{The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted: vol. 8, The Early Boston Years, 1882–1890} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 183.

\textsuperscript{26} Beveridge et al., \textit{Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted}, 180.

\textsuperscript{27} Beveridge et al., \textit{Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted}, 182.

\textsuperscript{28} Beveridge et al., \textit{Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted}, 182.
published the Olmsted report in the local newspaper, a move which apparently aided in their campaign to gain public approval for the purchase of land on both the north and south banks of Brandywine Creek.²⁹

In 1888, the smaller Bancroft tract became the city’s second public park called Rockford Park. Beginning in 1889, plans for the Kentmere Parkway were under discussion, which was a 150-foot wide, landscaped roadway that would connect the Rockford and Brandywine parks. William Bancroft communicated regularly with the F. L. Olmsted firm as the design of the parkway slowly took shape, particularly through Olmsted’s nephew and partner in the firm, John Charles (J. C.) Olmsted. The Olmsted’s involvement was limited to advisory while Wilmington businessman William M. Fields executed the blueprint design. Fields also donated part of the fourteen-acre strip. Bancroft too donated land for the parkway and apparently occasionally tweaked the blueprints sent to Olmsted for approval (Figure 19).³⁰

![Figure 19: 1895 Map of Wilmington. University of Delaware Special Collections.](image)

²⁹ Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 76. The report was published in *Every Evening*, June 26, 1885. The delay in publication was likely due to the need for an amendment to the Parks Commission enabling legislation to allow the city to borrow money for the purchase. Scharf, *History of Delaware*, 2:671.

³⁰ Bancroft to Olmsted letters 1889–1891, Box 19, Folder 13, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records, Hagley Museum and Library.
After 1889, when William and Samuel Bancroft incorporated their highly profitable Bancroft Mills Company, William Bancroft turned his energy and his fortune more intensively to his charitable interests. He remained deeply involved with the Wilmington Park Commission, serving as president of the commission from 1904 until the end of his tenure in 1922 (Figure 20). By the late 1890s, however, his interests began to expand into the growing national movement toward improving working-class housing.

![Figure 20: 1914 Map of Wilmington. University of Delaware Special Collections.](image)

**Progressive Era Community Planning**

In the United States, upper-class migration to designed subdivisions outside the city’s traditional neighborhoods began in the second half of the nineteenth century. Specifically planned for upper-class residents, these early developments often employed curvilinear street patterns, community parks, and lot restrictions. The subdivision plans embraced the design movement toward “natural” landscaping and healthy open space. Significant projects from this period include Llewellyn Haskell’s Llewellyn Park in New Jersey (1857) and Olmsted and Vaux’s Riverside, Illinois (1869). Yet as suburban design for the wealthy focused on large lots and healthy surroundings, most working-class housing suffered the degradations of industrialized locations and the speculative market.
U.S. government action to ensure “healthy” housing for the poor was limited to restrictive building codes, which improved building construction but did little to improve the environment in which low- and even middle-income families lived. In Europe and Great Britain, a more active government approach to meeting low-income housing needs was developing. Their approach was described as “constructive” rather than “restrictive” legislation, “including public housing, municipal land purchase, low-interest loans to individuals and limited-dividend companies, and tax exemptions.”

In Great Britain, planners were particularly influenced by the theories espoused by Ebenezer Howard. Howard’s social reform plan that he laid out in his 1898 treatise, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (republished in 1902 as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*), envisioned building planned satellite cities surrounded by an agricultural greenbelt, known as Garden Cities.

Ebenezer Howard’s own company, First Garden City Ltd., put his community-building theory into practice in 1903 with the construction of Letchworth located thirty-five miles north of London. Architects Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker designed Letchworth. The Letchworth experiment inspired others as well. In 1905, Henrietta Barnett, wife of an Anglican minister, enlisted Unwin to design a planned suburb of the city of London called Hampstead Garden. Her vision, here described by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, employed many of the Garden City principles:

She aimed to include a variety of classes as a community where the richer residents subsidised the rents of the poorer, and all lived in well-designed houses attractively grouped at low density and surrounded by gardens, bounded by hedges. There would be access to a variety of open spaces and the housing would be enhanced by the retention of significant areas of indigenous woodland, ancient hedgerows and mature Oak trees. Allotment gardens would be included in the layout to enable residents to grow their own food.

Howard’s second experimental city, Welwyn Garden City, was started in 1920 and located twenty miles north of London. Arnold Rowntree, nephew of Quaker chocolatier Joseph Rowntree and director of the family’s chocolate manufactory at the time, helped to finance the land purchase for Welwyn Garden City.

Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin’s planning theories and town-building experiments were pivotal for the future of city planning in Great Britain and the United

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States. However, they actually followed—and likely drew inspiration from—earlier industry-sponsored town designs aimed at improving worker and mixed-income housing in England. In about 1890, William H. Lever (of Lever Soap) began his workers village called Port Sunlight. A company-owned development immediately adjoining the factory grounds, the Port Sunlight plan placed housing around large blocks of garden “allotments.” George Cadbury, a Birmingham Quaker industrialist who was part owner of the Cadbury Brothers chocolate manufactory, began planning his “Bournville Model Village” in 1893. The Cadbury factory had recently been relocated several miles outside the city limits of Birmingham, which was at the time still surrounded by rural land. George Cadbury personally purchased a large tract adjoining the factory on which he constructed his village. According to Cadbury’s planning prospectus, the purpose of the Bournville Village was:

[T]o make it easy for working men to own houses with large gardens secure from the danger of being spoilt either by the building of factories or by interference with the enjoyment of sun, light, and air, [and] the speculator will not find a footing.37

In September 1901, Cadbury shared the genesis of his project and the results at a Garden City Conference held in Birmingham. In attendance were Ebenezer Howard, father of the Garden City movement, and Joseph Rowntree, fellow Quaker and chocolate manufacturer, who were also presenting papers.38 When asked about the interest accrued on the investment, Cadbury replied that Bournville “was a freehold handed over to trustees, and the whole of the income would go towards developing the idea.” This arrangement was later adopted by both Ebenezer Howard and Henrietta Barnett.

The residences in Bournville were open to anyone with Cadbury’s intention to build a mixed-income population. The village included shops, schools, churches, and parks surrounded by a belt of unimproved land. Scholars consider the 1893 Bournville “experiment” an influence on Ebenezer Howard’s 1898 Garden City theories. Bournville likewise influenced other British Quaker industrialists who developed their own housing experiments, including Joseph Rowntree’s New Earswick (1901) and James Reckitt’s Hull Garden Village (1907).39

Following Howard’s 1902 re-publication of his theories in Garden Cities of Tomorrow, British experiments with town building and the Garden City movement in general found footing in the United States after the turn of the twentieth century. In 1909,

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William Poole Bancroft and the Woodlawn Plan

Raymond Unwin published his own treatise, *Town Planning in Practice*, explaining his planning and design theory through the example of his Garden City designs. He followed up with speaking tours through the U.S., which served as a resource for American planners, architects, and landscape designers. At the same time, Daniel Burnham’s 1906 “Plan for Chicago” illustrated the potential for orderly city function and growth. New communities reflecting the influence of British theory and practice in carefully planned development included Forest Hills Gardens, New York (1909–1911), a privately funded community for low-income families, and Kingsport, Tennessee, designed by John Nolen (1915). Despite these advances, the majority of housing construction during this period was still based on speculative profit rather than careful planning and continued the sprawling expansion of cities where industrial employment was centered.40

**William Poole Bancroft’s Vision for Wilmington**

Into this developing matrix of philanthropy and professional planning theory stepped Quaker industrialist William Poole Bancroft. Bancroft’s work on the Wilmington water improvements and public park developments brought him in contact with the growing low-income housing issues in his home city of Wilmington. Like many other American cities, Wilmington had seen the upper-class residential flight to developments outside the inner city. The lay of the land along the Christina River defined the residential areas of Wilmington, here described by historian Carol Hoffecker:

> On either side of the Christina and particularly on the east side of Market Street the lands are flat, lowlying, and even marshy in places, while the land on the west side slowly rises to a high point that marks the watershed between the Brandywine and Christina, running along the course of modern-day Delaware Avenue westward from Tenth and Market streets. The high and healthful west side, more suitable as a residential area, attracted middle- and upper-middle-class home builders. Meanwhile, developers of working-class housing built row upon row of speculative two-story brick homes for the working class on the low, flat east side near the factory district.41

Through the 1860s, Wilmington financier Joshua T. Heald was involved in speculative development in both areas of the city that continued the geographic stratification of the city’s residents.

In 1860, Heald began the subdivision of the 176-acre Shallcross farm on the north-west edge of Wilmington. Located on the high ground along the Delaware Avenue grid, Heald ensured the success of this upper-class development by establishing The Wilmington City Railway. The Railway was a horse-drawn streetcar system leading from the city’s

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41 Hoffecker, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 51.
mercantile center to the northwestern suburb. The first wave of residents included many of the wealthiest Wilmingtonians who built elaborate Victorian-era mansions along the Delaware Avenue frontage. A second wave, brought in by the local design/build architectural firm of J. D. Seeds & Son in the 1880s and 1890s, expanded the subdivision with upper-middle-class residences. The large building lots with ‘natural’ landscaping, building restrictions, and set-backs certainly acknowledged the progressive ideals of natural and healthful surroundings. However, the developers did not adopt the curvilinear streets found in many contemporary suburbs; instead, they continued the city’s grid street system with no attempt to integrate lower-income dwellings.

The Shallcross tract sited on a low hill afforded a healthier climate relative to the marshy east side of the city where much of the industrial worker’s housing was already located.42 In 1866, Heald established the Christiana Improvement Company “for the purpose,” notes Hoffecker, “of promoting the maximum utilization of lands along the river”:

The company engaged in dredging and land-fill operations and bought unused land for the purpose of selling it for the erection of factories, commercial wharves, and working-class homes. Acting sometimes through the Christiana Improvement Company and sometimes as an independent real estate agent, Heald built many rows of working-class housing in this low, marshy region. Also in 1866 he bought a large tract south of the Christina River Bridge at Third Street where he erected rows of brick homes located to appeal to the men who were employed at various riverside factories in that area.43

Sanitary conditions in the eastside lowlands became an obvious concern, but the city’s expansion in all directions created strains on the water and septic systems, which prompted the city government’s first major public improvements.

Following William Bancroft’s initial foray into public reform with water and parks development in the 1880s, it appears that he immersed himself into the emerging social, political, and city-planning theories of the day through journal subscriptions, organization memberships, and attendance at professional conferences. He expanded his literary, scientific, and political horizons with subscriptions to The North American Review, Popular Science Monthly, and The Spectator.44 Bancroft remained grounded in Quaker principles with subscriptions to the Friends Weekly Intelligencer published in Philadelphia and The British Friend. Both journals covered Quaker religious topics, various meeting activities, and personal notes. Contributors also wrote articles about current Quaker

43 Hoffecker, Wilmington, Delaware, 55–57.
44 Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 16.
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philanthropic endeavors. Many focused on improvements in education and housing among the working poor in the U.S. and abroad.45

In the 1890s, William Bancroft joined the National Municipal League. This national gathering of local municipal organizations and individuals was established in 1894 in Philadelphia during the National Conference for Good City Government. Bancroft was elected to the Executive Committee of the National Municipal League in 1900 and also served on the Committee on Business Organizations and the Committee on Civic Alliance.46 It might have been through his League associations that Bancroft gained membership with the American Academy of Political and Social Science by 1901. Established in Philadelphia in 1889, the Academy was an academically oriented gathering of professors, professionals, and individuals seeking to expand their understanding of current social and political theory and practice. The Academy’s mission, in part, was to serve as “an intermediary between scientific thought and practical effort.”47

Beginning in 1897, the Academy held an annual meeting in Philadelphia at which scholarly lectures were presented around a unifying topic. In 1900, the topic centered on “Corporations and Public Welfare”—a topic that no doubt attracted the attention of William Bancroft.48

In 1902, Bancroft attended an Academy lecture on the “Housing Problem” presented by The Octavia Hill Association. It included a tour of “certain typical sections of Philadelphia in which the housing problem presents peculiar difficulties.”49 The presentation was published in the Academy’s journal, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, in July 1902.50 Hannah Fox and Helen Parrish founded The Octavia Hill Association in 1896. Formed as a stock corporation (income-producing), the Association was dedicated to the ownership and maintenance of improved low-income housing based in social reform ideals. Like William Bancroft, both Fox and Parrish were listed as members of the Academy in 1901. Both women were also Philadelphia Quakers who, like Bancroft, sought to improve the lives of their less-fortunate neighbors through “practical effort” and wise planning.

By 1901, William Bancroft began to apply his knowledge of planning theory into “practical effort.” Over the twenty years that Bancroft was involved in Wilmington public parks development, he purchased several hundred acres of vacant land intending to transfer the land to the city government for parkland. Public parks and parkways would continue to be an important component of Bancroft’s plan; however, his shift to incorporate current city planning theory required a new layer of administration for his philanthropic vision. As early as the summer of 1900, he discussed an alternate plan with his daughter, Sarah, then a student at Cambridge University in England. In a letter written in December 1900, Bancroft stated, “I am thinking very seriously about the matter mentioned this summer; that is transferring all, or nearly all, the real estate I own, except the home place, to a Corporation, the stock of which I would expect to divide among the Wilmington charities.”\(^{51}\) Apparently the two had also discussed the possibility of building low-income housing on one of the tracts: “If I should do this, the question of whether to build on the tract between Union Street and the B&O RR and 4th and 7th Streets will remain for consideration later.”\(^{52}\)

The specific area in question was part of a tract historically known as Woodlawn, which as late as April 1901 was still owned by the Wilmington Improvement Company.\(^{53}\) It was a triangular twenty-four-acre parcel located on the west side of Wilmington and bounded by the B&O Railroad tracks to the west, Union Street to the east, Lancaster Avenue to the south, and 9th Street to the north. In 1901, Bancroft followed through on his corporation idea and established The Woodlawn Company. It was so-named for the Woodlawn tract because, according Bancroft, “If it should be built on … it will perhaps be ultimately all that this Company will own and the name will be appropriate.”\(^{54}\) Bancroft formed the Woodlawn Company as a stock company overseen by five directors including himself as president. The Company would assume ownership of Bancroft’s accumulated land and oversee the use and distribution of the land for parks, planned city development, and housing “for the benefit of the people of Wilmington and its vicinity.”\(^{55}\) Local Wilmington charity groups were given company stock with the intention that the dividends

\(^{52}\) Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 21.
\(^{53}\) Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 22. It is not clear whether it was Bancroft or the Woodlawn Co. who purchased the tract, probably in 1901.
\(^{54}\) Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 22. Widell cites Correspondence, Bancroft to Roger and Sarah Clark, April 9, 1901, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
\(^{55}\) As cited in C. A. Beck, “The Hope of the Woodlawn Trustees,” 1922, p. 3, Box 1, Folder 2, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
would provide them with regular income.\footnote{By 1919, the local groups Bancroft and the directors had chosen to receive stock in the Woodlawn Company included “The Delaware Hospital, Natural History Society of Delaware, The Ferris Industrial School, The Homeopathic Hospital Association, The Home of Merciful Rest Society, the Home for Aged Women, Layton Home for Aged Colored Persons, the Minquadale Home, The Trustees of the Home for Friendless and Destitute Children, and the Wilmington Institute (Free Library).” Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 24.} The Company would earn income and generate dividends through lot sales and, Bancroft hoped, through rental income from development on the Woodlawn tract.

It seems that by the first meeting of the Woodlawn Company directors, William Bancroft had decided to move forward with his Woodlawn tract development plan. He outlined his plan in a message to the directors:

I believe it likely it would prove a pecuniarily profitable and in other ways a useful thing to build up the tract bounded by 4th, 7th, and Union Streets and the B&O Rail Road, or nearly all of it, with small houses, to remain permanently in the ownership of the Woodlawn Company as an investment for the charitable and educational institutions that will hold its stock.

I propose that the tract shall be laid out nearly as I have sketched.\footnote{Untitled, n.d., Box 1, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records, Hagley.}

The plan included several blocks of variably-sized row houses with deep adjoining lots, space for public parks and a 160-foot wide parkway along Grant Avenue (Figure 21). One year after construction began the buildings and lots were described at a meeting of the directors:

An unusual feature of the plan is that in many of the buildings there is a family on the first floor and one above them; and while this is so, in nearly all cases, the families have independent front doors and back doors, front yards and back yards.

We put up last year two rows of houses containing apartments for forty families. In these two rows there are eight six room houses, of plans not much different from ordinary, eight smaller two-story houses, and twelve buildings which each have apartments for a family on the first floor and one above them. Each family has a cellar to itself and each family has a bath room.
The buildings are set back from the street about 15 feet. Lots between streets and back alleys are 73 feet deep... It is hoped that after all expenses are paid there will be a profit of over 5% per annum. In explanation of this low estimate of profit, it may be said that it is proposed to make considerable expenditures in keeping the neighborhood in desirable and attractive condition.58

Commercial space was also included, according to the report, noting that “a drug store and grocery store” were among the first tenants on the Woodlawn property. As suggested by Bancroft in his original plan, trees were planted along the public streets.

Bancroft’s ideas for design of the building lots, public open space, and perpetual ownership appear to have drawn inspiration in many ways by his father’s mill villages. Yet Bancroft also was influenced by his research and personal associations, particularly through the Academy. He was certainly aware of The Octavia Hill Association’s activities in Philadelphia. In addition, Bancroft appears to have drawn inspiration from housing experiments in England, particularly by fellow Quakers George Cadbury and Joseph Rowntree. By early 1901, Bancroft had made the acquaintance of Dr. William H. Tolman, an emerging American scholar and theorist in “social engineering” and housing policy.59 In a June 1901 correspondence, Bancroft thanked Tolman for providing him with letters of

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58 D. J. P., “Minutes of the first meeting mailed to Wm. P. Bancroft to England. 7/30. 1901,” Box 1, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records. Given the description of the Woodlawn buildings already in place at the time of this meeting, the 1901 date is unlikely. The date is more likely to be 1903.

introduction to Bournville founder George Cadbury and William H. Lever, the industrialist-developer of Port Sunlight. He wrote, “I have little doubt but that I will be able to deliver the notes of introduction and the opportunities they will give me will, so far as I have time to avail myself of them, be I am sure very valuable.” Bancroft periodically traveled to England through much of his adult life and probably through family associations was acquainted with prominent Quaker industrialists there, including Joseph Rowntree. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, he took annual trips to visit his daughter, so he likely was able to discuss town planning with one or more these men.

Construction of the Woodlawn Flats, as Bancroft’s Wilmington housing experiment became known, began in 1902 and continued through 1913. The plan, like Cadbury’s Bournville, was for rental housing set at affordable rates for the “steady, ordinary laboring man.” Like Bournville, Woodlawn Flats were open to all low-income laborers, not just the men and women employed at the Bancroft Mills. Other similarities between the two also existed, including building lots that included space for gardens, dedicated public spaces, and a private entrance for each unit (in the Bournville case they were individual cottages whereas in Woodlawn they were attached houses, duplexes, and apartments). Significantly, both Cadbury and Bancroft chose to retain ownership of the property as a whole through a stock company that would reinvest in the property and maintain the planning vision into the future beyond their own lifetimes. Indeed, just six months prior to Bancroft’s 1901 visit to England with his letter of introduction, Cadbury had transferred his ownership of the Bournville property to the Bournville Village Trust, a charitable trust established to ensure its “long-term development” even after his death.

The Woodlawn Flats housing experiment, like the Octavia Hill Association housing, was a response to American urban issues. It differed from the British industrial planned villages and Garden Cities in that it was constructed in the existing city grid and relied on city parks rather than rural locations for green space. By 1904, Bancroft and the Woodlawn Company, however, had already begun to look beyond the existing boundaries of Wilmington.

Acquisition of the Brandywine Hundred Tracts

William Bancroft’s commitment to wise city planning evolved into an expansive vision of future development outside the then-current city boundaries. Given the

61 “Bancroft’s frequent travels to Great Britain had begun in the 1870s and by the 1890s there is evidence that he was keeping company with some of the most prominent Quaker industrialists in the world ...” “… a letter between Bancroft and Rowntree in 1902 suggests great friendship between the two families.” Widell, “Rockford Woodlawn Property,” 18–19. For the second quotation, Widell cites, Letter from Bancroft to J. Wilhelm Rowntree, March 24, 1902, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
62 D. J. P., “Minutes of the first meeting mailed to Wm. P. Bancroft.”
phenomenal growth of the Bancroft and DuPont industries that was largely fueled by technological and chemical advances, Bancroft believed that Wilmington would continue to grow and perhaps eventually approach the southwest edges of Philadelphia. Bancroft’s plan thus extended north into the Brandywine Hundred to include the rural Brandywine Valley landscape as far as the Delaware-Pennsylvania state boundary along Beaver Creek.

In a rare public speech given in 1909 to the West Brandywine Grange, Bancroft outlined his plan to proactively preserve the natural beauty of the Brandywine and its feeder creeks as parkland and maintain control of the adjoining farmland for future “wise” development:

For many years I had been saying that I wished someone would gather up the rough land along the Brandywine above Rockland and hold it for the future Wilmington. . . . About two years since the land on the easterly side of the Brandywine above Thompson’s Bridge was in the market, and I concluded that perhaps I ought to do something toward what I had been wishing others would do. I bought several tracts then offered, and have bought others since. My thought is that the hills along the creek, some of the valleys running up from the creek, and a few of the finest view points on the hills should be owned by the city and kept open for the public; and that the land further back from the creek, being largely in one ownership, may be laid out with roads on good grades and leading to the good building sites; which will have easy communication with Wilmington, so as to make a very attractive and desirable residence district.\(^\text{64}\)

According to Woodlawn Trustees records, Bancroft began the process of purchasing tracts in Brandywine Hundred as early as 1904. By 1912, he had accumulated more than 1,300 acres of rural farms, Brandywine Creek frontage, and woodland located west of the Concord Pike.\(^\text{65}\)

William Bancroft finalized the bulk of his early purchases in 1907. Many were located along Thompson’s Bridge Road, including the Palmer farm, purchased from Hugh Ramsey (Figure 22) and situated on the north side of the road, including the adjoining Forbes farm (1849, M. Journey farm), located on both sides of the road and bounded on the south by Hurricane Run (Figure 23); the Lowber property (described on the Palmer/Ramsey plat as “part of Palmer Place”), a small triangular tract with house and garage on the south side of the road; and three adjoining tracts owned by Hugh Monigle, the John Carney estate, and Lecarpentier (1881 “Mrs. Carpenter”) at the west end of the road adjoining Creek Road and overlooking Brandywine Creek (Figure 24). To the north, Bancroft purchased the Leech farm in 1907 (1849, C.I. DuPont), which was his first purchase along Beaver Valley Road at the Delaware state line (Figure 25), in addition to the adjoining Hendricks farm (1849, A. Chandler) on the southwest side of Beaver Valley Road

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\(^{64}\) William Bancroft, “1909 paper presented to the Brandywine Grange,” Box 1, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.

In 1908, Bancroft purchased another former Chandler tract from J. G. Highfield (Figure 27). In 1911, William (Wills?) Passmore, a Quaker surveyor who appears to have done all of Bancroft’s plats, prepared a plat of the Twadell properties along Beaver Creek apparently in anticipation of their eventual purchase. The Woodlawn Trustees appear to have acquired the Jacob Twadell tract (1849 Talley & Claud Store) in 1917.

Figure 22: 1908, Palmer Farm to William P. Bancroft. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.

“Notes Properties Info,” Excel database, “FRST Woodlawn Tract Leased Property,” table, First State National Historical Park Cultural Landscape Inventory, (unpublished manuscript, March 2014); Various survey plats, OS17, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records; “Wills Passmore, Surveyor” advertisement, Philadelphia Friends’ Intelligencer and Journal, May 5, 1887, iii; “Wills Passmore, a well-known and highly respected farmer, living near Perry’s Hotel, on the Concord turnpike, died yesterday morning at his home of some liver trouble, aged 61 years. Mr. Passmore was a Friend, for several years had been a director of the Wilmington & West Chester Hallway Company, and for many years acted as secretary of the West Brandywine Grange at Talleyville. He was a surveyor and engineer, and unmarried,” Wills Passmore obituary, Delaware County Daily Times, Aug. 5, 1912.
**Figure 23:** 1907 Survey, Forbes to Bancroft. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.
Figure 24: 1907 Survey, Monigle, Carney, and Lecarpentier. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.
Figure 25: 1908 Leech farm, property of William P. Bancroft. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.

Figure 26: Plat, n.d., from around 1907. Brandywine Hundred farms. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.
By 1912 the Woodlawn Flats project was nearly completed. Bancroft turned his attention to his Brandywine Hundred lands. In a message to the Woodlawn Trustees, he laid out his “future Wilmington” plan:

In my desire to secure park ground for the future Wilmington, I have bought a large amount of land in Brandywine Hundred. I have, or have engaged to take, about 1376 acres; and I am willing to buy several hundred acres more, if what I consider desirable for the purposes I have in view can be obtained at moderate prices.

My thought is that the parts most desirable for public use shall ultimately be deeded to the City, including in this perhaps a boulevard or parkway a mile or two long between different parks, and the remainder of the land be laid out and disposed of as a residence district.67

By then in his seventies, Bancroft viewed this as a future project possibly not even likely to be completed within a young man’s lifetime. The kind of planned development he envisioned was not only specifically intended for low-income housing like the Woodlawn

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67 “Letter to the Woodlawn Directors,” Feb. 15, 1912, Box 1, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.
William Poole Bancroft and the Woodlawn Plan

Flats but rather viewed as a way to control residential development in general. He wanted to ensure “the attractiveness and amenities of the area by the proper and attractive town planning fitting it with parks and landscapes in a way impossible with the usual random development.”

Bancroft then asked the directors to agree to allow the Woodlawn Company to take ownership of the land as a continuation of their mission to promote “wise planning” and to continue the process of purchasing more land as it came available.

Over the previous decade, Bancroft’s Woodlawn Company expanded their city planning sphere beyond the Woodlawn Flats idea to include planned residential districts in Wilmington that mostly catered to higher income occupants. On tracts owned by the Company that were targeted for development, streets were laid out, trees planted, and parkland was reserved, but no buildings were constructed. Building restrictions were used to control building appearances and lot subdivisions were used to control building sizes—that is, small lots encouraged lower-income housing while large lots accommodated the larger houses favored by upper-income buyers. In some cases, lots were available for purchase by individuals whereas in other cases, whole tracts were sold to developers.

Bancroft envisioned a similar system of planning for the Brandywine Hundred lands. In September 1915, William Bancroft enlisted the services of New York city planner Charles W. Leavitt to design “a system of roads and parks…to extend over nearly all the land shown on the map.” (Figure 28). Leavitt responded the following day with clear interest in the project. By late October, he had made his first visit to the Woodlawn Company’s Brandywine Hundred land to undertake an initial survey. In January 1916, Leavitt wrote to Bancroft and sought his opinion on the optimum percentage of parkland in his plan:

The large amount of land which we are working on for you is bound to have a great effect on the development of the City of Wilmington and I am anxious to have what is done make that effect as beneficial as possible. In this I am sure that you heartily concur. In other words, I regard this work as City Planning and I do not care to miss any opportunity of having it of the very best.

Bancroft agreed, noting, “probably the parks in that district [Brandywine Hundred] will be used to a large extent by people of all parts of the big city of the Future. . . . I am, with thee, desirous to have your work as generally beneficial in effect as practicable.”

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69 This included Rockford Park District and Boulevard. C. A. Beck, “The Hope of the Woodlawn Trustees,” 1922, 5 and 7, Box 1, Folder 2, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
70 “Organization and History of the Woodlawn Trustees, Inc.,” 1993, Box 1, Folder 4, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
71 Bancroft to Chas. Leavitt, Sept. 27, 1915, Box 15, Folder 2, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
work continued into the summer of 1916; by August, however, Bancroft suggested that the work conclude:

From the beginning I considered that any plans would be very tentative, not likely to be carried out to any extent soon, probably not in my life time. This is very much impressed on me at this time. Other things are very pressing that I should not allow these plans to interfere with much. I think Charles W. Leavitt’s plans should without much delay or work on them, be put in shape to be laid away.  


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75 “Leavitt’s 1916-1917 original layout of roads for Brandywine Hundred, in three pieces [Shelf KK 10 A],” Roll MM, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. records.
William Bancroft’s original request to Leavitt was for a plan showing “a system of roads and parks.” Unlike his plan for the Woodlawn Flats development, however, Bancroft did not intend for the Woodlawn Company to engage in any building construction on the Brandywine Hundred lands. In an October 1915 letter to Leavitt, Bancroft made known his intentions for the future residential districts:

The land west of the Brandywine is gradually being bought up by rich people as country seats. My aim is to promote the westerly part of Brandywine Hundred being developed, after reserving what is desirable should be parks, as a residence district for people of moderate or small means. Having much of it in one ownership will make this more practicable.\(^\text{76}\)

Bancroft noted that while he hoped “there would be some large houses on it,” those houses “should not probably average higher in cost than those in the Willard Street and Boulevard districts [in Wilmington].”\(^\text{77}\) He wished to control the future development by having a plan for what land would be reserved for parks and by judicious land sales based upon the appropriate projected use as identified in the plan—a plan that he openly admitted was likely to change over the ensuing years. Leavitt’s plan included suggestions for building styles and arrangements for lower-cost “grouped homes” and recommended that the lower-income residential districts should be located closer to the park lands.

As Bancroft implied in August 1916, the Leavitt plan was put on the shelf after its delivery in April 1917. By then the U.S. had entered into the conflict in Europe called “the Great War,” later known as World War I. It is unknown whether this impacted Bancroft’s plans; however, industries retooled for wartime needs were already located in cities such as Wilmington and worker housing to support wartime industries was now first on most city-planners minds. As early as January 1916, the Woodlawn Company was contacted by the National Housing Association seeking information and “illustrations” of the Woodlawn Flats development. Soon information requests were coming from industries like the Fore River Shipbuilding Corporation in Quincy, Massachusetts, and Brighton Mills in Passaic, New Jersey. The New York Public Library and the Housing Committee of the Federated Charities also sent requests. On August 7, 1917, the Company received a request from the Republican National Committee to provide information for a report on industrial housing: “Knowing that you have established model houses for your employees and have carried out, in part, at least, the English garden city idea, I write hoping that you will send whatever data you may have regarding your experiment.” This was followed by a letter on August 23, 1917, from the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense requesting an opinion on the wartime housing needs for Wilmington workers that asked,


\(^{77}\) These were city districts the Woodlawn Company laid out in lots with building restrictions, sold to middle and upper class families who built larger homes on the lots.
“Would you advocate employer/company building of workmen’s homes to meet part of Wilmington’s problem?”

These numerous inquiries leave little doubt that the Woodlawn Company was at least administratively busy during the war years.

William Bancroft himself also remained busy during this period. He continued his work with the Parks Commission to develop more park land along the Brandywine on the north edge of Wilmington. In 1909, Bancroft persuaded Alfred I. du Pont to sell to the city a section of unused DuPont Powder Company land along the creek adjoining his Nemours estate. Other industry-owned tracts appeared in the “Proposed Additions to Brandywine Park,” including nineteen acres owned by Bancroft (Figure 29). After another small tract was added by du Pont in 1914, however, the final boundary of what would be known as Alapocas Woods did not actually connect directly with Brandywine Park. Instead, Bancroft and du Pont jointly financed the Alapocas Road (today Alapocas Drive), which looped through Alapocas Woods to eventually connect with Brandywine Park.

Shortly after the conclusion of World War I in 1918, William Bancroft decided to change the Woodlawn Company’s corporate structure. In place of the Woodlawn Company, Bancroft formed a nonprofit corporation titled Woodlawn Trustees Inc. It was governed by a group of seven trustees—the same five men who served as the former company’s board of directors plus two new trustees including his wife, Emma Bancroft. The

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78 “Correspondence,” Box 1, Folder 11, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.
80 Thompson and Bernardo, “Nemours Historic District,” 11.

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charter for Woodlawn Trustees Inc. stated the same purposes laid out for the Woodlawn Company; that is, to acquire land for parks, promote wise city planning, and construct houses as “deemed wise” by the directors (trustees). Bancroft, however, added to the Woodlawn Trustees charter language that altered the corporation significantly: “The Corporation is not one for profit. It desires to have no capital stock.” This new structure was described in 1940 by Charles Beck, secretary and treasurer of the Woodlawn Company and Woodlawn Trustees from 1908 to 1943:

All of the assets of Woodlawn Company were conveyed or assigned to the new corporation. The institutions which had owned stock of Woodlawn Company and had been receiving dividends on the preferred stock held by them, were given 99 year bonds issued by the new corporation, to mature December first, 2018, bearing interest at five percent per annum payable semi-annually.

In 1973, Trustees President Philip Rhoads (beg. 1955) distinguished the Woodlawn Trustees’ corporate structure from that of a “charitable trust”: “Woodlawn is an operating company whose assets are managed to forward its purposes thru its activities (as distinct from a charitable trust whose capital is invested in unrelated securities from which earnings of capital are distributed to accomplish its objectives).” In other words, like Cadbury’s Bournville Village Trust, the company invested in its own land and housing activities to produce the earnings that it distributed to charitable institutions.

Like the old Woodlawn Company, the Woodlawn Trustees’ liquidity was founded first on Bancroft’s own initial investment and more generally on the rental profits from the Woodlawn Flats and sale of lands considered ready for planned development. The Brandywine Hundred lands, comprised mostly of tenanted farms, provided additional rental income as well as enormous potential for future land sales. In a letter to the Trustees written in June 1919, Bancroft made clear his desire to hold the company to its intended mission while maintaining its “pecuniary strength”:

As to what the pecuniary strength of the organization will allow it to do,—the amount I owe it is a safe asset, the surplus from the Woodlawn buildings is a continuous large income; within a decade, or two or three decades, there will be likely to be large receipts from the Stapler land, and other land along the proposed parkway, the Delamore land, the Prices Run district, and in other ways. . . .

I do not know what it will be expedient to do in regard to the Brandywine Hundred lands; but perhaps it is not unlikely that it will be well to follow in the

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81 “This statement was prepared for submission to the Unemployment Compensation Commission, at a hearing held November 14, 1940,” p. 2, Box 1, Folder 2, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records. No author is identified on this document, however, it was probably written by Charles Beck, secretary and treasurer of the Woodlawn Company and Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. from 1908–1943.

82 “This statement was prepared for submission.”

line of my thoughts as to holding on to and adding to them, so as to promote parks along the Brandywine, above Rockland, and promote the advantageous laying out and development of the district.\textsuperscript{84}

In his characteristic self-deprecating manner, Bancroft concluded:

While desiring to avoid unwisely urging my views upon the organization, I may say I hope the Brandywine Hundred lands, and the larger tracts in or near Wilmington, may be held until they can be sold without losing the advantage of plans for them being made and carried out, as can best be done while the properties remain in its ownership.\textsuperscript{85}

The Woodlawn Trustees maintained development plans for the Brandywine Hundred lands and continued to purchase land as it came available for sale at a reasonable price. By 1922, Secretary/Treasurer Charles Beck reported that the Trustees owned nearly 1,900 acres of land in Brandywine Hundred. Still missing from the Woodlawn Trustees’ acquisitions was the large 193-acre Hugh Ramsey farm, which was located nearly in the center of the Brandywine acreage and represented nearly a mile and a half of creek frontage (Figure 30).

\textbf{Figure 30:} 1908 Ramsey Farm Survey. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.

\textsuperscript{84} Bancroft to Woodlawn Trustees, June 24, 1919, Box 1, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.

\textsuperscript{85} Bancroft to Woodlawn Trustees, June 24, 1919.
Woodlawn Trustees’ Vision for the Brandywine Hundred Lands Evolves

When William Poole Bancroft died in 1928 at the age of eighty-four, he left behind an enormous legacy of public works in the Wilmington area and beyond. His clear vision prepared the Woodlawn Trustees Inc. to carry on its mission to provide parkland for the growing city population, preserve land for well-planned future development, and maintain a commitment to the Woodlawn Flats as affordable and attractive urban housing.

Shortly after Bancroft’s death, the Trustees revisited the 1917 Leavitt development plan for the Brandywine Hundred lands. They enlisted Charles Leavitt again to revise his original plan. His new plan was entitled “Thorofare Plan for a Portion of Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware.” Its purpose was to accommodate the automobile as a primary means of transit to and through the planned parks and future residential and commercial development. Leavitt emphasized in his new report that the old plan’s development districts were still applicable; only the roads and parkways needed to be altered to meet the requirements of the automobile age. Additionally, Leavitt acknowledged, the new plan incorporated existing roads whereas the old plan did not.86 The slightly less expansive plan encompassed all of the land then-owned or anticipated to be purchased by the Woodlawn Trustees between Concord Pike and Brandywine Creek and north of Rockland Road to the Delaware state line to include all of Beaver Valley (Figure 31).

The following year, the Trustees hired Kansas City, Missouri, city planners Hare & Hare to draw up a plan for just the northern (Beaver Valley) section of the Brandywine Hundred lands situated between Ramsey Road and Beaver Valley Road (Figure 32). Submitted in September 1929, their plan included significantly less land reserved along the Brandywine for parks and included large lots on cul-de-sacs overlooking Creek Road and the Brandywine parkland. Much of the tract was subdivided into moderately sized lots while smaller lots formed superblocks on the east side of the tract. An artist’s rendering appears to indicate a plan for one-story duplexes that may accommodate lower-income residents in the area closest to Concord Pike (and farthest from the scenic parkland along the creek) (Figure 33). This plan, with its location of large, high-value lots adjoining the Brandywine parkland, seemed to stray from Bancroft’s vision somewhat and opposed Leavitt’s 1917 recommendation that the lower-income housing be placed closer to the parks to facilitate access.

In the end, none of these early plans were utilized on the Woodlawn Trustees’ Brandywine Hundred tracts. Shortly after the Hare & Hare plan was submitted to the Trustees, the United States faced a new crisis that would affect economic growth for nearly a decade. On October 28, 1929, the U.S. stock market crashed. The resulting catastrophic losses among investors, as well as a series of bank failures across the United States, caused a contraction of the U.S. economy. As available credit dried up and consumers turned away

from purchasing new items such as automobiles, U.S. factories and retail outlets reduced their workforces. The ranks of the unemployed grew to astonishing numbers. What started as a recession soon deepened into the Great Depression, which lasted through much of the 1930s. Efforts by then-President Herbert Hoover to address the deepening depression failed. In 1932, Hoover lost reelection to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Within the first 100 days of his presidency, President Roosevelt pushed through dramatic changes to the U.S. financial system and began recovery programs that would finally help turn around the economy.\(^{87}\)

During the height of the Great Depression, the Woodlawn Trustees focused their activities on helping the residents of the Woodlawn Flats. Occupied largely by laborers, the tenants were among the Wilmington residents most likely (along with African Americans) to find themselves unemployed and facing deepening poverty. Trustees records show that the company was “lenient in the collection of rents” and allowed them to “slowly pay their debts” as the Depression eased. The Woodlawn Trustees additionally began their own work program. They hired local unemployed laborers to construct “thirty-three garages, a warehouse addition, thirteen four-room houses, and three pairs of six-room semi-detached houses” on the Woodlawn Flats property.\(^{88}\)

In 1935, the Trustees began to prepare a plan for their first residential development outside the Wilmington city boundary. The development tract, to be called Alapocas, adjoined the Alapocas Woods park. It featured the new Wilmington Friends School located at the center of the development. A gift from Emma Bancroft’s estate and her two daughters facilitated the purchase of the school parcel from the Woodlawn Trustees in 1935. In 1938, after the preparation of the site’s roads and with building restrictions in place, the Trustees began selling lots in the Alapocas development: “The first lots in Alapocas averaged about 75–to 80–feet wide and 150–160 feet deep and prices started at $2,190.00 . . . sold to individuals or a selected list of builders.”\(^{89}\) Not surprisingly, given the lingering economic troubles in the late 1930s and the ensuing World War II interruption (1941–1945), it appears that initial sales were slow. At the time of the 1943 United States Geological Survey (USGS) survey, only a small section was completed. By 1954, it appeared to be essentially complete and occupied.


\(^{88}\) Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records, “Historical Note.”

Figure 31: 1928 Charles Leavitt and Son "Thorofare Plan." Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library
William Poole Bancroft and the Woodlawn Plan

Figure 32: 1929 Hare and Hare “Preliminary Plan for North Portion of Property.” Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.

Figure 33: 1929 [?] Bird’s Eye View. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.
The Alapocas development south of the land area was included in the two Charles Leavitt plans for the Brandywine Hundred tract, which only extended as far south as Rockland Road. Yet with the conclusion of World War II in 1945 came an enormous call for new housing focused largely outside of the cities in planned suburban neighborhoods. The Woodlawn Trustees responded with a new plan for their lands north of Rockland Road. In 1946, the Trustees prepared the “Tentative Plan of Redevelopment of Brandywine Hundred Lands,” which applied elements of Leavitt’s 1929 Thorofare plan.\(^90\) Shortly thereafter, the Trustees sold a large parcel on the north side of Rockland Road to the DuPont Country Club for a new eighteen-hole golf course, which opened in 1949.\(^91\) The Woodbrook development was planned around the golf course. The sale of lots there began in the 1950s, followed closely by the Sharpley development. By 1960, the Edenridge and Tavistock developments, which closely followed the 1929 and 1946 plans, were also under preparation. In Woodlawn Trustee Stephen Clark’s 1972 “Update of the Operations and Purpose of Woodlawn,” he noted that by the middle of 1972, “1193 lots have been planned, 1038 offered for sale and 193 remain unsold.”\(^92\)

The 1954 USGS map shows clearly the extent of speculative development occurring on the east side of the Concord Pike opposite the Woodlawn Trustees Brandywine Hundred property (Figure 34). The 1946 Trustees’ plan anticipated the need for institutional and commercial development along the Concord Pike. By 1960, the Trustees developed a plan to separate the anticipated commercial development from the planned residential districts with a realignment of the Pike (Rt. 202) (Figure 35). Although the realignment did not come to fruition, the 1973 Woodlawn Trustees Master Plan showed a number of institutions in place including churches, a library, and community center, as well as lots slated for future commercial development. The Master Plan also indicated a continued commitment on the part of the Trustees to future residential development in the Beaver Valley section (Figure 36). After 1979, however, the Trustees undertook no additional residential development.\(^93\)

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\(^93\) “Organization and History of the Woodlawn Trustees, Inc.,” 1993, p. 4, Box 1, Folder 4, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.
William Poole Bancroft and the Woodlawn Plan

Figure 34: 1954 Wilmington North United States Geological Survey map.

Figure 35: 1960 Woodlawn Trustees plan showing planned realignment. Woodlawn Trustees Inc. records, Hagley Museum and Library.
Recreational Use of the Woodlawn Trustees’ Brandywine Hundred Property

Since its initiation by William Poole Bancroft in 1902, the Woodlawn Company/Trustees always identified acquisition and preservation of park land for the residents of Wilmington and vicinity as its primary purpose. The residential planning and development followed closely behind. Bancroft’s vision for the Brandywine Hundred lands was first to preserve the beautiful natural landscape along the Brandywine Creek for everyone to enjoy—not just for “rich people as country seats.” In order to protect the Brandywine viewshed, Bancroft understood that much more land would need to be purchased; on that land, the Woodlawn Trustees could control future development with careful plans and judicious sales.

By the 1960s, the region’s government agencies were catching up to Bancroft’s progressive vision. Beginning in 1965, the State of Delaware determined to establish a state park along the Brandywine Creek in New Castle County. They began purchasing tracts on the west side of the creek and to the south of Thompson’s Bridge Road through a federal

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program called the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1974, the Woodlawn Trustees decided to donate land to extend the Brandywine State Park to the east side of the creek. The initial plan was for the Trustees to sell the tract then valued at one million dollars to a nonprofit for $750,000. The nonprofit would then sell the tract to the state for the million-dollar value and donate the $250,000 profit from the sale to a trust for park maintenance. By the time that the actual conveyance of the tract took place in 1981, the Trustees decided to make it, in part, a direct donation from Woodlawn Trustees to the Brandywine Creek State Park. The land had by then nearly tripled in value. The Trustees’ gift was announced with great fanfare by the local Wilmington newspaper, The News Journal. The article noted that half of the value of the land was indeed a gift from the Woodlawn Trustees, the other half was “paid for with federal land and water conservation funds.” The Trustees planned to use the federal money to “set up a $500,000 trustee account to provide maintenance for the new parkland, the first time land has been given to the state with maintenance provided.” The fund would provide money to help the state “secure and police the area,” according to the article, based upon the Trustees’ own experience with “misuse and vandalism” in the public use areas of their Brandywine Hundred lands.

Since as early as the 1960s, the Woodlawn Trustees had posted their northern section of the Brandywine Hundred lands (centered on Beaver Valley) as a “Wild Life Refuge.” Miles of trails were developed through the wooded areas and across the tenanted farms in the style of the British public paths. Users were expected to stay on the trails and respect the privacy of tenants (Figure 37). Hikers, bikers, and horseback riders used and largely maintained the trails while the Trustees kept meadows mowed to encourage wildlife. Along the Brandywine Creek, the Trustees maintained several Campsites that became popular destinations—with permission—for Boy Scout troops, Girl Scouts, church groups, school groups, and even the Sierra Club. One request in the fall of 1977 involved eight Boy Scout troops from Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey, including fifty to eighty boys and adult chaperones, sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons). In one instance, a group of senior-class students from a nearby Pennsylvania school sought and received permission to camp at the Wild Life Refuge. When it was later

95 Cara Lee Blume, Cherie Clark, and Meril Dunn, Cultural Resources Management Plan for Brandywine Creek State Park (Dover: Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1990), 4. “The first lands to be identified as Brandywine Creek State Park were 433 acres purchased at the urging of Forward Lands, Inc., an organization devoted to preservation of open space. With grants from the Crystal Trust, the Longwood Foundation, and the Woodlawn Trustees, the State was able to match a grant from the Delaware Water Conservation Aid Fund to create the state’s sixth state park. Coupled with the 500 acres transferred by the Woodlawn Trustees, the park continues to be one of the state’s largest public parks.” “Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records Finding Aid,” Hagley Museum and Library, accessed May 15, 2017, http://findingaids.hagley.org/xtf/view?docId=ead/2424.xml.

96 Converse Murdoch to Philip Rhoads, Feb. 21, 1974, Box 19, Folder 20, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.

learned that the student trip was not sanctioned by the school, the senior class president wrote a letter of apology to the Woodlawn Trustees.\textsuperscript{98}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure37.png}
\caption{1996 Woodlawn Trail System map. WTI records, Hagley Museum and Library.}
\end{figure}

In 1985, the Woodlawn Wild Life Refuge was threatened by the Delaware Department of Transportation plans for major road improvements to Naamans Road, Concord Pike (US Route 202), and part of Beaver Valley Road and Thompson’s Bridge Road. The first phase of the project involved dualizing Naamans Road eastward from the Concord Pike to US Route 13.\textsuperscript{99} A New Castle County planning map from 1985 indicates that the ultimate plan was to also realign the Concord Pike at the Naamans Road/Beaver Valley Road intersection and create a cloverleaf interchange on the west side of the Concord Pike. Additionally, the plan would have cut off Beaver Valley Road and instead realign and extend a dualized Thompson’s Bridge Road running southwest from the Concord Pike to a new bridge crossing Brandywine Creek (Figure 38). It is not known why the proposed freeway was never completed, though the enormous negative impact it would have had on the Woodlawn property and Brandywine State Park might have been a factor. In 2018, the dualized portion of Beaver Valley Road ends at its intersection with Thompson’s Bridge Road.

\textsuperscript{98} Camping requests, Box 1, Folders 13 and 14, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.

Woodlawn Trustees’ Housing and Development Policies Challenged

William Bancroft’s mission was to improve the lives of his Wilmington neighbors—rich, poor, and those in the middle—by providing parks for recreation and well-planned residential neighborhoods. Though Bancroft’s vision crossed economic lines, in practice the Woodlawn companies’ housing policies did not penetrate the racial divide of segregation. Institutionalized racial segregation was entrenched across the United States through the first half of the twentieth century. Segregation, however, began to lose its footing after black veterans returned home from World War II. With the Supreme Court’s Brown v. Board of Education ruling in 1954, which ended school segregation, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination in housing and employment, the Woodlawn Trustees’ housing policies came under scrutiny and would eventually change.

Wilmington, like cities across the nation, was racially segregated by law in its schools and housing. Thus, when Bancroft’s Woodlawn Company, and later the Trustees, embarked on their mission to create affordable housing at Woodlawn Flats, African Americans were excluded from the Flats. In 1925, an effort to address housing for Wilmington’s African American population grew from people in William Bancroft’s circle. A small group of men and women, including Woodlawn Trustee George Rhoads and Bancroft’s wife Emma Bancroft, organized the Citizen’s Housing Corporation (CHC). “There are so few people who take a practical interest in the colored race,” noted Rhoads as he embarked on a campaign to raise $20,000 to $25,000 of startup capital. “I am putting the matter before thee
[Emma Bancroft],” continued Rhoads, “so thee and William Bancroft can consider the subject and determine what you are willing to do to help.”\textsuperscript{100} Adapting the Octavia Hill Association model, the CHC planned to purchase and renovate city housing, which would then be rented to “deserving colored people to be properly housed.”\textsuperscript{101} By 1927, the CHC purchased six houses. By 1959, that number grew to sixty. Their project was a perennial financial struggle, however. It was the Woodlawn Trustees who supported the corporation by purchasing stock. In 1959, the Trustees held nearly all of the stock in the CHC and were managing the properties. That year, the Trustees resolved “to take over and carry on the work for which the Citizens Housing Corporation was especially organized . . . ”\textsuperscript{102} They purchased the remaining stock and took title to the sixty houses. By 1992, the CHC arm of the Woodlawn Trustees owned and operated “111 rental houses on Wilmington’s East side.”\textsuperscript{103}

Despite the well-intentioned work of the CHC and Woodlawn Trustees, the corporation’s housing was, and continued to be, segregated by race. As late as 1972, CHC units were still identified for black occupancy while the Woodlawn Flats allowed only white residents. From the early 1960s, members of the Friends Wilmington Monthly Meeting condemned the Trustees for discriminatory practices in their housing programs. Remarkably, it was not until 1972 that the State Human Relations Commission investigated the Trustees’ rental policies.\textsuperscript{104} According to the investigating commissioners’ findings report:

The properties involved comprise about 500 rental units, over 400 units in the ‘flats’ (an area west of Union Street) which historically have been rented exclusively to white people and about 90 units in downtown Wilmington which historically have been rented primarily to black people.\textsuperscript{105}

The Trustees’ October response indicated a change was forthcoming:

We have carefully reviewed our rental procedures and practices in order better to guard against any possibility of discrimination . . . [which] led us to conclude that certain procedures followed in the past for reasons of administrative practicality should be modified.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{100} George A. Rhoads to Emma C. Bancroft, July 1, 1925, Box 11, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.
\textsuperscript{101} “The Citizen’s Housing Corporation,” July 18, 1927, stock issue letter, Box 11, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.
\textsuperscript{102} “Resolution re Citizens Housing Corporation,” 1959, Box 11, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees, Inc. Records.
\textsuperscript{103} “1992 Woodlawn Trustees history,” Box 1, Folder 4, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.
\textsuperscript{106} “Woodlawn Trust rental procedures to change.”
Trustees secretary John M. Stocking noted in his response that all current waitlists for the rental units would be terminated; new applications would be accepted “without regard to race, color or creed.”

This was not the only controversy the Woodlawn Trustees faced in the twentieth century. Land in the Brandywine Hundred (and adjoining Delaware County, PA) was by the 1960s a suburb of both Wilmington and Philadelphia and had become high-value real estate. The Woodlawn Trustees’ developments—Alapocas, Woodbrook, Sharpley, Edenridge, and Tavistock—were expensive, all-white communities surrounded by golf courses with direct access to the Brandywine Creek parkland. Bancroft’s vision of a mixed-income community in the Brandywine Hundred where all would make use of the parks was, according to some, a distant memory. In 1963, the committee of Friends appointed by the Wilmington Monthly Meeting to investigate Trustees’ housing policies revealed that Woodlawn Trustees deeds for building lots “restricted residency to Caucasians and that Woodlawn lacked a policy on the race, creed, or national origin of their residents.” Also in 1963, the IRS revoked the Woodlawn Trustees tax exemption, “declaring that the Trust was violating the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 by receiving revenues from a business unrelated to its original purpose—namely, profits from real estate rentals and sales.” Though the Trustees successfully argued that the rentals and sales were, in fact, always a part of their charitable mission, many believed the exclusivity of the Brandywine Hundred developments and the lack of housing integration there was improper. Agitation from the Wilmington Monthly Meeting continued until the 1972 resolution of the Trustees’ rental policies.

In 1973, perhaps to help rectify the housing inequities, the Woodlawn Trustees engaged the firm of Whitman, Requardt, and Associates to produce a new Master Plan for the Brandywine Hundred lands. The plan reiterated the Trustees’ long-stated mission:

> The primary consideration has been the determination of those portions of the property to be reserved as permanent parkland and those portions available for development. A secondary consideration was to utilize the area to be developed as efficiently and economically as possible and to minimize any damage to the environment during development.”

Significantly, the 1973 Master Plan suggested that forty-nine percent of the Trustees’ more than 2,000-acre property should be preserved as parkland, citing in particular the “Garden of Eden Woods (about 135 acres), one-half mile south of Thompson’s Bridge.” This “unspoiled” woodland was included in the 1981 conveyance to Brandywine Creek State Park, thus ensuring its preservation. Additionally, the Master Plan concluded that forty

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107 “Woodlawn Trust rental procedures to change.”
108 Jeffrey Burdash, email message to author.
109 Jeffrey Burdash, email message to author.
percent of future residential development should be single family homes on lots, similar to that which the Trustees had already planned and sold. Importantly, however, and likely in response to the agitation of the previous decade, the plan called for sixty percent of residential development to be “townhouses and apartments” to appeal to lower-income occupants (Figure 36). \(^{112}\)

Though the 1973 Master Plan called for a significant amount of additional residential development on the Brandywine Hundred lands, as noted previously, no residential development was undertaken by the Woodlawn Trustees after 1979, which was likely a result of a lagging economy. As the economy improved in the 1980s and 1990s, the Trustees focused their energies instead on developing the commercial and institutional properties along the Concord Pike (US Route 202). The parcels developed on or near the west side of the Concord Pike included Brandywine YMCA; the New Castle County Library; a post office; a number of churches; the Pilot School (1960s, later moved to current site); the Jewish Community Center, constructed in 1970 and expanded in 1985; and a number of leased parcels including the Delaware Corporate Center, built in 1985; a lot occupied by a Circuit City retail store in 1985; and development of “an over age 55 community” (today called Village of Rocky Run Condos) on the Lynthwaite (McAllister) farm property in about 1998. \(^{113}\) In the meantime, the east side of the Concord Pike was more intensively developed, including the Concord Mall beginning in 1965 and which expanded over the next several decades.

The Concord Pike corridor became increasingly congested with commercial development and traffic into the twenty-first century. In 2008, controversy erupted over several planned developments submitted for county review, one of which was located on Woodlawn Trustees land at the Beaver Valley Road/Concord Pike intersection. \(^{114}\) Hagley Museum and Library archivist Jeffrey Burdash summarized the Woodlawn Trustees’ response to area residents’ resistance to more development along the corridor:

In 2008, many residents believed that there was no more room for development in Brandywine Hundred. However, Woodlawn’s president, Elke McGinley, disagreed. In an article in a local newspaper, McGinley was reported to say that William Bancroft’s early sketches of the Brandywine Hundred area coincided with twenty-first century plans to develop the intersection of Concord Pike and Beaver Valley Road. “His idea was that people needed to work, shop, and have recreation somewhere.” She added, “Communities have to grow, but in an orderly fashion.” Woodlawn still owns 1,970 acres in northern New Castle County, extending into Pennsylvania. McGinley said that Woodlawn would continue to leave the open space in the Brandywine Valley untouched for the enjoyment of those who continue to walk the trails and greenways. However, she noted, Woodlawn was still the largest provider of affordable housing in


\(^{113}\) 1989 Master Plan, Box 19, Folder 6, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records.

Wilmington with nearly 600 rental units. Housing needs constant maintenance, and Woodlawn must continue to lease much of its lands for income to maintain the housing to which it is already committed. McGinley admitted that more of Woodlawn's property along Concord Pike would eventually be leased or sold for commercial purposes, but that would be done slowly, with the best interests of Woodlawn’s tenants and the residents of New Castle County in mind.\textsuperscript{115}

Facing stiff local opposition, the large mixed commercial and residential development proposed by Stoltz Real Estate Partners for the Trustees’ corner parcel was redesigned and downsized several times, each time failing to garner county planning commission approval. The project was eventually abandoned; in 2018, the parcel was a part of the expanded Wilmington University Brandywine campus.\textsuperscript{116}

\textbf{Woodlawn Brandywine Hundred Tract Conveyed to the National Park Service}

In 2011, as New Castle County prepared its 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update, the Woodlawn Trustees embarked on their own reassessment of the Brandywine Hundred lands. They hired The Conservation Fund (TCF) to prepare a “Land Capability Assessment for the Country Properties” entitled the “Woodlawn Vision Plan.” It focused specifically on the approximately 1,300 acres in New Castle County, Delaware.\textsuperscript{117} As with previous Master Plans, the Woodlawn Vision Plan identified its historic mission in contemporary parlance: “a Land Use Plan indicating use, development and disposition of the Country Properties (in Delaware only) that incorporates open space protection and fulfills financial objectives.”\textsuperscript{118}

In a section called “Recommended Future Land Use,” the report identified a couple important points about the Woodlawn Trustees’ “Country Properties”:

1. Most of the Country Properties’ undeveloped lands are designated [in the county Comprehensive Plan] for Resource & Rural Preservation… . . . The land along Route 202, much of it already developed, is designated for Community Redevelopment, where the emphasis is on mixed use, mobility oriented growth and infill; and

2. It is notable that in one of the initial public meetings (February 2011) to discuss Future Land Use for the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Update, the ‘Preservation of the Brandywine Valley’ was identified as a significant opportunity for the county.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{115}Jeffrey Burdash, email message to author.
TCF found that approximately 56 percent of the 1,300-acre tract in New Castle County was required by county code to be “protected as open space” due to environmental factors such as “floodplains, wetlands, riparian buffers, steep slopes, water resource protection areas, and critical habitat.”120 The TCF also found that the remaining (44 percent) of largely agricultural acreage was “unconstrained” from future development.

Despite the TCF finding of a relatively significant amount of developable land, it seems the Woodlawn Trustees no longer intended to pursue development of the land outside of the immediate Concord Pike corridor.121 The following year in 2012, The Conservation Fund, which also facilitates acquisition of land for preservation, secured an agreement with the Trustees to purchase 1,100 acres of the Brandywine Hundred land. This was part of a larger plan to establish Delaware’s first national park, according to local newspaper reports. At a July 2012 public meeting, TCF president Blaine Phillips announced to an audience of over 600 people that they “secured funding to purchase the property from the Woodlawn Trust and [have] an agreement to take over the land,” adding “they could have the property ready to be donated to the government by the end of the year.”122 National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis was also at the meeting. He confirmed the plan, noting that “Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar asked him to investigate whether to recommend that President Barack Obama use his power to declare the First State historic park a national monument” as a sort of “fast track” to national park status.123 The park would include other significant sites across Delaware as well as what by then was being referred to as the “Woodlawn property” or “Woodlawn tract.”

The idea of a Delaware national park began back in 2006 when Congress passed the “Delaware National Coastal Special Resources Study Act of 2006.” The study’s stated purpose was “to determine whether specific natural and cultural resources or areas in Delaware are nationally significant, suitable and feasible to qualify for potential congressional designation as a unit of the national park system.”124 The study area covered the Delaware coastline from the banks of the Delaware River at Wilmington to the Atlantic coast at Bethany Beach; it did not include the Brandywine Hundred. The report concluded that there were sites within the study area that warranted “further study” relative to two themes of national significance: “the colonization and establishment of the frontier, which would chronicle the first European settlers in the Delaware Valley … and the founding of a

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123 O’Sullivan, “National park within reach.”
nation, which would document the contributions of Delaware to the development of our constitutional republic.”

U.S. Senator Tom Carper, Governor of Delaware from 1993–2001, was a longtime supporter of a Delaware national park. Senator Carper introduced the necessary legislation to authorize such a park numerous times to no avail. Carper’s official website explains the extended process involved in establishing a national park, which began with the special resource study:

In January 2009, the Bush Administration finalized a National Park Service Special Resource Study concluding that a national park should be placed in Delaware and every year since Senator Carper has introduced legislation authorizing a national park. Since 2009, there have been over a dozen public meetings on the national park effort—including legislative hearings in both chambers of Congress—which have shown overwhelming support for the national park idea.

Despite this apparent “overwhelming support,” Congress failed to pass the legislation. On March 25, 2013, President Barack Obama used his executive power to establish a national monument without Congressional approval and signed Proclamation 8944, the “Establishment of the First State National Monument.” The proclamation stated:

Sites within the State of Delaware encompass nationally significant objects related to the settlement of the Delaware region by the Swedes, Finns, Dutch, and English, the role that Delaware played in the establishment of the Nation, and the preservation of the cultural landscape of the Brandywine Valley. A national monument that includes certain property in New Castle, Dover, and the Brandywine Valley, Delaware (with contiguous acreage in the Township of Chadd’s Ford, Pennsylvania) will allow the National Park Service and its partners to protect and manage these objects of historic interest and interpret for the public the resources and values associated with them.

President Obama’s proclamation was received with great joy by his Vice President, Joe Biden, former Senator from Delaware. Included within the discontinuous boundaries of the First State National Monument were the Woodlawn property of 1,100 acres; the New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House; and The Green, Dover. Of these sites, only the Woodlawn property and Sheriff’s House were actually owned by the National Park Service.

Within months of President Obama’s proclamation, the “First State National Historical Park Act of 2013” was attached to the “National Defense Authorization Act for

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127 Proclamation No. 8944. The power of the President of the United States to established National Monuments was authorized in the 1906 Antiquities Act.
Fiscal Year 2015,” which passed in December 2014. The legislation cites a slightly expanded statement of significance to include not only the early settlement of Dutch, Swedes, and English as well as “the role of Delaware in the birth of the United States” but also specifically “as the first State to ratify the Constitution.”

This legislation also expands the boundaries from the First State National Monument to include Fort Christina National Historic Landmark and Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church, both in Wilmington (New Castle Co.); the John Dickinson Plantation near Dover (Kent Co.); and the Ryves Holt House in Lewes (Sussex Co.). These sites, like the New Castle Court House and Green and The Green in Dover, are not owned by the National Park Service but rather included via “cooperative agreements.”

The “Woodlawn tract,” the largest contiguous acreage owned by NPS in the First State National Historical Park, serves as the land anchor for the park, with the headquarters set up in the former Lowber house. As Senator Carper notes, “estimates of construction, operation and maintenance of Delaware’s park—puts First State National Historical Park as one of the least expensive parks in the National Park System.”

**Preservation of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract**

William Poole Bancroft envisioned the Woodlawn Trustee’s “Brandywine Hundred lands” to be divided between lands preserved as parks for their enjoyment by the public and lands suitable for well-planned development. The 1,100-acre Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract—what locals refer to generally as Beaver Valley or “the Valley” and national references call the “Woodlawn tract”—fulfills an important part of Bancroft’s original vision as a component of First State National Historical Park. Though not “owned by the city” of Wilmington, as Bancroft mused back in 1909, the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract now preserves the natural beauty of the Brandywine Creek’s hills and valleys “and a few of the finest view points,” just as he had hoped. As a unit of the National Park Service, it will be “kept open for the public.”

Preservation of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract preserves not only the Brandywine’s natural beauty but also a significant portion of the Quaker cultural landscape that developed beginning in the eighteenth century. The preserved landscape also provides an opportunity to interpret the early Lenape occupation of the land and their interactions with the earliest Dutch and Swedish colonists along the Delaware River.

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130 “First State National Historical Park.”

131 William Bancroft, “1909 paper presented to the Brandywine Grange,” Box 1, Folder 1, Woodlawn Trustees Inc. Records. The other part of Bancroft’s vision, that of wise community planning, also continues on the remaining land still owned by the Woodlawn Trustees.
SECTION TWO

FIRST STATE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
ASSOCIATED SITES
INTRODUCTION

This section of the First State National Historical Park HRS provides a historical overview of each of the associated historic sites included within the park: Fort Christina Park (Chapter 2.1); Holy Trinity (Old Swedes’) Church (Chapter 2.2); Ryves Holt House (Chapter 2.3); New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House (Chapter 2.4); the John Dickinson Plantation (Chapter 2.5); and The Green, Dover (Chapter 2.6). Each chapter documents the developmental history of the subject’s cultural resource and highlights the national significance of the site, whether significant events or significant thematic associations. As many of the larger historic contexts are developed in Section One, reference is made to those contexts and a brief summary is included where appropriate. The Conclusion chapter clarifies the overarching national significance of First State National Historical Park and the contextual threads that tie together the varied cultural resources that populate the park.

The history of the land along the lower Delaware River and Bay is extensive, as evidenced by the history of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract in Section One. Section Two widens the scope of that history to include the other First State National Historical Park significant sites located throughout the “Three Lower Counties” (Delaware). With these additional sites, the history delves deeper into the political and economic developments that brought Delaware into the national spotlight as the United States was formed and codified in the late eighteenth century, and through its growing pains of the mid-nineteenth century.

In 1624, when the Dutch initially claimed the South (Delaware) River region as part of their New Netherland territory, their purpose was to enlarge their peltries trade network with the resident Lenape and nearby Minqua tribes. Still, much of their trade activities remained focused in the North (Hudson) River region. Contact with the Dutch traders, however, would forever alter the lives of the region’s Lenape bands. Disease, war with the Minqua over trade rivalries, and their violent confrontation with European colonists at Zwaanendael in 1631, interrupted daily and seasonal routines developed over hundreds of years. Despite this, many bands continued to occupy the land relatively undisturbed as the Dutch attempted no new settlements following the failure of the Zwaanendael colony at the mouth of Godyn’s Bay (Delaware Bay). For the next several decades, only the Fort Nassau trading post, which was occupied only intermittently, identified the Dutch presence in the region (see Chapters 1.1 and 1.2 for more detail on the Lenape and early European settlements).

In the 1630s, Chancellor Oxenstierna, who worked as Regent on behalf of the young Queen Christina and the Swedish Crown, moved to establish a colony in North
America.\(^1\) The first group of Swedish traders and colonists arrived aboard the *Kalmar Nyckel* and *Fogel Grip* in 1638. From their landing at “The Rocks,” they staked their claim to the South River territory, calling it New Sweden. There they built a trading post called Fort Christina located on the *Minquas Kill* (Christina River) near its confluence with the South River.\(^2\) Unlike the Dutch before them, the Swedish colonists and their Finnish allies adopted the land as their home. They also established small subsistence farms and a closer relationship with their Lenape neighbors and trading partners. In 1654, a town called *Christinehamn* (the site of today’s Wilmington) was laid out adjoining Fort Christina. The Swedish Lutheran church and graveyard (the site of today’s Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church were located on a hill just north of the fort.\(^3\)

The Dutch were slow to respond to the Swedish incursion; yet in 1651, they built Fort Casimir (at today’s New Castle) on the South River to the south of Fort Christina in order to recapture their dominance over the river commerce. The Dutch resurgence culminated in 1654 after the Swedes seized Fort Casimir. Dutch vengeance was swift and sure and New Sweden reverted to New Netherland governance. To solidify their renewed claim on the South River, Dutch settlements were established as far south as the *Hoere Kill* (English – Whorekill, today’s Lewes Creek), a creek at the mouth of Godyn’s Bay (Delaware Bay). In 1663, Pieter Cornelisen Plockhoy and forty fellow Mennonites sailed from Amsterdam to reoccupy the area of the former Zwaanendael patroonship.

The following year, in 1664, King Charles II of Great Britain seized the Dutch New Netherland territory which then came under the governance of the Duke of York. Though the *Hoere Kill* (Whorekill) settlements were reportedly plundered by the English and many residents fled to safer locations, the region was not abandoned. The old Plockhoy (later Wiltbank) settlement on the Whorekill was renamed Lewes (Deal, later Sussex, County). Lewes grew as a lively port town with both Dutch and English merchants and tradesmen. By 1671, forty men, women, and children populated the town and its surrounding farms. The region was fraught with attacks by Maryland proprietary militia over the ongoing territorial dispute. In about 1685, a small, two-room house or tavern (Ryves Holt House) was built on a corner lot “in the Second Street” and was occupied by its Quaker owner, Philip Russell. In 1723, the house was enlarged by Ryves Holt, William Penn’s appointed Naval Officer of the Port of Lewes, later the first Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Chancellor Oxenstierna was carrying out the wishes of his dead sovereign and friend, Gustav II Adolf, when he looked to expand Swedish trade and establish colonial settlements. Queen Christina never took an active interest in New Sweden, even after she came of age and ruled in her own right in 1644. The author learned this from Sam Heed, Senior historian and Director of Education at the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation. Sam Heed, personal communication with author, July 2018.


\(^3\) Greenwood, “Holy Trinity (Old Swedes’) Church,” https://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp.

Like the humble beginnings of Lewes, the town of New Castle in the northern county of New Castle began as a collection of cabins adjoining the Dutch Fort Casimir. Initially called New Amstel, the town was first laid out in 1651 along two streets. By 1655, a public market space (The Green) was added. The Green served as a place for public gatherings, town markets, and livestock grazing. An important port on the Delaware River, by 1658 as many as 600 people occupied New Amstel. When the English took control in 1664, the town was renamed New Castle. As the seat of the New Castle County government, the English constructed a courthouse on The Green in 1689. Beginning in November 1704, the New Castle Court House doubled as a State House where the new semi-autonomous Assembly for the “Three Lower Counties” met to enact laws and discuss political developments of the day. After a fire in 1729, a new New Castle Court House was constructed on the original foundations. It was in this new building after 1732, that the territorial dispute between Maryland’s Lord Baltimore and the Penn proprietary was in part quieted by the establishment of the building’s cupola point as the center of the twelve-mile arc. In this building in 1776, the legislature declared the formation of The Delaware State and at the same time declared its independence from Great Britain. In 1777, the Delaware state capital was moved to Dover in Kent County.

The John Dickinson Plantation was established in 1740 by Samuel Dickinson on 1,368 acres of Kent County land near Dover. The Dickinson family moved from Talbot County, located on Maryland’s Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. They brought with them from Maryland a well-established economic model of large-scale tobacco production using enslaved African laborers, although tobacco production in Delaware declined by the 1770s. John Dickinson grew to maturity on his father’s vast plantation. By the 1760s, he had a successful law practice in Philadelphia. In 1767, Dickinson penned his Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, an “appeal to reason” as colonial reaction to the British Townsend Acts sparked calls for rebellion. Author W. Barksdale Maynard, in his Buildings of Delaware, asserts that Dickinson refers to his plantation in the Letters.

As a Pennsylvania representative to the Continental Congress, Dickinson continued to write and argue for a diplomatic solution to the colonies’ grievances against the King and Parliament. Though his conscience prevented him from attending the vote for independence in 1776 when the American Revolution became a reality, “Dickinson was among the first to don uniform to defend the new nation.” John Dickinson returned to national

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8 W. Barksdale Maynard, Buildings of Delaware (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 236.
Introduction

politics in 1787 when he represented Delaware in the U.S. Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia; his skills in writing and compromise helped form the final document.

Construction of the new State House in Dover, fronting on The Green, was still underway in 1787 when thirty Delaware delegates met to vote on ratification of the United States Constitution. They met in the nearby Golden Fleece Tavern, adjoining the public Green, where the Upper House of the Assembly (Council) had been meeting since the move of the state capital to Dover in 1777. William Penn established the town of Dover in 1683, but surveys and construction were slow to follow. The county court house was finally completed in 1699—the same year The Green, or Public Square, was first ordered to be laid out by the county court. The order was issued again in November 1701 for a two-acre lot “next adjoyninge and round the Court house for a market place and other publick uses.”

During the American Revolution, The Green provided space for militia reviews and public gatherings. Though many of the buildings around The Green have come and gone, the landscape of the public square known as The Green has remained largely unchanged in appearance over its 300-year lifespan.

The extensive John Dickinson Plantation and similar estates in Kent County and south across Sussex County depended upon enslaved labor for large-scale agricultural production like those in the neighboring “slave states” of Maryland and Virginia. Delaware, however, had a large Quaker population much like its northern neighbor, the “free state” of Pennsylvania where slavery was outlawed in 1780. Slaveholders in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia were engaged in a constant struggle against enslaved individuals seeking their freedom in the northern free states. The famed Underground Railroad was a network of individuals—both black and white—who aided escaped enslaved people along several active routes through Delaware in the 1840s and 1850s.

Thomas Garrett, a Quaker iron merchant in Wilmington, is said to have overseen and actively participated in an extensive network in and around Wilmington. Garrett was a long-time member of the Wilmington Friends Meeting along with fellow industrialist William Poole Bancroft. In 1848, Thomas Garrett and John Hunn were tried in federal District Court held in the New Castle Court House and accused of aiding an African American family in their escape from bondage in Maryland. U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney (later author of the Dred Scott Decision) presided over the

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12 In 1856, Thomas Garrett identified the old Swedish landing at The Rocks as a landing point for fugitive enslaved people on the Underground Railroad. In a letter to William Still he wrote: “Captain Fountain has arrived all safe, with the human cargo thee was inquiring for, a few days since. I had men waiting till 12 o’clock till the Captain arrived at his berth, ready to receive them; last night they then learned, that he had landed them at the Rocks, near the old Swedes church, in the care of our efficient Pilot, who is in the employ of my friend, John Hillis, and he has them now in charge.” William Still, The Underground Rail Road (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872), 325.
trials and found the two men guilty of violating the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act. Setting a new legal precedent with the resulting penalties, Taney ruled that fines would be applied for each of enslaved individuals they had aided. The ruinous fines bankrupted both men, but the Wilmington Friends, including Emma Bancroft, purchased Garrett’s home and furniture at auction, which allowed him and his family to remain.

The sectional divide between the Northern and Southern states over institutionalized slavery dissolved into Civil War in 1861. Enslaved people in Delaware—a slave state that remained in the Union—were not freed by President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In fact, Delaware’s enslaved people, along with those in Kentucky, remained in bondage until December 1865 when the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified. Kentucky and Delaware were the last states in the Union to end institutionalized slavery.

The history of Delaware, the “First State,” continued beyond its infamous “last state” status of 1865. There were inspiring developments in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Wilmington manufactures expanded through the growth of the DuPont Chemical Company and Bancroft Mills, among others, as well as advances in shipbuilding and railcar construction in the port cities of Lewes and Wilmington. While Delaware men had made “First State” history in ratifying the 1787 U.S. Constitution, Delaware women were at the forefront of the fight to enshrine American women’s right to vote in the twentieth century with the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Though a small state with only three counties, Delaware looms large in American history. The following six historic sites in Delaware, which, in addition to the Beaver Valley-Woodlawn Tract, comprise First State National Historical Park, serve to illustrate Delaware’s significant role in shaping the American cultural landscape.
CHAPTER 2.1

FORT CHRISTINA PARK

The two-acre Fort Christina Park located on the Christina River waterfront in Wilmington, Delaware, preserves and commemorates what is believed to be the site of Fort Christina at the Swedish landing site known as “The Rocks.” Fort Christina represents “the first permanent European settlement in the Delaware Valley”¹ and is considered nationally significant as “the nucleus of New Sweden on the Delaware River.”² Fort Christina Park was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975.

Physical Description

Fort Christina was located near the landing site where in 1638, the first Swedish colonists and fur traders anchored the *Kalmar Nyckel* and *Fogel Grip* and stepped ashore. The landing, known as “The Rocks,” was on the north bank of the Christina River just west of its confluence with the Brandywine Creek. About two miles to the southeast is the confluence of the Christina and the Delaware Rivers. The site today is part of the city of Wilmington.

Fort Christina Park is a long, narrow, rectangular open space that extends from Wilmington’s East 7th Street to the outcrop of dark rocks that formed the landing place in the river. The surrounding area is generally industrial with the exception of early sites such as Old Swedes Church, located a short distance to the northwest. Situated to the east of the park is the Copeland Maritime Center, which serves as the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation’s headquarters and museum and where *Kalmar Nyckel*, the re-creation of the seventeenth-century ship that brought the early colonists to Fort Christina, is maintained and operated.

The exact location of Fort Christina has not been fully determined, but it is presumed to lie in close proximity to the landing place. The fort served as a place of protection and a trading post. Fort Christina Park, created in 1938 on the 300th anniversary of the landing, consists of a flat landscaped area with defining high brick boundary walls along each side and a wrought iron fence with brick piers along East 7th Street. An iron gate opens from 7th Street into the park, and accesses two parallel wide flagstone walkways lined with trees. The walkways lead from the gate area at 7th Street southward to the water’s edge. At the river, the west walkway expands into a large plaza jutting out into the

¹ Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, “Fort Christina,” wayside sign.
Fort Christina Park

water. It offers a view up and down the river and specifically toward the rocks that were the landing place. On the point that projects into the river is a large sculpture commemorating the landing. The sculptural monument was a gift from the people of Sweden in 1938. According to a state historical marker placed at the site, Swedish-American sculptor Carl Milles created the monument from Swedish black granite. The monument is a hexagonal tower with bas relief depictions of people and events associated with the 1638 landing.

The park appears to be well maintained and in good condition. It contains approximately two acres.

New Sweden and Fort Christina

The first Swedish colonists who landed at “The Rocks” in 1638 were led by Peter Minuit, a German-born merchant who had previously served as the third Director of the New Netherland colony beginning in 1626. Minuit knew the area of the South (Delaware) River and its native occupants, having explored the river for the Dutch West India Company (WIC) in 1625. In 1629, as New Netherland Director, Minuit negotiated with the Siconese Lenape on behalf of WIC investors Samuel Godyn and Samuel Blommaert for their patroonship known as Zwaanendael or Swanandael. Minuit was stripped of his directorship in 1631 amid charges of improprieties. Given his knowledge of the region and his broken relationship with the Dutch trading company, Minuit was a logical choice to lead the newly chartered New Sweden Company’s first expedition to the Delaware Bay, of which Samuel Blommaert was a key investor. The New Sweden Company formed in 1637 under a charter given by the young Swedish Queen Christina (still just eleven years old) and approved by her regent, Sweden’s Lord High Chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna. Its purpose was to establish a Swedish colony on the Delaware River and begin trading with the local Indians. In December 1637, two Swedish ships, the Kalmar Nyckel and Fogel Grip, set sail for North America. In March 1638, they entered the Delaware Bay. He steered his ships into the Minquas Kill (Christina Creek) and landed at a place the Swedes called “The Rocks.”

Before construction of a fortification began, Peter Minuit met with the local Lenape sachems (band-level chiefs) in order to “purchase” the land on which the New Sweden colony would be planted. Minuit’s crew later recalled the transaction with both Lenape and Minqua leaders in attendance:

Director Peter Minuit requested and caused the nations or people to whom the land really belonged to come before him, whom he then asked, if they wished to sell the river, with all the land lying about there, as many days’ journeys as he would request. This they agreed to with the common consent of the nations. The parties were therefore agreed with one another, and thereupon, on the twenty-ninth of March of the above year [1638], appeared and presented themselves before the abovementioned ship’s council, in the name of their nations or people, five Sachems or princes, by the name of Mattahorn, Mitot...
Schemingh, Eru Packen, Mahamen, and Chiton, some being present [on behalf] of the Ermewormahi [Erie or Black Minqua], the others on behalf of the Mante [Lenape] and Minqua [White Minqua or Susquehannock] nations.

Figure 39: 1654 Lindstrom sketch of Fort Christina. Johnson, The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware.

The Swedes claimed that the land they purchased stretched from Cape Henlopen along the west of the South (Delaware) Bay to the falls of the Delaware River and westward “several days’ journey in extent.” The sachem Mattahorn later disputed that description in 1651, testifying that the transaction was for “as much land as [Minuit] could set a house on, and a plantation included between 6 trees . . . that neither the Swedes nor any other nation had bought lands of them as right owners, except the patch on which Fort Christina stood.”
Minuit, however, was satisfied that the New Sweden Company now owned the land and set his men to work building a fortification at The Rocks. Thomas Scharf’s *History of Delaware* (1888) described the fort as “a small enclosure having the general form of a square, and within the stronghold were erected two log houses for the abode of those who should form the garrison and as a place for the storage of provisions for them, as well as a depository for the goods brought to barter with the Indians.” In 1654, Swedish engineer Peter Lindstrom drew the structure as a four-cornered “star” fort with deeply projecting corner bastions (Figures 39 and 40). The fort was enclosed by log palisades fortified with earthen banks over which the ramparts were constructed. A ditch or moat surrounded the fort, which would have effectively raised the height of the palisades and provided the earth for the fortification.

Lindstrom’s drawing also showed a large building that likely served as a barracks and a smaller, but tall building without windows that presumably was a magazine and/or storehouse. Three tiny buildings depicted in the fort are of unknown use, one of which appears to be located on the northeast rampart. Outside the fort, Lindstrom’s 1654 map illustrated three dwellings located on a road leading to the community gardens. His battle map, drawn in 1655 following the Dutch siege of the fort, described the gardens as the “Kitchen” and additionally detailed the block plan of the adjoining town of Christinahamn (Christina Harbor) (Figure 41).
The fort depicted in Lindstrom’s 1654 and 1655 maps was a thrice-improved version of the original fort constructed by Minuit and his men in 1638. Though the shape and size of the fort was likely unchanged, the fort was repaired and improved under the guidance of three successive New Sweden directors (governors)—Ridder (1640–1643), Printz (1643–1653), and Rising (1654–1655)—over the course of its brief history under Swedish control:

In 1640, under the direction of Governor Ridder, the earthworks were repaired and three new houses, a storehouse, and a barn were constructed within the fort. In 1641–1642, colonists began to build their small houses on tobacco plantations outside the fort. In 1647, it was necessary to rebuild the fort entirely.

In 1654–55, Governor Rising [sic] had the town of Christina Harbour laid out in back of the fort to the north, and fifteen to twenty houses were constructed on the square blocks of the new town. At the same time Fort Christina was re-strengthened and a new palisade was erected around the earthworks.

Johan Rising, who arrived in the New Sweden colony in 1654, assumed the role of Director or Governor following his seizure of the Dutch Fort Casimir. His improvements to the fortifications of Fort Christina were no doubt ordered on the expectation of a Dutch reprisal. In this, the Dutch or “Hollanders” did not disappoint.
In September 1655, after handily reoccupying Fort Casimir (renamed Fort Trinity by the Swedes), New Netherland Governor, Peter Stuyvesant, steered his warships up the Minquas Kill (Christina River) and laid siege to Fort Christina. Swedish engineer Peter Lindstrom reported the events:

_The 2nd of September_ the enemy surrounded and besieged Fort Christina. On the same day the enemy pillaged Tenna Konck or Printzhoff. On the same day the village of Christinehambn in New Sweden was ruined and burnt to the ground. The same day our soldiers who were at Fort Trinity took the oath of allegiance to the Hollanders.³

Rising and the Swedes in Fort Christina held out against the Dutch siege until September 15:

Until this day Director Mr. Rijsingh [sic] held out well and irreproachably in every manner; but then he was compelled to give up the fort on account of lack of powder, because most of the powder had been ordered to Fort Trinity to be used there, since that was the key to the New Sweden River, lying foremost in the passage, and hence first to be attacked.⁴

Three days later, after signing an agreement to end the siege, Lindstrom reported that “General Stijfvesandh [Stuyvesant] came stilting on his wooden leg to us in Fort Christina” whereupon he led his soldiers into the fort, “occupying all the batteries, hauling down our flag and placing his own in its stead.” While many of the Swedish officers returned to “Old Sweden,” most of the common soldiers and freemen elected to remain in their homes and farms along the Delaware under New Netherland rule.⁵

_New Netherland and Fort Altena_

The Dutch West India Company (WIC) found itself deeply in debt after financing the reacquisition of the South River territory. In December 1656, they determined to transfer Fort Casimir and the all the land from the west side of Christina Creek to Cape Henlopen to the City of Amsterdam. The new colony, and its fort (formerly Casimir) and port town, would be known as New Amstel and placed under the vice-directorship of Jacob Alrichs, a representative of the Burgomasters of Amsterdam.

Fort Christina, by then renamed Fort Altena, and the land east of Christina Creek remained under the ownership of WIC. In 1657, Fort Altena became the Company’s headquarters in the South River territory and the Directors recommended that Stuyvesant garrison the fort with eight to ten soldiers “for the safety of the Swedes, now our subjects, as [well as] to awe and make careful the natives and other nations.”⁶

³ Lindstrom, _Geographia Americae_, 267.
⁴ Lindstrom, _Geographia_, 269.
⁵ Lindstrom, _Geographia_, 271.
(Casimir), Fort Altena was by then in poor condition, according to Alrichs: “[I have ordered] ... five and twenty men to go to Christina, now Altena, at which place, it being also somewhat tumbled down, as no garrison has been there for quite a while, they were therefore embarrassed and in need of shelter for their persons and the small quantity of provisions.”

In July 1658, William Beeckman was appointed the Commissary and Vice Director for the WIC. He ordered to “provisionally take his quarters in the buildings in Fort Altena.”8 Though his administrative headquarters were at Fort Altena, Beeckman spent much of his time in New Amstel overseeing the Company shipments arriving at the New Amstel wharves. According to Company records, smuggling had become a significant problem under Alrich’s tenure. Yet other problems loomed over the South River colonies. Initially, these were threats of violence from Maryland colonists in support of Lord Baltimore’s claim over the Dutch territory. In September 1659, Indian attacks on South River colonists prompted Stuyvesant to appoint Commissioners Cornelis van Ruyvan and Capt. Marten Creiger. Ruyvan and Creiger marched a garrison of sixty soldiers from New Amsterdam to Fort Altena to supplement the sixteen men already stationed there. But by October 1, 1659, the troops were moved to Fort Amstel and apparently shortly thereafter recalled to New Amsterdam.9

In November 1659, Beeckman reported twenty-one men garrisoned at Fort Altena. All, except the seven married men, lived in the fort.10 In April 1660, Beeckman reported that they were “placing gabions on the Fort and shall cut down the crumbled points slopingly.” He also noted that the quarters, which doubled as a guardhouse, were so tight that the men “undress themselves often and go into their bunks, because they have no bench to rest on nor can any be placed ... [and] have also frequent quarrels about the fire, now it is fuel for the guard, then again fuel for the quarters, so that there is always strife.” Beeckman continued, “We need here very much a guardhouse, about 12 or 15 feet long.”11 Beeckman’s reports indicate that mostly Swedes and Finns were jailed, primarily for drunkenness and debt to the Company.

On September 1, 1663, William Beeckman asked if the Company would repair Fort Altena, “as the pallisades and everything are in decay.”12 He never received an answer as by September 9, the West India Company had surrendered the whole of the South River territory to the City of Amsterdam. Stuyvesant was instructed to order Beeckman and the garrison to begin “evacuating Fort Christina, but carrying off the ammunition of war, the

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7 Jacob Alrichs to Peter Stuyvesant, 1657, in Fernow, Documents, 7:188.
9 Ruyven and Creiger to Alrichs, Sept. 26, 1659, in Fernow, Documents, 7:263; Ruyven and Creiger to Alrichs, Oct. 1, 1659, in Fernow, Documents, 7:266–70.
10 Beeckman to Stuyvesant, Nov. 8, 1659, in Fernow, Documents, 7:283.
11 Beeckman to Stuyvesant, April 28, 1660, in Fernow, Documents, 7:307.
12 Beeckman to Stuyvesant, Sept. 1, 1663, in Fernow, Documents, 7:439.
ordnance and everything belonging to it and further all the Company’s property and effects” in advance of the City’s administration. Beeckman elected to move to Maryland and it appears Fort Altena (Christina) was not reoccupied as Fort New Amstel became the seat of government. But the City’s tenure in possession of the South River colony did not last long.

While the Dutch, Swede, and Finn occupants of the South River lived in constant fear of Indian attacks and the recurring threat of Lord Baltimore’s claim on their land, a larger threat was brewing across the ocean in the uneasy peace between the feuding British and Netherlands governments. The two nations fought a naval war from 1652 to 1654, known as the First Anglo-Dutch War, over which country would dominate the oceanic trade routes. A second war broke out in 1665, in part because Britain’s King Charles II unilaterally seized the Dutch New Netherland territory in 1664. The Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667) ended in an uneasy peace. The King’s brother, James, Duke of York, played a significant role in the English defeat of the Dutch naval fleet during the first battle of the war. He was rewarded with the New Netherland territory, renamed New York in his honor. Though the territory included only the land on the east side of the Delaware River, the Duke of York additionally claimed the South River colony (effectively all of future Delaware) as his own.

In September 1664, the Duke of York sent Sir Robert Carr to “reduce” Fort New Amstel and take control of the former Dutch/Swede colony:

> When you are come near unto the ffort which is possessed by the Dutch you shall send your boat on shoar to summon the Governour and inhabitants to yield obedience to his Majestie as the rightfull sovereign of that tract of land and let him and them know that his Majestie is graciously pleased that all the planters shall enjoy their ffarms, houses, lands, goods and chattels with the same privileges and upon the same terms which they do now possess them, Only that they change their masters, whether they be the West India Company or the City of Amsterdam.

No mention was made of Fort Altena to the north, which likely was in a state of advanced decay following its abandonment by the WIC in 1663. What remained was the largely Swedish-occupied town laid out by Director-General Stuyvesant during his 1658 visit to the South River colony.

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13 Directors of WIC to Director General and Council of New Netherland, in Fernow, *Documents*, 7: 440–42.

14 A land patent record dated October 1669 indicates that the fort was gone by then: “A Patent granted to Robert Jones, for a small parcel of land convenient to keep a ferry in Christeen Kill in Delaware. Whereas there is a certain small parcel of land in Christeen kill at Delaware where formerly ye Fort stood.” Original Land Titles in Delaware, 143.


For nearly one hundred years, the site of Fort Christina at The Rocks lay forgotten and unused. During that time the former Swedish/Dutch colony was conveyed in 1682 by the Duke of York to Pennsylvania proprietor, William Penn, becoming known as the “Territories” or the “Three Lower Counties.” The Swedish town site, all but abandoned by 1730, was redeveloped by Quaker immigrants Thomas Willing and William Shipley in 1731 just west of the old fort site. Called Willington for its founder, the town was renamed Wilmington in the King’s town charter of 1739 and claimed over 600 residents by 1740. But in 1748, threats from French and Spanish privateers trolling the waters of the Delaware River and its tributaries instilled fear among the residents of the small town. A fortified redoubt was built on or near the site of the old fort along The Rocks and manned by local citizens. As the threat passed, it would be another two decades before calls for fortification on the Christina River would again be heard.

The Revolutionary War and the Wilmington Defensive Outpost

In the spring of 1775, the brewing disagreement between the American colonies and the British Crown and Parliament over taxation and colonial governance dissolved into war. It began with the 1765 Stamp Act. The tax levied on the American colonies by the British parliament to help pay for their defense during the recent French and Indian War (Seven Years War) drew as much ire in Delaware as elsewhere. In the letter of introduction for the Delaware delegates attending the Stamp Act Congress of 1765 in New York, the Delaware Assembly indicated its displeasure with “the great infringement of the liberties and just established rights of all his majesty’s colonies on this continent” and asserted “the colonies’ right of exclusion from parliamentary taxation.” Thomas McKean of New Castle and Caesar Rodney of Dover in Kent County represented the Lower Counties in the Stamp Act Congress. John Dickinson, who had moved to Philadelphia from his father’s plantation near Dover, attended the Congress as a representative from Pennsylvania. Dickinson is credited with authoring a large part of the resulting petition to the King and Parliament. In 1766, Parliament withdrew the Stamp Act; yet the sentiments arising from the 1765 Congress would later become the rallying cry of the American Revolution: “No taxation without representation.”

Just two years later, the British Parliament tried once again to raise revenue from the American colonies by passing the Townsend Revenue Act in 1767. The act levied duties on a number of vital British imports to the colonies. Again, following concerted American

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21 “Magna Carta.”
protests and boycotts, parliament repealed the act in 1770. The duty on tea, however, remained in place. On December 16, 1773, colonial patriots dumped a shipment of English tea into the Boston Harbor rather than pay the tax. The act of defiance ignited a rebellious fire in the hearts of many colonists.²²

When British troops moved into Boston to enforce the harbor closure following the 1773 Boston Tea Party, the colonies again united in their opposition and called for a meeting of the First Continental Congress. In the fall of 1774, the Congress convened in Philadelphia. Thomas McKean and Caesar Rodney again represented their Delaware counties along with George Read of New Castle County. Petitions were sent again to England requesting redress of colonial grievances, and the representatives agreed to another boycott of English goods shipped to American ports. While some, including Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, continued to hold out hope for reconciliation with England, most of the colonies already envisioned an independent post-colonial union. A Second Continental Congress was scheduled to meet in May 1775. Just one month prior to that meeting, the war for independence began when the colonial militia and British soldiers clashed at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts.²³

The American rebels, calling themselves Continentals, faced the world’s strongest naval fleet in the war for independence from Great Britain. Delaware was in a particularly vulnerable position sandwiched between the Delaware Bay and the Chesapeake Bay. The strategic position of the old fort site at The Rocks may have again been utilized for protection. The Wilmington defensive outpost, reportedly established in 1776, was likely little more than a militia encampment and perhaps a new redoubt (Figure 42).²⁴ Originally placed to provide protection for the growing town of Wilmington, the outpost would gain new importance in the summer of 1777 when General George Washington established his headquarters in Wilmington.

²³ Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 235–37. See Middlekauff, The Glorious Cause, for a comprehensive discussion of the events leading up to the American Revolution or War for Independence. Additional details concerning the events leading up to the American Revolution can be found in Chapter 2.5 “John Dickinson Plantation.”
Following the British capture of New York, Lieutenant General William Howe moved 18,000 of his men via ship into the Chesapeake Bay. In response, Washington encamped most of the Continental Army (16,000 men) on the east bank of Brandywine Creek in anticipation of a British move on Philadelphia. An advance guard detachment of approximately 1,700 men, including Continental Army regulars and Delaware and Pennsylvania militia under the command of Brigadier General William Maxwell, occupied Iron Hill and Cooch’s Bridge over the Christina River west of Wilmington. On September 3, 1777, they were met by a Hessian regiment that was a part of British General Cornwallis’ command. A day-long skirmish ensued with the Americans fighting until they ran out of ammunition:

After the enemy had shot themselves out of ammunition the fight was carried on with the sword, they being finally put to flight. But they immediately made a stand again, and we drove them away a second time, when they took post beyond Christeen Creek at Cooch’s Bridge.\textsuperscript{25}

The British pushed the Americans back toward Wilmington. General Washington moved most of his troops forward to Red Clay Creek in an effort to protect both Wilmington and Philadelphia, but the British turned north through Newark into Pennsylvania. Washington’s Continental Army raced northward to Chadd’s Ford on the Brandywine where the two armies met again on September 11 in the Battle of Brandywine. It was a disastrous loss for the Americans. The battle left Philadelphia and Wilmington open for British occupation and the Delaware River “infested with enemy ships.”

In December 1777, Washington sent General Smallwood back to Wilmington with a division of troops and an engineer to put “the place in the best posture of defense” with authorization to confiscate tools and supplies from the surrounding countryside. Smallwood additionally reactivated at least one of the Wilmington flour mills, all of which had previously been deprived of their millstones in an attempt to deny supplies to the British. Washington hoped the reactivated mill would help to feed the local citizens, as well as “supply you,” wrote Washington to Smallwood, “with Flour and Horse Feed.” The Wilmington defensive outpost was abandoned after 1778.

Though the winter of 1778 was a difficult one for Washington’s troops at Valley Forge, Benjamin Franklin’s negotiations toward an alliance with France bore fruit. In a treaty signed in February 1778, France committed itself to “the independence of the United States” and promised military aid following a French declaration of war against Britain. With England now fighting two wars, the Americans slowly began to gain the upper hand in the fight against the British Army. Taking the war into the southern colonies, the British struggled with an increasingly unconventional war as American patriots engaged in less “conventional” warfare. The British suffered too from insufficient supplies as they moved inland away from supply ships. In October 1781, French and American troops laid siege to Yorktown, Virginia, then occupied by British regulars under command of General Cornwallis. Though Cornwallis’ surrender at Yorktown did not immediately end the war, it hastened efforts in England to bring the conflict to a conclusion. In the spring of 1782, representatives of the British government entered into peace talks with the American peace commission. A preliminary agreement was signed in November 1782 and the final Treaty of Paris was signed September 3, 1783.

The Treaty of Paris officially ended the American Revolutionary War. The United States of America, the confederacy formed by “The Delaware State” and the twelve other states, was recognized as an independent nation. In 1787, when the confederacy became a republic with the ratification of the new U.S. Constitution, Delaware became the “First

27 Christopher L. Ward, The Delaware Continentals (Wilmington: The Historical Society of Delaware, 1941), 256.
28 Ward, Delaware Continentals, 257.
State” to ratify the foundational document (see Chapters 2.4 and 2.6 for more context on the American Revolutionary War and U.S. Constitution).

**Fort Union (1813–1815)**

With the return to peace and a new government, the Wilmington manufactories resumed full production largely centered on flour milling, cotton and woolen cloth, paper, and iron. A new product entered the Wilmington scene in 1802, when French immigrant Éleuthère Irénée du Pont established his gunpowder mill on the Brandywine just north of Wilmington. Du Pont’s establishment would play an important role during the next war between the United States and Great Britain, which began in 1812. Once again, it appears the site at The Rocks may have been used to protect the exposed river front at Wilmington. In April 1813, Samuel Woodworth reported in his weekly journal called *The War* on “the construction of Fort Union near Wilmington.”

Four years later, in 1817, the Corporation of Wilmington was reimbursed $1,553 by the federal government “for expenses incurred by them in the erecting of a Fort, ammunition, Rations, Forage, Transportation and other incidental expenses.”

**Wilmington’s Industrial Waterfront and Fort Christina Park**

Du Pont’s successful gunpowder manufactory presaged the industrial revolution that would find its way to Wilmington beginning around 1830. Wilmington sat at the confluence of the tremendous water power of the Brandywine Creek and the navigable waterfront along the Christina River. The Brandywine powered the expansive factory milling operations of the du Ponts and Bancrofts, among others, while the Christina waterfront fostered several shipbuilding companies and manufacturers of railroad cars and carriages (Figure 43). These factories fostered the growth of the city of Wilmington from a population of 6,600 in 1830 to over 76,000 in 1900. In 1913, a city-wide vote approved the construction of a deep-water port in the Christina River to advance the city’s shipping capabilities. The port was officially opened for business in 1923 and brought in new development along the waterfront.

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29 “Delaware in Wartime.” This source cites *New York* *The War*, April 13, 1813.

With the phenomenal industrial and population growth of the city, it was remarkable that the old landing and at least part of the presumed fort site remained relatively undisturbed through the turn of the twentieth century (Figure 44).\textsuperscript{31} By 1876, the old fort site was encompassed in the McCullough Iron Company property, where by 1887 railroad spur tracks appear to have been laid over the presumed fort site (Figures 45 and 46). A 1936 survey map that included the former McCullough property, then owned by the Wilmington Steamboat Company, showed several buildings on the site (Figures 47 and 48).

\textsuperscript{31} The presumed fort site at The Rocks, which has yet to be archeologically confirmed, was “relatively undisturbed” in the sense that it was not excavated and covered by large industrial buildings.
In 1937, the state of Delaware purchased the narrow lot extending inland from The Rocks to establish the Fort Christina Park. The development was in anticipation of the 300th anniversary of the Swedish landing and settlement, with a joint celebration planned by Delaware and the Swedish government. Swedish citizens donated $60,000 for the Carl Milles sculpture commemorating the landing to be erected in the park. The sculpture/monument, sited near The Rocks landing site, was unveiled in a ceremony on June 28, 1938.
and attended by the Swedish Crown Prince and Princess, Prince Bertil, the Finnish Official Delegation, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Delaware Governor Richard C. McMullen.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Figure 45}: Detail from 1876 G.M. Hopkins Atlas of City of Wilmington.

\textsuperscript{32} “Fort Christina Monument,” Delaware Public Archives, microfiche CRS N-338, “Fort Christina Research.” Swedish Crown Prince Gustav Adolf was ill with kidney stones the day of the park dedication ceremony and not in attendance. He listened to the broadcast on the radio from his stateroom aboard the Swedish liner \textit{Kungsholm}, which was anchored in the Delaware River.
Figure 46: Detail from 1887 Baist Atlas of Wilmington and Vicinity.

Figure 47: 1936 Wilmington Steamboat Co. survey.
Figure 48: 1937 Fort Christina Park plan. John Milner Assoc., “Geomorphologic Assessment, Fort Christina Park,” 2012, Figure 9.
Though the site of Fort Christina is identified on a number of maps from as early as 1655 through 1772, the exact location of the fort has never been determined. In 2011, a “Phase 1A Investigation into the Location of Fort Christina” was completed preparatory to possible archaeological testing of the Fort Christina Park site. Based upon a thorough review of maps and written sources, the report’s author identified the area of highest probability for where the fort might have been located (Figure 49), concluding:

All of the descriptions for the site of the fort place it on fast ground between marshes. Therefore, a series of borings or other subsurface exposures should be employed across the park area and to each side (as possible) to see if a composite profile reveals an area of naturally fast ground within marsh sediments.33

Figure 49: 2011 aerial image showing suggested location of Fort Christina.

33 Gannett Fleming, “Phase 1A Investigation into the Location of Fort Christina,” (unpublished manuscript, prepared for the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation and DIGSAU, Jan. 2011), 7.
In 2012, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs followed up on the Phase IA report suggestion and contracted with John Milner Associates Inc. to complete a geomorphic study of the park landscape. Eleven borings were taken across the park “to determine the presence or absence of buried deposits that could have supported historic and/or prehistoric occupation of the landscape and to determine the integrity of the deposits to contain historic or prehistoric materials.”

Six borings taken in the northern section of the park revealed a “Tidal Wetland” horizon under layers of park development and industrial fill. The western corner of the park near The Rocks, however, showed an “intact buried landscape” (boring #Gp4), indicating the potential for archeological remains. To date (2018), no archeological investigations have been completed to definitively locate the site of Fort Christina.

Fort Christina Park serves as a significant commemorative site. It marks the presumed landing of the first Swedish settlement expedition in 1638, which was among the earliest permanent European settlements in American history. Although still speculative concerning its location as the site of the original Fort Christina, the park also provides a commemorative venue for the history of the fort and its various iterations associated with Swedish, Dutch, English, and U.S. political developments.

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35 Chadwick, “Geomorphic Assessment,” 5.
Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church in Wilmington is nationally significant for its association with early Swedish settlement in the Mid-Atlantic region. The cemetery grounds on which the 1698 church stands include the burials of the earliest Swedish colonists (1640s) as well as forty-four men who fought in the American Revolution. The church and cemetery were designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961 and certified in 1977 with the following Statement of Significance:

Built in 1698 on the original burial ground of Fort Christina, Holy Trinity Church is the oldest surviving church of a Delaware Valley Swedish congregation. No other structure so closely related to Swedish settlement has so markedly retained its architectural integrity.¹

Figure 50: Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church, west elevation. Paula S. Reed and Associates, Inc. 2016.

Though the extant 1698 church building was completed after the 1655 fall of New Sweden, it is integral to the history of the Swedish and later English settlements along the Delaware River.

**Physical Description**

Just to the northwest of the Fort Christina site, at the intersection of East 7th Street and Church Street, is Old Swedes Church. The church sits in a large lot that is mostly developed as a cemetery. The historic buildings and grounds are situated on a three-acre site along the Christina River in a mixed residential/industrial urban setting—one of the few green spaces in the neighborhood. Amtrak and regional railroad tracks, a manufacturing plant, city streets, and a parking lot border the property. Trees line the sidewalks on two sides of the property. The surrounding neighborhood is working-class residential with blocks filled with two- and three-story brick row houses dating from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century.

Within the church property is Old Swedes Church, which is the popular name for Holy Trinity Church, built in 1698–99, and its surrounding cemetery. Also, on the church property is the former Parish House dating from 1893, known since 1944 as the Christina Community Center. In 1959, the stone Hendrickson House, a building built around 1622 and moved from a site between Stoney Creek and Crum Creek in Chester County (now Delaware County), Pennsylvania, was reconstructed along Church Street at the west side of the property. South of the Hendrickson House is a stone-paved parking area with an amphitheater and a labyrinth. Belgian paver stones were laid in the parking lot and the amphitheater was created between late 1970s and 1983. The forty-two-foot labyrinth is modeled after the one at Chartres Cathedral in France. The labyrinth was painted onto a stage that serves the amphitheater in 2001. The churchyard proper is enclosed within a stone wall topped with an iron fence. Brick-paved walkways lead to the church building from gates in the wall. The First State National Historical Park Boundary follows the cemetery wall and excludes the Community Center, Hendrickson House, and the amphitheater area.

While the construction of the church in 1698 and that of the brick bell tower in 1802–1803 are documented, the dates for some of the alterations, repairs, and renovations to the church are vague. Church records remain and form an important part of the documentation in this chapter. Discrepancies occur, however, over the dates that work was proposed and when it was actually completed. Various researchers interpret these dates

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2 The estimated 1622 date and location for this building was supplied by the Holy Trinity Church unit of First State National Historical Park.

3 Information provided by the Holy Trinity Church unit of First State National Historical Park.
differently. In addition, the University of Delaware conducted an archeological investigation of the north and south wall buttresses in 2015 and produced an “Anthropology Field Notes” blog with students and faculty involved with the project. The blog mentions different dates for alterations to the church but unfortunately lack references to the information’s source. Nevertheless, the archeological findings include several notable discoveries, including grave sites under the buttresses and other artifacts from the early history of the church. With these vagaries, this chapter attempts to present the currently available information with references to its source, but some dates for work performed on the church simply are not clear.

The original church is built from local stone with a jerkinhead hipped roof hood at its east end. It has a rectangular plan which is oriented east-west and measures approximately thirty-by-sixty feet. Originally, the building had jerkinhead hips at each end, but the west end was converted to a gable with the addition of a bell tower in 1802. Stone buttresses, four along the north wall and two along the south wall, project outward from the building. The buttresses frame opposing central entrances at the north and south. According to the National Register/National Historic Landmark nomination for the church, the buttresses were added in 1749 because the walls were moving outward. However, church records indicate that they may have been added earlier in 1740 (see discussion below). The buttresses were infilled with brick to form gabled porches with archway openings over the north and south entrances and a projecting sacristy on the north side. According to church records, the sacristy was not completed until after 1750. While the nomination asserts that the brickwork was part of the 1749 construction of the buttresses, it may have been added later, perhaps as late as 1802 when the brick bell tower was installed. The uncoursed stone walls have wide, flush, mortar joints with decorative galletting. There is a watertable at the base of the building and leveling courses across the end walls at the eaves level. While leveling courses across gable end walls frequently indicate that a building had pent roofs at one time, no other documentary evidence suggests that Old Swedes Church had pents across its gables. Disturbed or altered masonry around the windows suggests changes to them; church records note the replacement and alteration of windows. Carvings and graffiti have been added to the walls and woodwork over time.

The original windows were casements that were replaced in 1756 and 1758 with new windows that had clear glass panes (see history and reference below). Typically, eighteenth-century churches used clear glass windows to provide adequate daylight to illuminate the interior. Currently, the windows are round arched and partially or entirely

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4 The Holy Trinity Church unit of First State National Historical Park references a 2015 “Historic Structure Report” as providing definitive dates for original work, alterations, repairs, and renovations to the church. A copy of the HSR was not available for this project and therefore no citation or further information can be added to this Historic Resource Study at present.

lined with brick. Stained glass windows were added over a period from 1884 to 1896. According to the historic church records quoted below, the original builder’s contract called for the windows and doors to be arched and the windows to be quoined with brick. The Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church unit of First State National Historical Park reports that glazing was done by a Dutch glazier named Lenard Osterson. Sash windows were installed in 1756–59, though some work was done during Acrelius’s tenure.

There are opposing front and rear doors. They are rectangular or arched and accessed through gabled porches created from the buttresses. The original main entrance is in the south wall. It is behind a broad, arched porch and includes double doors to the interior and an exterior stairway that provides access to the church’s balcony. Due to the stair landing over the entrance, the south entrance is flat-topped rather than arched. The rear entrance in the north wall is arched. Another entrance that is headed with a round arch leads from the sanctuary into the bell tower. Doors are double in thickness with raised panels on the exterior and diagonal tongue and groove wood surfacing on the interior side. Ornate strap hinges attach the doors.

In 1802, a Georgian-style brick bell tower was added. It is constructed in Flemish bond with a watertable at the base. An open, arcaded cupola with a bellcast roof tops the tower over a hip-roofed base. The tower has round arched entrances and rectangular six-over-nine sash windows beneath shallow segmental arches. Windows in the wooden base of the cupola are arched. Wrought iron letters, part of an inscription placed on the west wall of the original church when it was built, including the date 1698, are set into the brick walls of the tower. The iron numbers are from those that were originally set in the west wall. The initials and last name of the builder of the tower, T S COLE, are set in the tower.

The interior of the building features brick floors, enclosed pews, and a black walnut elevated pulpit with a sounding board overhead. The pulpit is located on the north side of the church with the altar at the east end. The current altar is a modern replacement. The ceiling is barrel vaulted. The balcony, supported by round columns, covers nearly a third of the interior space (Figure 51).

Since 1699, the church has undergone a number of changes. It began as a Swedish Lutheran Church, but in 1791 when the last Swedish priest left, the congregation became Protestant Episcopal. In addition to the buttresses constructed in 1740 or 1749, the balcony was added in 1774 providing twenty-five additional pews. In 1802, the brick tower and
belfry were added at the west end of the church. In 1842, repairs and alterations included the replacement of the main floor pews. In 1899 [or 1884–1896], the building was refurbished for the church’s bicentennial, including reproduction of the original pews that had been removed and installation of the stained-glass windows that replaced the earlier clear glass lights.9

According to the National Register/National Historic Landmark nomination and church records (see references below), John Yard was contracted to do the masonry, assisted by his sons, Joseph, John, and William, the carpenter was John Smart, and the joiner was John Harrison (all from Philadelphia). The Old Swedes Foundation indicates on their website that “the pulpit is the oldest known pulpit in the United States. Made of black walnut, it has a canopy and support board [sounding board?]. “The pulpit was carved by Joseph Harrison, a cabinetmaker from Philadelphia, who used wood given by members of the congregation.”10 Production of the pulpit was specified in John Smart’s contract, which is quoted below. It remains unclear whether Joseph Harrison was related to or was the same person as John Harrison the joiner and whether he was affiliated with John Smart, who was contracted to build and install the pulpit.

The church yard actually predates the church building and served as the burying ground for Fort Christina. The oldest burial noted in the NR/NHL nomination is 1719, but many earlier graves are suspected to be present either unmarked or with illegible stones. Several graves have been found under the foundation of the church and its buttresses.11

Old Swedes Church is one of the oldest continuously operating churches in the United States. It is still owned by the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America (PECUSA), Diocese of Delaware, and maintained by Old Swedes Foundation and Trinity Episcopal Parish. The Church is in regular use for worship services every Sunday as well as weekly tours and special events throughout the year.

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9 National Register/National Historic Landmark Nomination, Holy Trinity Church, 1975, https://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp. The Holy Trinity Church unit of First State National Historical Park states that the dates of the stained-glass windows was between 1884 and 1896. No citation was made available for these dates.


11 “Category: Old Swedes Church Project 2015.”
Building Holy Trinity Church: The Reverend Ericus Bjork

Holy Trinity Church records indicate that a Swedish Lutheran Church was established at Fort Christina as early as 1638. Riorus Torkillus, who arrived with Peter Minuit’s first group of Swedish colonists, ministered the church. Services reportedly took place within the fort, but a burial ground was established on higher ground outside the fort to the northwest. According to Horace Burr, the 1890 translator of *The Records of Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church*, Torkillus died in 1643 at Fort Christina and was buried in the cemetery, possibly near what would later be the “southern end of the present church.”

Torkillus was replaced by the Rev. John Campanius, who stayed in New Sweden until 1648 before returning to “Old Sweden.” Others followed, including Lars Lock (to 1688) and Jacob Fabricius (to 1693), after which the Swedish congregations along the Delaware had no ministers at all.

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In the summer of 1697, the Swedish King sent two ministers (often titled by the Swedes as “Magister” meaning scholar) to serve the languishing Swedish Lutheran congregations along the Delaware. Andreas Rudman served the “upper congregation” at Wicaco and Ericus Bjork served the “lower congregation” at Crane Hook. The Rev. Ericus Bjork began his tenure with the Christina congregation in the old log church at Crane Hook, located south of the Christina River on the west bank of the Delaware. According to his own records, Bjork immediately began preparations to construct a new church on the north side of the river:

July 30.—Agreeable to notice given on the 25th of July, we met to choose certain discreet persons of this side of the river and some of the south side (a) to act for the whole Congregation in selecting and agreeing upon a place where we in Jesus’ name should set our new church.

1st.—They also agreed that the church should be built at Christina and that it should be of brick or stone, though some had been in favor of wood . . .

2d.—In accordance with the wishes of the others, Hans Pietterson took upon himself to superintend the building of the (in the Lord’s name) intended new church.

3d.—It was decided that the church should be forty feet in length, thirty feet wide and twelve feet high, though the height shall remain uncertain till we see how it will compare with the other dimensions.

4th.—Those who can best do the carting shall of their own free will, and at their own expense bring forward the stone, and yet give what they have promised in money.

5th.—All who do other work or promise work, shall do it free and at their own expense, so that we shall not have to give out the incoming money to our own folk, as we need it to pay the mason and for the purchase of lime boards, &c.16

The agreed-upon dimensions of the church in this July 30, 1697 entry—40’ x 30’ x 12’—would grow in size over the following months and significantly increase the cost of its construction.

On October 6, 1697, Bjork reported that he and the church wardens contracted with Joseph Richardson, a stonemason from Upland, Pennsylvania, “to build the new church walls which were to be of stone, fifty feet long, thirty feet wide and fifteen feet high.”17 Though they had identified the old burial ground as the general site for the new

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15 The “upper congregation” met at Wicaco and was led by Andreas Rudman, while the “lower congregation” at Crane Hook (immediately south of Fort Christina) was led by Ericus Bjork, the initial author of Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 13.


17 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 18.
church, the exact location for the building was still undecided as late as December 1697. On December 6, Bjork noted that “the church yard did not extend sufficiently high up for a convenient place without standing over graves, and as we did not wish to set the church so low down, therefore, church warden John Stalcop gave of his own free will for the glory of God out of his own land, so large a place as was needed for the church partly to stand upon, with two fathoms on the south side and the west end for a free church walk.”

Work on the new church building was delayed until spring 1698 due to colder weather. Sometime in March or April (“about Easter”), Joseph Richardson broke his contract with the church wardens for unknown reasons. On May 18, a stonemason from Philadelphia by the name of Joseph Yard applied for the job in person and was accepted. Yard’s contract, dated May 19, 1698, specified the final dimensions and details of the church he would build:

I, Joseph Yard doe obledge and engage myself and my heirs, that is, with the help of GOD, to lay all the stone and Brick work of a Church which is to be Built in and upon ye Church yard at Christeen near John Stallcop’s: the length of it shall be 66 foot from out to out, the breath shall be 36 foot from out to out, and to be laid in ye ground, a good and firm foundation, and the height frum ye Topp of ye ground upwards 20 foot, and ye thickness of ye wall from ye foundation to the lower ends of the windows 3 foot thick, and then afterwards 2 foot thick upwards, and all ye Windows and doors upon the Church shall be Arched, and the doors and Windows Arched and Quined with Bricks.

For this work, Yard was paid eighty-six pounds “In Silver Money.” The carpenter, John Smart of Philadelphia, had a similarly detailed contract:

[T]o build and finish a certain church on Christeene Creek, near John Stalycop’s house to be sixty foot long and thirty foot in breath, both in the clear to build the carpenters work to etc. One large and four smaller windows proposable to the said Bigness before said, two large and one lesser Door case with Doors and four pewess Enclosed; the other with Rails and a flancher and Benches and Doors, and Encloses ye ends of the Pews at the passages thereof. The Rufe to be framed with Nealing Principles and Ovale on the inside also with an Ornamental Encsy with a Pulpit and Canape over the same and to make a Table convenient, Casements to the windows.

Bjork noted that a sawyer from Philadelphia, Edward Smouth, was engaged for six shillings per hundred feet of board sawn, “allowing them free lodging, meat and drink with

18 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 18.
21 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 28. The carpenter’s contract was dated March 29, 1698, and gives the interior dimensions of the building.
all the timber ready on the Sawpit.” The building stone was quarried “and broken on
Asmund Stidham’s land northerly from the church, and mostly were hauled on sleds in the
Winter, and after Springtime on carts.”

Lime for the mortar came from Upland and was
delivered by boat by a Quaker named James Lownes. The mortar was prepared on site by
“Dick,” a “free negro” brought from Philadelphia by Joseph Yard “as he knew best how to
prepare and carry the mortar.”

The cornerstone was laid by the Rev. Ericus Bjork on May 28, 1698, at “the north
corner of the east gable.” Bjork noted that the foundation for the church averaged about
one foot deep, “except a piece on the south wall, and here and there a grave—and some
stumps.” This indicated that perhaps several early graves underlie the church foundation.

The masonry work began on June 20 with the erection of the first scaffolding. They raised
the scaffolding higher two times in July. The stone walls were completed on August 12, with
Bjork’s comment, “Glory to God.”

In October 1698, Joseph Yard was contracted to build up the stone gables, plaster
the interior walls and vaulted ceiling, and lay the brick and stone floor. Bjork noted that he
decided to have Yard build the gables “half way up” so that “it would look more like a
church building.” The roof was raised in November and the shingles were all but com-
pleted by Christmas. In the spring of 1699, the finish work was completed in time for the
planned consecration on Holy Trinity Sunday; as Bjork wrote, “I also intended the name
to be Holy Trinity Church (Helga Trefaldighets Kyrckia).” On the church exterior, Bjork
had iron inscriptions attached “upon the west end”:

1698
SI-DE., PRO-NOBIS-QUIS-CONTRA-NOS
SUB-IMP. REG. D. G. ANG.
WILL. III.
PROPR. WILL. PENN-VICE-GUB. WILL
MAGNIF. REG. SUEC. NUNG-GLOR. MEMOR
CAROL. XI
HUC-ABL.F.S
E. T. B.
W.S.
P. L.

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22 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 29.
23 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 29, 30.
24 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity.
26 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 31–32. The floor began as stone but the stone was found to be uneven and so
they switched to all brick.
27 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 39. The roof was started by John Smart, the original carpenter, but finished by
John Davis who Smart hired to complete the work. Another Philadelphia carpenter/joiner, John Harrison “of the
English Church,” was hired by Smart to complete the windows and doors and eventually did all of the interior
finish work. Both Davis and Harrison did the roof shingling. Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 33–34.
Bjork translated the inscriptions:

If God be for us who can be against us?
In the reign of William III, by the Grace of God, King of England,
Wm. Penn, Proprietor, vice Gov. Wm. Markham,
the Most Illustrious King of the Swedes Charles XI now of most glorious
memory,
  having sent here
Ericus Tobias Bjork
  of Westmania
  Pastor Loci.

On the south side of the building was placed the word “IMMANUEL.” On the east gable, “LUX-L. I. TENEBS-ORIENTS-EXALTO,” meaning “Light from on high shines in the darkness.” On the north side, “POLq NR CHRISTq,” meaning “Christ is our polestar.”

Bjork’s church record included detailed lists of the monetary and material contributions made by the mostly Swedish members of the congregation toward the completion of the new church building, including over 900 days of unpaid work helping the skilled masons and carpenters, described as “a free will gift to the church.” Building materials donated included the “seven walnut boards for the pulpit,” given by “Erick on Cranehook.” Supplies of food and drink for the workers and horses were also donated, as was room and board for the workers.

In his final reckoning for the construction of the church, Bjork gave a detailed accounting of the work and its costs (Figure 52). Bjork concluded his accounting with this notation:

There is no account here of the 180 ceiling joists, nor of the 700 laths, nor of the 12000 small laths. My own board ought also to be added, and various other small things. It seems to me therefore, safe to say, that in round numbers the whole Church building, as it now within a year, (Glory be to God,) is come to be finished, has cost 800 pounds Pennsylvania currency.

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28 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 37–38. Currently only the “1698” remains of these iron inscriptions. The “1698” was moved to the north side of the new steeple tower in 1802.

29 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 51. A display on the pulpit erected by the current congregation notes that Peter Pietersen gave three boards, Lucas Stedham gave one board, Asmund [Stedham] gave two sticks, Brewer Senecke gave one log, and Erick of Cranehook gave seven boards.

30 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 54.
Here follows an account of the whole cost as near as I can gather the items together, viz:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>sh</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>795 bu. lime at 20 pence a bu. and 4 pence per bu. freight,</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricks for doors, windows and floor, 12,500</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason for all,</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For negro who was with him,</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters,</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glazier for 330 ft of glass at 16 pence.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinges for pew doors, 46 pairs at 35h. 6d.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800 shingles,</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N. B.—1,700 unprepared, cost 20 sh. per 1000, but the eighteenth thousand that we took afterwards were all ready and therefore cost 1 pound, 36h.—cost of all that were bought, 49 4

The sawyers for 5,220 ft. at 6sh. a hundred, and four days crooked sawing at 6sh. a day, with going and coming, makes in all, 17 9 3

One inch and one-half inch boards bought 2000 feet, 9 0 0

Nails for the whole work, 28 15 5

N. B.—In this are not included what John Numerson gave, namely, 1700 nails, 55 to the pound, nor smaller, 1704—110 to the pound, nor Hans Pietterson, 11 ½ pence, nor Chas. Springer, hair at 10 pence per bushel, 4 11 0

Various other small matters, 34 9 10 ½

Whereunto should be added 2 pounds freight for the 2000 feet of boards and 200 pounds lath nails, which Mr. Smouth sent down and are not reckoned elsewhere, and 30 shillings increased pay for Mr. Harrison in the contract with Mr. Smart, which was not included in the other account, and is brought in here.

The stone for the whole Church wall in all 700 loads, 600 for the wall, 20 feet high and 100 feet for the gable ends.

All the timber was cut on our own wood lot where it was found best and most convenient.

The days works including the drawing are all together 1028 days, which would be at 3s. a day, 154 4 0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To which is to be added amount of board given in whole,</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>sh</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luloff Stedham half,</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesper Walraven gave half,</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost at the consecration,</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

770 2 6 ½

Figure 52: Account of the whole cost. Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 53–54.
In June 1707 or 1708, a belfry was raised on the northeast corner of the church.\textsuperscript{31} In its final form, the substantial stone church on the hill must have towered over everything in the small Swedish settlement town of Christina.

In August 1700, Bjork laid out the boundaries of the church yard according to the wishes of recently deceased church warden, John Stalcop, who had donated the land prior to the church construction:

> We then began to lay out the church yard on the west end, beginning 22–½ feet from the wall of the church, going thence obliquely to the bound of the old church yard, and thence, southerly to where an old church yard fence stood almost to the edge of the marsh, then eastward to the run or brook as we judged best and convenient, thence northerly as far up as my first, where the proper church walk should be, and then easterly over the brook to their own road. Upon the north side as the late John Stalcop gave just from the river wall of the demolished clap board lime house, we also measured it the same 22–½ feet, which line we ran out easterly, but diagonally, more at the brook, for on the other side of the run, the north church yard fence should run up alike, so we also made it 22–½ feet broad, coming by the two apple trees . . . not just up to the street, but more out the north side, which the widow found herself satisfied with.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1707, the yard was finally enclosed with a split rail fence after seven years of discussions and delays between the church wardens and the congregation. According to Bjork, the 500 rails and the workmen who build the fence were paid at his own expense, “for I was both disgusted and weary with talking any more about it.”\textsuperscript{33}

Bjork buried a number of his parishioners, some of whom were among the earliest Swedish colonists, both in the church yard and inside the church itself. In 1709, Aaron Johnson of Bread and Cheese Island was the first to be buried within the church. He was laid to rest “in the main aisle at the beginning in the lower quarter where the long pews for men begin.”\textsuperscript{34} The second, Brewer Seneke, was interred under his pew “at the south side of the Altar.”\textsuperscript{35} In 1710, Bjork’s infant son Petter [sic] was the third interment inside church. He was laid “on the south side of the altar in before the choir just before my pew.”\textsuperscript{36}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[31]{Burr, \textit{Records of Holy Trinity}, 124. The text reads: “On Midsummer’s day in accordance with the agreement with me of the above-named church wardens Matz Pietterson and Edward Robinson, made the Sunday before, we raised the belfry on the north side down by the east corner of the church, right opposite a walnut tree the whole labor of which cost one pound and 13 shillings, which Jesper Walraven and Pietter Pietterson on the old land ought to have.”}
\footnotetext[32]{Burr, \textit{Records of Holy Trinity}, 80–81. “In 1722, the church yard was surveyed, and Stalcop’s sons officially conveyed a parcel of ‘three acres, eight perches, and twenty feet’ to the trustees of the church.” Greenwood, “Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church.”}
\footnotetext[33]{Burr, \textit{Records of Holy Trinity}, 117.}
\footnotetext[34]{Burr, \textit{Records of Holy Trinity}, 125. The honor was given to Johnson because he devised all of his possessions to the church in his will.}
\footnotetext[35]{Burr, \textit{Records of Holy Trinity}, 130.}
\footnotetext[36]{Burr, \textit{Records of Holy Trinity}, 136.}
\end{footnotes}
In 1711, the Rev. Ericus Bjork was replaced by two priests from Sweden, Magister Andreas Hessellius and Herr Abraham Lidenius, although the transition was not completed until 1713. During his time at Christina, Bjork had overseen the construction of the substantial Holy Trinity Church, obtained for the church a Glebe farm of 500 acres, and had a “priest house” constructed. Significantly, it was Ericus Bjork who cemented an early association with the “English Church” when the priestless Anglican congregations at Chester and New Castle requested that he preach for them in English every other Sunday. Bjork wrote of this service: “we have always been counseled and instructed from Sweden to maintain friendship and unity with the English, so that we and the English Church shall not reckon each other as dissenters like the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, &c., but as sister Churches.” The relationship would bode well for the church in the future.

**Holy Trinity Church: Swedish-English Transition, 1713–1791**

Magister Hessellius remained at Christina until his recall to Sweden in 1723. He was followed by his brother Samuel Hessellius (to 1731) and Pastor John Enneberg (to 1742). It appears that it was under Enneberg’s tenure that the exterior church wall buttresses were constructed. In 1739, Enneberg noted in his church record that “the repair of the church was considered, which is much needed, which was agreed upon.” The construction of the “side arches” in 1740 was confirmed in a later notation in the church records.

Pastor Enneberg was called back to Sweden in 1742 and replaced by Pastor Peter Tranberg, who died suddenly while conducting a funeral in 1749. Magister Israel Acrelius was assigned to replace Tranberg at Holy Trinity Church. Acrelius, who balked at the American assignment because he “was entirely ignorant of the English language,” complained almost immediately upon his arrival at Christina of the “alterations, which our Swedish congregations have undergone since so many different races, religions and sects have mixed themselves in such alterations as the first Swedish teachers could not have imagined.” Noting that many of the children did not speak Swedish as “no Swedish school has been kept” since the death of Magister Hessellius, Acrelius initiated a Swedish school and purchased Swedish-language Psalms books to encourage the preservation of the congregation’s heritage.

In his initial (1749) entry into the church record, Acrelius also wrote on the subject of needed physical repairs to the now-aging church building:

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40 The Rev. Israel Acrelius noted in a 1753 discussion about irregularities in the church finances that payment had been made “for the side arches for the church,” adding the notation, “These arches were built in 1740.” Burr, *Records of Holy Trinity*, 450.
1st. At the south door a wall to support the long side which sinks down so that the arch in the church is in danger of breaking, the wall can be made so as to serve as a protection in stormy weather and from the heat of summer.

2nd. The roof was found much decayed.

3rd. The bell needs recasting having been cracked for many years, and it should be done next summer.

4th. The church should be rid of the nests of birds which are built under the arch over the pews, filling them with excrement and nastiness, and also should be white-limed and the pews, should be washed.

5th. The north and west doors which are entirely decayed should he made anew.

6th. New windows with large panes, and to begin with, that by the pulpit which is so much decayed that it does not keep off the north wind from the preacher.

7th. A sacristy to be built at the outer wall from the door at the foot of the pulpit stairs, which door was made for that purpose when the church was first built.44

No mention of the church repairs followed in 1749 or 1750. In April 1751, Acrelius exhorted his congregation “that the church should be repaired this summer where the repair was most necessary,” noting the north and west church doors still needed to be replaced, the interior whitewashed, and “the sacristy should be built.”45 In 1753, Acrelius indicated that “the side arches for the church” had been paid for, noting that they were actually constructed in 1740, and that the roof was finally repaired while the windows were completed in 1756 and 1758.46

The Holy Trinity Church of Wilmington received a charter from the legislature and governor of Pennsylvania in 1759 under the guidance of Pastor Erik Urnander.47 Magister Andrew Borell served from 1759 to 1768, but apparently left no records. The final Swedish minister assigned to the Christina church was Magister Lars (Lawrence) Girelius, who preached in Swedish and English on alternate Sundays, which indicates the continued integration of the congregation.48

45 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 430.
46 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 450, 466, 468. In his History of New Sweden, Acrelius wrote on the “Repairs of the Church”: “The church wall along the south side had yielded to the weight of the roof, as neither an arch nor a wooden beam bound the wall together. They had often taken counsel how and in what manner it might be repaired, whether by an iron band inside or by building pillars outside; but they could not arrive at any conclusion in regard to it. Nevertheless, that the time might not pass by unimproved, a new roof was laid upon the whole of the south side, which was very necessary. Then attention was again turned to the wall, as to how it might be secured; but they could not agree as to what was best to be done. They therefore undertook something else that was very necessary, and made some new windows in the church.” Acrelius, History of New Sweden, 306–307.
47 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 473.
48 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 484.
In 1772, the church council ordered a new bell from London to replace the old cracked bell. When the bell arrived in November, it was found to be four times larger than the old bell. Girelius noted that “it gave a very good sound”:

[I]t was believed might be heard five or six miles around if it could be hung properly and sufficiently high. But where could we hang it? The old steeple was so rotten that it would be dangerous to hang it therein, besides being so low that the church took away a great part of the sound on the south side. So the pastor suggested a general parish meeting… . It was resolved that we would try to build a new steeple or tower at the west end of the church, and of stone.49

While the congregation raised money for the new steeple, the old steeple was repaired, and the new bell installed.

Girelius was the last Swedish minister to serve at Holy Trinity Church in Wilmington. By 1773, at the request of members of the congregation, he began giving two Sunday services in English and the third Sunday in Swedish, “at least during the winter season, when on account of the roughness of the weather, but few of the Old Swedes can go out.”50 The growth of the church necessitated the addition of more pews; as a result, the vestry decided to put the steeple on hold and, instead, raise funds to build a gallery in the church. Construction on the gallery began in August 1773 and was completed by February 1774, adding twenty-five new pews.51

On August 27, 1777, the Rev. Girelius reported, “Two companies of [British and Hessian] militia soldiers were quartered in the church, which made all public worship cease till the 8th of September, when the British commanding officer Colonel McDonald sent an officer and ordered me to perform Divine service for his men.”52 The church may have been occupied by the militia through much of the year previous, as no records were kept for 1775 and 1776. Thereafter, only brief annual accounts were recorded by Girelius. In 1779, he noted that the cost of living had risen two to three times the pre-war nor. Girelius threatened to return to Sweden if he could not be paid £200 per year.

In 1782, the King of Sweden sent permission for the ministers remaining in America to return to Sweden and issued a statement that he would no longer pay to send Swedish ministers to American churches. Girelius elected to stay while his congregation decided how they wanted to proceed. In 1786, the Swedish-American congregations sent a letter to the King of Sweden indicating their preference “to choose themselves teachers [ministers] from the natives of their country, than that they should be sent to them from Sweden,” to which the King assented. The two remaining Swedish ministers, Girelius and “H. Collin,”

49 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 498.
50 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 501.
51 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 503, 504.
52 Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 510.
were recalled to Sweden, leaving the congregations to continue in their own fashion. Girelius returned to Sweden whereas Collin remained with his Philadelphia congregation.53

**Holy Trinity Church: Protestant Episcopal Transition, 1791–Current**

Clearly, by the end of the American Revolutionary War and the establishment of the new United States of America with the Constitution in 1787, the Swedish American congregations were fully assimilated into American culture. This included the complete loss of “knowledge of the Swedish language.”54 It is said that the Holy Trinity congregation of Wilmington became part of the Protestant Episcopal (formerly Anglican) denomination in 1791.55 In 1794, the vestry met to appoint a committee to “obtain some alterations of the charter thought necessary on account of the altered condition of the congregation.”56 The new charter for “Swedes Lutheran Church, called Trinity Church,” was issued on January 15, 1795, by the State of Delaware General Assembly meeting in Dover. It excluded the minister from the corporation, leaving the churchwardens and vestry as the “body corporate.” The vestry and churchwardens were charged with the responsibility for the annual appointment of the minister, whose affiliation could be “according to the ordination of the Lutheran, or Episcopal Church.”57 In March 1795, the vestry appointed the Rev. Joseph Clarkson, who had been officiating at the church since 1792, to serve another year.58

In September 1799, the Rev. James I. Wilmer was noted as officiating on alternating Sundays with only a three-month contract. In December, a new minister, the Rev. William Price “of Milford,” was appointed to serve the Holy Trinity congregation. It was under Price’s administration that in August 1802 the vestry voted to erect a new bell tower: “Whereupon, resolved, That the belfry shall be built at the west end of the church, twelve by fourteen feet, and thirty-four feet high, of stone and brick, with a sufficient cupola to swing the bell in above the roof, etc.”59 At the following meeting, the vestry altered the plan, instead building the tower entirely of brick. The project was completed the same year, though full payment languished into 1805.60

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55 Greenwood, “Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church.”
58 Burr, *Records of Holy Trinity*, 526. Clarkson served officially until 1798, apparently did officiate some services in that year. (Ibid., 530, 532). On Feb. 23, 1799, Wilmer attended the vestry meeting to apply for the job, saying he had heard that Clarkson had resigned. The vestry invited Wilmer to preach on March 3, 1799, and in September appointed him through the end of the year. In March 1799, Clarkson demanded his pay for 1798 and the vestry refused saying they had not appointed him for that year. They later agreed to pay him a reduced sum. Burr, *Records of Holy Trinity*, 532.
In the two centuries following the severing of the relationship between the Swedish Lutheran Church of Sweden and its American colonial congregations, the Holy Trinity Church of Wilmington increasingly shifted to Episcopal administration. In 1803, Bishop Claggett, the Episcopal Bishop of Maryland, administered the “ordinance of confirmation in Trinity Church.”\(^{61}\) By 1818, Trinity Church was a participating member in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Just twelve years later, in 1830, the congregation moved to a new building, Trinity Chapel, on Fifth and King Streets in Wilmington. Holy Trinity Church, formerly also known as Swedes Lutheran or Christina Church, was opened for service only once a year until 1842:

In 1842, the old church was repaired and reopened for regular worship and by 1847, the present organization was in place with one parish in two locations. In 1882, Trinity moved to a new one story church on Adams Street near Delaware Ave. and in 1891, blessed and occupied the present beautiful large stone Gothic church [on Adams Street].\(^{62}\)

The current Trinity Episcopal Parish includes both the “Old Swedes” Church and the Trinity Church on Adams Street as one parish.\(^{63}\)

The old stone Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church, with its prominent location on the hill overlooking Wilmington’s east side since 1698, has long been a landmark reminder of Delaware’s history of Swedish and English settlement. While it is a significant building in its own right for its design, history, and preservation, the burial ground on which the church stands, which is mentioned in early references to Fort Christina, links the 1698 church to the earliest Swedish settlement on the Christina River.

\(^{61}\) Burr, Records of Holy Trinity, 538.


Ryves Holt House

The Ryves Holt House in Lewes dates from the seventeenth century, probably 1686. It could be the oldest known house in Delaware standing on its original foundation and among the oldest surviving in the United States. Although settled in the 1630s, Delaware has few surviving seventeenth century buildings. Although the exact date of construction of the house is unclear, even with dendrochronology, it is an exceedingly rare survivor in Delaware. It may also be one of the earliest constructed buildings with H-bent framing in Delaware and the United States and a rare example of seventeenth century wood construction, very few of which survive in the U.S.

Physical Description

The Ryves Holt House stands on the corner of Mulberry and Second Streets, with the street address of 218 Second Street, in Lewes, Sussex County. The house likely dates from the late-seventeenth century, with dendrochronology dates ranging from 1665–1695.
Some sources, such as the Center for Historic and Architectural Design at the University of Delaware (CHAD), suggest that the house could date as late as 1710.¹

There were two separate dendrochronology investigations in 1989. One was based on samples of original framing in the basement and the other on framing from the second floor. The basement samples indicated that the wood from which they came was cut in 1680, with an error range of 10–15 years. This indicates that those samples could date from 1665 to 1695. The second-floor samples were dated to 1665.² Thus, the date of construction for the oldest part of the house has not been precisely determined.

The house faces northeast onto Second Street with Mulberry Street intersecting and passing along the west side of the building. Most of the property within the block bounded by Second Street, Mulberry Street, Third Street, and Market Street belongs to St. Peters Episcopal Church and accommodates the church building, parish hall, cemetery, a labyrinth, and the parsonage. The church owned the Ryves Holt House from 1981 to 2005 and used the building as church offices until 1997 when the Lewes Historical Society leased the house and began operating it as a museum. The historical society bought the house in 2005.

The Ryves Holt house has changed a great deal over time, but distinct, original components survive and have been documented. In its current configuration, the house has undergone at least five major additions or renovations, beginning with an original one-and-a-half story, 20-foot by 16-foot unit.¹ All parts of the house are framed construction with wood shingle siding. The house, as it fronts onto Second Street, is a five-bay, two-story building resting on a concrete-parged stone foundation. There is a two-story wing extending to the south from the west (original) section that creates an L-shaped building. The first story of this L-extension appears to have been a part of the original construction or a very early addition.

The front section is side gabled and the rear extension is gabled as well. A two-story, two-bay addition is attached to the east end of the original block. A one-story, shed-roofed addition extends to the south from this addition against the east wall of the L-extension. Corrugated sheet metal covers the roof of the original section and east addition whereas the L-extension has an asbestos shingle roof. A concrete-parged chimney, probably of brick construction, extends from inside the east-end wall of the original section, centered on the roof peak.

Irregularly spaced windows indicate the several components of the building. There are a combination of window and sash types, some with single-pane sash and some with six-over-six light sash. The windows in the original section of the house are wide-framed

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³ “Ryves Holt House.”
with mortise and tenon joints and trimmed with ovolo molding. These are probably eighteenth-century replacements of original seventeenth-century windows, possibly casements.

The current main entrance leads into the east end addition. Over the door is a bracketed, gabled hood. The door has four panels with the upper two replaced with glass. This entrance appears to date from the late-nineteenth or early twentieth century.

After entering through the front door, a doorway to the right, or west, leads into the original section of the house. This original section was refurbished in the early nineteenth century, based on the mantelpiece and other woodwork. The floorplan may have been altered to create an entrance/stair hall. A new floor was also laid over the original floor in the early twentieth century. The current floor runs north-south, but the earlier and possibly original floor, which remains beneath, runs east-west.

Figure 55: Exposed chamfered joists. Paula S. Reed and Associates, Inc. 2016.

Framing is exposed at the ceiling, with plates and the summer beam visible, and also wall framing through observation openings installed in the walls. The exposed ceiling joists are chamfered with lambs-tongue stops and were intended to be seen (Figure 55). The original entrance was at the west end of the north wall. It remains in place, now encased within a closet. The original floor boards remain uncovered in the closet, and the doorway has been covered with vertically placed pine boards. The door frame is still in place, with a beaded edge, along with a chairrail with astragal molding and a fancy double-ogee cornice. Early-nineteenth-century wallpaper survives in the space, including an architectural block pattern and a floral border paper along the cornice. These remnants suggest that the exterior front door was made into a closet in the later nineteenth century, probably when the current front door was added (Figures 56–57).
The current fireplace is centrally placed along the east-end wall of the original component of the house. The firebox has been enclosed with plaster or a drywall panel and the current flooring covers the hearth area. The mantelpiece dates from the early nineteenth century and features a frieze with reeded pilasters, a deeply molded architrave, and a matching molded mantel shelf. It appears that this fireplace was installed in the early nineteenth century and replaced an original fireplace that sat diagonally across the north-east corner of the room. In the basement, immediately below, is another corner fireplace.
that helped to support the fireplace in the first-floor room (Figure 58). An arched pier in the basement supports the current fireplace.

Another small arched alcove in the north wall of the basement may have been a window or ventilation opening used at a time when the ground level in front of the house was lower. The underside of the floorboards and the joists, which are unfinished, have whitewashed surfaces.

A staircase under the stairs to the second floor leads down to the basement. It is bordered by a wall of tongue and grooved beaded boards with narrow beads. This wall likely dates from the early nineteenth century. The same is probably true of the staircase to the second floor, which rises steeply upward opposite the original front door.

According to the University of Delaware’s Center for Historic Architecture and Design, the Ryves Holt House has H-bent framing, which is (although not always) a Dutch practice. Thus, the house is likely a rare example of Dutch construction in Delaware. An SAH Archipedia article that features the Ryves Holt House concludes, “Delaware is notably lacking in seventeenth-century survivals, making this one exceedingly valuable.” The article further points out that wood is a perishable material, which makes the chance of survival even more remote. In all of Virginia, only one known pre-1700 wood house survives, the Nelson-Galt House in Williamsburg, which dendrochronology dates to 1695.4

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4 “Ryves Holt House.”
The Dutch Colony called Zwaanendael (1631) and Whorekill

In April of 1631, the Dutch ship Walvis landed at a creek near the southwestern tip of the South (Delaware) Bay with twenty-eight men aboard. They had set sail the previous December from the Netherlands as part of an expedition to establish a whaling station on the lower Delaware River. The new arrivals, who were impressed with the number of wild swans on the creek, called the place Zwaanendael (or Swanendael), which translates to “Valley of the Swans.” The men in this first group of colonists built a palisaded fort with brick living quarters inside. The site was along present-day Pilottown Road just southeast of Roosevelt Inlet, which leads from the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal to the Delaware River near its mouth. A stone monument marks the site, opposite Pilottown Road from Saint Peters Cemetery.\(^5\)

Unfortunately, tragedy unfolded. Misunderstandings with the local Lenape band, the Siconese, resulted in the complete massacre of the settlement. When Captain David deVries, organizer of the Dutch West India Company expedition, visited the site in 1632, he found the unburied remains of the dead and the destroyed settlement. In 1956, archeologist Chesleigh A. Bonine examined the site and found rows of post molds, which he believed were from the Zwaanendael palisade. Today, however, some historians doubt the authenticity of the site, suggesting that the post molds may be from a later farmstead site. Saint Peters Cemetery and Pilottown Road cover much of the site.\(^6\)

Before the demise of the settlement, the colonists named the swampy creek (today the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal) Hoerekill, which the English later spelled Whorekill. The term translates to Harlot’s River. In time, the general area became known as Hoerekill or Whorekill. After the massacre, the settlement lay dormant until the Dutch rebuilt it in 1659. The second effort was more successful than the first. This time, the settlement was established as a trading post and along with Fort Amstel at New Castle. The posts were the Dutch attempt under the West India Company to develop the South River (the Dutch term for the Delaware). The Dutch West India Company named the recreated settlement Seckonnessink. It likely developed upon the site of the original settlement, although its actual location has not been determined. It included a fort, trading post, and a growing community of permanent colonists.\(^7\) Among the colonists who arrived at Hoerekill was a contingent of forty one Dutch Mennonites under Peter Cornelius Plockhoy. They arrived in July of 1663 and came with tools and farming implements.

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\(^6\) W. Barksdale Maynard, Buildings of Delaware, 268.

\(^7\) National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Lewes, Delaware, First Town in the First State, 5.
**Hoerekill/Whorekill becomes Lewes**

The various government and commercial entities in England and Europe gave out land grants in the new world that overlapped, which caused confusion and conflict. The Netherlands claimed much of today’s New England, eastern New York, New Jersey, and Delaware from a grant to the Dutch West India Company in 1621. In 1632, England’s Charles I made a grant to George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, that extended from the Atlantic Ocean an unspecified distance west and north to the 40th parallel, which placed the future site of Philadelphia in Maryland. The Calvert grant, however, excluded any lands already settled by people of European descent. Later, Charles II gave his brother, the Duke of York, essentially the same lands that the Dutch claimed, setting off the first Anglo-Dutch war in the 1660s. In 1664, New Netherland became the property of the Duke of York. After a second conflict, the former New Netherland briefly returned to Dutch rule, and then permanently returned to the Duke of York in 1674. In 1682, the Duke of York transferred the three lower counties along the Delaware River to William Penn. Penn changed the Dutch name, Hoerekill, to Lewes after a town of the same name in Sussex County, England. Lewes became the county seat of Sussex County, the southernmost of the three lower counties of Pennsylvania. The courthouse was constructed along Second Street in front of the present St. Peter’s Church. It remained the county seat until 1791.

The changes in governance of these lands mostly resulted in peaceful transitions for the inhabitants. The Dutch colonists in the Delaware counties continued to own their land and ply their trades. However, in 1664 the English destroyed the Dutch Mennonite settlement at Hoerekill. The Mennonite group that arrived in 1663 dispersed, although many of them remained in the Delaware area.

In 1673, Lord Baltimore initiated raids of the Dutch settlement of Hoerekill/Whorekill. At that time, the settlement belonged to The Netherlands. For years, Lord Baltimore sought to include the lower Delaware area in Maryland, as indicated in his grant from Charles I. In 1672, he sent forces into the three lower counties and Whorekill in particular, most notably in 1673 when the settlement was completely burned. Ten years later in 1683, five witnesses who made sworn depositions to Pennsylvania authorities are quoted in an article in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* by Leon DeValinger Jr. The following passage is from the depositions (spelling and wording as written):

> In the Moneth of December in the year 1673 the Lord Baltimore sent a Company of horsemen in number about fortye under the Command of Capt Thomas Howell whoe came into the Whore Kill Towne with swords drawn;

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And threatened & Terrified the Inhabitents whoe being frighted thereby submit
ted to them. After that they kild many of the Inhabitents Cattle; and when they had bene here about forteene days Capt Howell went to the Lord Baltimore as he pretended to Aquaint him that the Inhabitents of this place was poor and not able to maintaine soe many souldgers; And when he came back again he Caused all the Inhabitents of the County or provent [province] to be warned to Come to the Whore Kill Towne to Muster with order to bring all their Arms and Amunison; And when the Inhabitents ware Come together the said Capt Howell Told them that he must tell them with Greife that his orders from the Lord Baltimore was that he must burne all their houses and that he must not Leave one stick standing; and that he Could not be Excused from soe doeing; And that he was to give but one quarter of an hour warning before he did it. Soe Immediatly the houses ware by them sett on fire and Burnt downe to the Ground; but before the houses ware all sett on fir[e] sume women very big with Child and others made their Addrassse to Capt Howell and Intreated him to spare one hous for their Releife in distrasse; the said Capt Howell Answered that he must obsarve his orders and that he could spare non; But said that if God would save them one they should have it and not Else. And the good providence of God was that day sene in that peticoler; for A Thatch Barne standing in the Middle or betwene A Boorded Barne of Alexander Moulston that had about Two hundred Bushell of wheate unthrashe[d] in it. A dwelling house and severall other out houses standing betwene the said Thatch Barne ware sett on fir[e]; And the said Capt Howell said that if the Thatch Barne would not Burne it should be saft; the flame of the other barne and houses flying over the Thatch Barne sett it on fir[e] three times and it went out Again. Upon that Capt Howell said that God had saft the Thatch Barne; And that he did not dare to meddle anymore with it. After this the Lord Baltimores party went away Left the place and Carried away with them all the boats that ware in the Creeke and also the Arms belonging to the Inhabitents; soe that they ware left without Arms to defend themselves from the Indians being about sixty miles from any Inhabitents to goe to for Releife.10

Despite the raid, the Dutch retained Whorekill, but only until October of 1674 when they relinquished it to the English in the Treaty of Westminster. The treaty ended the third Anglo-Dutch War and transferred all of New Netherland to England. The lands reverted to the Duke of York through a new patent issued by King Charles II. In August of 1682, the Duke of York conveyed the three lower counties along the Delaware River to William Penn. According to the depositions, the 1673 fire destroyed the entire town, with the exception of the old thatched barn. Thus, when the English took over the place, they built a new town on or near the site of the old Dutch settlement.

The town of Lewes, briefly called Deale, took shape in the 1670s and 1680s after the transfer to English hands in 1674. The original town of Lewes extended from Lewes Creek

to Pagan Creek between today’s Savannah Road and Ship Carpenter Street. The principal streets were Front, Market (Savannah Road), Ship Carpenter, and Mulberry. Numbered streets ran between the named streets. The streets were to be sixty-feet wide.\textsuperscript{11} The town extended to the southwest only to Second Street because of swampy land beyond it. The swamp was drained in the 1720s and Third Street was added.\textsuperscript{12}

In 1704, complaints about the irregularity of the streets and lots prompted calls for a resurvey of the town. Officials ordered the resurvey, but it wasn’t completed until 1722. The commissioner in charge of making the resurvey, Robert Shankland, made the following report quoted in Scharf’s \textit{History of Delaware}:

\begin{quote}
[O]f several Bounds and Stations or places of Beginning of some of the streets of Lewistown that were yet known by some of the Ancient & Principle men of Lewistown (to wit): Mr. Jacob Kollock, Sr., Mr. Philip Russell, Mr. John Miers and Capt. Jonathan Bailey (that is), that ye old Brick chimney of Jacob Kolloek’s House set on the northwest side of the street, and that the shead or Corner of the House of Joseph Koyal that did belong unto William Orr was sett on the southeast corner of ye Market St.; also that Mr. Russell’s old house was sett on the southwest corner of the Back Street at the corner of Mulberry Street at ye corner—those are all Boundarys of the Town that were showde me by the Persons above mentioned at my first surveying of the Town as witness my hand this—day of August, 1722. Robert Shankland,\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

Philip Russell, mentioned in Shankland’s report, owned what came to be known as the Ryves Holt House.

Lewes thrived with much of its economy based on seafaring, including ship building, fishing, and a particularly large contingent of river pilots. The shifting shoals in the lower Delaware River meant that shipping interests required expert pilots to guide their ships safely to the ports of Philadelphia and Wilmington. Pilots would take small boats out to meet incoming ships, board, and guide them to port. The majority of Delaware River pilots resided at Pilot Town, which was a row of houses at the northwest edge of Lewes set along Lewes Creek and later the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal. Nearly half the business on the Delaware River was controlled by Lewes pilots. Ships’ pilots made their home base in Lewes from at least the 1680s.\textsuperscript{14} To this day, many river pilots operate out of Lewes.

\textsuperscript{11} Scharf, \textit{History of Delaware}, 2:1223.
\textsuperscript{13} Scharf, \textit{History of Delaware}, 2:1223.
The American Revolutionary War and Lewes

Despite Delaware ultimately becoming the First State, it was not a hotbed of revolutionary zeal before and during the war for independence. In particular, Sussex County and Lewes, its county seat, showed ambivalence toward declaring independence. There was a strong Tory contingent in Sussex County. A band of as many as 1,500 loyalists gathered there, resulting in Caesar Rodney taking the Kent County militia to Sussex County in 1776 to encourage the group to disperse.\footnote{Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 241.} No major fighting occurred between the groups. Many loyalists felt that the move to independence was premature or were reluctant to fight a war over it.

When it came to the Congressional vote for independence, two of Delaware’s delegates voted in favor and one, George Read of New Castle County, voted against. Read was not opposed to independence; however, he felt that a long war was not the right course of action. He ultimately signed the Declaration of Independence.\footnote{Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 243.}

Sussex County continued to hold the strongest group of loyalists, the most prominent of whom was Thomas Robinson, a successful local farmer. In 1778, as supporters of independence began to gain control, loyalists such as Robinson fled for the most part to the many British ships that held the lower Delaware River. In June 1778, the Delaware assembly “confiscated the estates of forty-six specified loyalists and of anyone else found guilty of actively aiding the British unless he asked for a pardon before the first of August.”\footnote{Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 246.} In addition to loyalist refugees on the bay, bands of loyalist raiders often looted plantations and farms along the river. Despite the loyalist presence in Delaware, the regiment from the three counties that fought for independence distinguished itself with its valor, earning the nickname “gamecocks” or “Blue Hen’s Chickens.” John Caldwell, captain of one of the regiment’s companies, raised gamecocks and was renowned for fighting birds that descended from a particular blue hen. The “Blue Hen” eventually became the state bird.\footnote{“Delaware State Bird,” Netstate, lasted modified Sept. 3, 2017, www.netstate.com/states/symb/birds/de_blue_hen_chicken.htm.}

As for Lewes specifically, it contributed to the Delaware regiment during the revolution. The British Man-of-War, the Roebuck, stayed in the bay opposite Lewes in 1776. The warship’s tender engaged with a Lewes schooner, much to the entertainment of the town’s residents who discovered that British naval prowess was not as great as they thought. The Roebuck returned during the winter of 1779–1780 and ransomed two Lewes residents, one of whom was an enslaved person, for cattle.\footnote{National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Lewes, Delaware, First Town in the First State, 13.}
History of the Ryves Holt Property

The Ryves Holt House has witnessed the early history of Lewes, of Sussex County, and of Delaware. It has most likely occupied its space at the corner of Second and Mulberry Streets since 1686. The house dates from after the 1673 fire since the building shows no evidence of fire damage and the five eye-witness depositions all told of complete destruction of the Whorekill settlement except for the thatched barn that they all noted survived the fire. Moreover, the earliest deed for the property, dated 1686, does not indicate that there was a prior improvement on the lot or a previous transaction for the property. Rather, it was an initial grant of a lot from the Sussex County Court to Philip Russell. Therefore, the likely construction date for the house is about 1686 when Philip Russell purchased the lot or shortly after 1685 when the Council in Philadelphia granted him a tavern license. In Robert Shankland’s resurvey report filed in 1722, the place is specifically referenced as “Mr. Russell’s old house.” Philip Russell and his wife, Sarah Gush Russell, were Quakers. They came to Pennsylvania from Bristol, England, in 1683. Russell was among the founders of the Quaker Assembly of the Lower Counties in 1704.

The earliest recorded deed for the Ryves Holt property is dated the 16th day of the 7th month, 1686. Since England used the Julian calendar until 1752 and designated March as the first month, the deed’s date is September 16, 1686. According to the record, “Phillip Russel petitioned for A Town Lott in the Second Street next to the last granted to Arthur Starr yesterday, which said lott the court granted to ye petitioner warrant given out the same day, 16th 7th month 1686” (Figure 59). This is an original deed and warrant granted by the court. Russell’s neighbor, Arthur Starr, received his adjoining property in the same way the day before. This appears to be part of the initial distribution of lots of the newly laid out town of Lewes. Front Street along the Creek was parceled out first followed by the “Back Street” (Second Street). Sussex County built a log courthouse shortly after 1680, which was located less than a block east of Russell’s new property. Quite possibly, the new courthouse at the other end of the block inspired Russell to initiate construction of a tavern to serve the public as it was in close proximity to the county government headquarters.

21 Federal Writers’ Project, Delaware: A Guide to the First State, 204.
In another transaction in Sussex County Deed Book 1, Russell “petitioned the court for a Lott of ground, being swampy and lying behind, Adjoining to his own already dwelling Lott, in the second Street in the Town of Lewes, which the Court grants, provided it be no more than his other Dwelling Lott, and that he Clears and fences it in according to Regulation.” Although this entry is not dated, it is part of Court listings from September 6th and 7th in 1693. Philip Russell had a number of other land transactions in and near Lewes as well. Russell likely built the Ryves Holt House or had it built and then operated it as a tavern. The Philadelphia Council granted him a tavern license on September 28, 1685, one year before he acquired the property.

Russell was operating the tavern in the building in 1687 and 1688 and probably longer. The tavern would have been still quite new when Russell got into trouble with the law for allowing illegal card games. According to Sussex County Court Records for February 1687, “The Inditement [sic] Agst Phillip Russell for suffering persons to play at Cards in his house was Read to which he pleaded guilty Confessing the same, saying it was the first time and much against his will but the persons was soe Resolute he could not perswade [sic] them against it and he the said Phillip promised to never suffer the like againe the Court fined him 5/8.”

Just a few months later, in May 1688, Russell was back in court and “indicted for selling beer at More than the laws of this Government allow; Referd.” The jury acquitted him, along with another Lewes tavern owner who had been charged with the same offence: “Wee the jury find these [indictments] not to be according to law.”

Philip Russell was also listed in some documents as “cup-bearer” to the Penns. A cup-bearer was an honorific title in royal courts that denoted someone held in high esteem who was trusted not to poison the king with tainted wine.

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26 “Index to Sussex County Deed Book 1,” Reel 1, Delaware Public Archives, available at Ancestry.com
27 Quoted in Turner, Some Records of Sussex County, 122.
29 Federal Writers’ Project, Delaware: A Guide to the First State, 204.
**William Godwin Possesses the property by 1722**

No further brushes with the law appear in court records that were checked for this project. At some point, Philip Russell gave up the tavern and sold the property to William Godwin. The date for this transaction is unclear; it seems to have been done between the two men as a gentlemen’s agreement without benefit of a legal document. Russell still owned the property in 1693 when he received the grant for the swampy land behind his dwelling lot. It is not known, however, whether the tavern was still in operation in 1693. In 1722, when the lot next door to the east was sold, the deed description refers to the land “adjoining on the North West side with the lot that was formerly Phillip Russell’s, but now in possession of William Godwin.”

Apparently, sometime between 1693 and 1722, the property passed from Philip Russell to William Godwin. To formalize the transfer, Russell and Godwin had a deed made and recorded on August 8, 1723. They needed a formal deed because William Godwin was about to sell the property.

**William Godwin Sells the Property to Ryves Holt, August 8, 1723**

The same day that Russell and Godwin made their deed, Godwin sold the house and lot to Ryves Holt “of Lewes Town, Gent.” The property was described as the lot on the corner of Knitting [Mulberry] Street and Second Street, 60 feet by 200 feet. The selling price was £110.

Holt hailed from Philadelphia and is said to have come to Lewes in 1721 at the age of twenty-four to practice law.

Ryves Holt quickly became an important public figure in his adopted county of Sussex. In 1724, he was commissioned High Sheriff of Sussex County, a position he held for twelve years. In 1727 and 1728, he also served as tax collector for Lewes and Rehobeth Hundred and Indian River Hundred. In 1729, he was appointed Overseer of the Highways in Lewes and Rehobeth Hundred. Holt was appointed the “King’s Attorney” for Sussex County in 1733, and later as “Clerk and Prothonotary of the Courts.” Ryves Holt achieved his highest honor in 1745 when he became the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Delaware and served until 1764. In 1760, the Penns named Chief Justice Holt as one of seven commissioners to carry out an agreement between them and Lord Baltimore to set the line between Pennsylvania and Maryland.

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31 Turner, *Some Records of Sussex County*, 182.
32 “Sussex County Deed Book F6,” page 55, Reel 5, Delaware Public Archives, available at Ancestry.com
33 Holt is also said to have served as the Naval Officer for the port of Lewes. See Federal Writers’ Project, *Delaware: A Guide to the First State*, 204. No documentation has been located to confirm this.
34 Henry C. Conrad, *Address Delivered at the Dedication of a Tablet Given by the Judiciary of Delaware and Member of the Delaware Bar in Memory of Ryves Holt* (Wilmington: Historical Society of Delaware, 1914), 5.
Ryves Holt House

Ryves Holt was an active member of St. Peter's Church, the Anglican (later Episcopal) church located next to his home on Second Street. When his neighbor and friend William Becket, rector at the church, made his will in 1743, he left to his friend, “Ryves Holt, Esq. a gold ring now on my ring finger.”[36] Holt died in Lewes at the age of sixty-seven on May 8, 1765, and was buried in St. Peter’s Church Yard cemetery, adjacent to the house he occupied for more than thirty years.[37]

**Association with Commodore Jacob Jones, U.S. Navy**

When Chief Justice Ryves Holt died in 1765, he left a widow, Catherine, a son also named Ryves Holt who died in 1763 at the age of twenty-two, and a daughter Penelope. The Holt family remained in the house on Second and Mulberry Streets. Eventually, the property descended to Holt’s granddaughter, Penelope Holt Jones.[38] She may have come to the house in the early 1770s when her husband died. Penelope Jones brought her stepson, Jacob Jones, who was not yet four years old when his father died. Young Jacob Jones was raised in the Holt house and eventually followed his step-grandfather’s legacy of public service. Initially, Jones distinguished himself as a medical doctor. Later, he joined the United States Navy and eventually earned the rank of commodore (Figure 60).

Jacob Jones was born in March 1768 near Smyrna, Delaware, a town on the Kent County and New Castle County border. His mother died while he was still an infant. His father, Jacob Jones—for whom his son was named—married Penelope Holt. Jacob Jones Sr. died just a few years later, leaving the young Jacob Jones in the care of his step-mother. According to several secondary sources, Penelope Holt Jones and her stepson Jacob were very close; he gave her credit for whatever progress he made in his life. Jones attended the Lewes Academy and then studied medicine.[39] In 1799, he joined the U.S. Navy. Following is an account of Jacob Jones’ military service:

Jacob Jones was . . . employed as clerk of the Delaware Supreme Court before joining the Navy in 1799 as a Midshipman. During the Quasi-War with France, he served under Commodore John Barry in the frigate United States and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant in 1801. Jones was an officer of the frigate Philadelphia when that ship was taken by the Tripolitans in 1803. Held captive for nearly two years, he again had seagoing service after his release and, with the rank of Master Commandant, took command of the sloop of war Wasp in 1810.

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In October 1812, during the early months of the War of 1812, Jones took *Wasp* on an Atlantic cruise... Returning to the United States after an exchange of prisoners, he received a gold medal from the Congress, was promoted to the rank of Captain and given command of the frigate *Macedonian*. With his ship blockaded at New York, Captain Jones was sent to the Lake Ontario theatre, where he commanded the frigate *Mohawk* during the last year of the war.

During the final Barbary War, in 1815, Jacob Jones again commanded *Macedonian*. Service as Captain of the frigate *Guerriere* followed in 1816–1818. He was Commodore of the United States' squadrons in the Mediterranean in 1821–1823 and in the Pacific in 1826–1829. Jones was a Navy Commissioner in Washington, D.C., between those tours at sea and held important commands ashore at Baltimore and New York during the 1830s and 1840s. He received final assignment, as commandant of the Naval Asylum at Philadelphia in 1847. Commodore Jacob Jones held that position at the time of his death on 3 August 1850.  

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Jacob Jones inherited the Ryves Holt House from his stepmother in 1790. He may have lived there briefly before moving to Dover for his medical studies under Dr. James Sykes.\footnote{Mark M. Cleaver, \textit{The Life, Character, and Public Service of Commodore Jacob Jones} (Wilmington, Delaware: The Historical Society Of Delaware, 1906), 4–5.}

In 1836, Jones sold the Holt family home in Lewes to John Marshall, a Delaware Bay and River pilot. The Marshall family owned the house for 145 years. In 1981, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church purchased the house from the Marshall family and used it for offices until the construction of the Parish House. In 1997, The Lewes Historical Society leased the building from the church and opened it to the public. The Society bought the building from St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in 2005 and repurposed it as The Visitor Center.\footnote{“A Brief History of the Ryves Holt House,” (Lewes: Lewes Historical Society, n.d.), brochure.}

The long history of the Ryves Holt House, as it is called by the Lewes Historical Society, encompasses much of the history of the town of Lewes. Its initial probable use as a Quaker-operated tavern provides an important link to the earliest days of the tidewater settlement and its growth as a county seat. The tavern, like a town’s public green, often served as a place to engage in political discourse among the common folk (as opposed to politicians). Later owned and occupied by Chief Justice Ryves Holt, the house history provides a window on the evolution of Delaware as an independent state and the men who devoted their lives to public service. As the boyhood home of Commodore Jacob Jones, the connection to the region’s maritime associations provides a significant avenue of interpretation.
CHAPTER 2.4

NEW CASTLE COURT HOUSE, GREEN, AND SHERIFF’S HOUSE

The New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House is considered significant in the First State National Historical Park for the site’s historic association with early European settlement on the Delaware River. The Green was platted as early as 1655 as the market square for the Dutch trade settlement known as Fort Casimir, later called New Amstel. After the British took possession in 1664, a blockhouse that also served as a court building was erected on The Green, then simply called “the market.” Following William Penn’s acquisition of the three Delaware counties in 1682, the “Market Square” was formalized with surrounding streets leading to the market and a lot dedicated to the first official county courthouse, built after 1689.

In 1732, following a fire, the original courthouse was replaced with a new building (the center block of the current building). The New Castle Court House sat at the center of colonial government on the lower Delaware. In the 1768 Mason and Dixon survey, the court house cupola served as the center point to measure the twelve-mile distance to the Maryland/Pennsylvania border. The cupola was also used as the center point in the 1892 resurvey of the “Twelve Mile Arc,” which defined the boundary between the states of Delaware and Pennsylvania. In the legislative chamber in 1776, the Delaware Assembly declared its independence from Great Britain. At the same time, it declared the Delaware State to be a sovereign state. The Court House continued to play a significant role into the nineteenth century as the United States grappled with the divisive issue of slavery and abolition. The 1848 Hunn-Garrett trials, which were held in the New Castle Court House and adjudicated by Justice Roger Brooke Taney, set a precedent for assessing fines under the Fugitive Slave Act.

The New Castle Court House was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1972. The NHL documentation was updated in 2003 with the following statement of significance:

The New Castle Court House, located on Delaware Avenue in New Castle, Delaware, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1972 for its historical significance as the seat of governance in Delaware during the colonial and early statehood eras. “The cupola served as the beginning point of the 12-mile radius that determines Delaware’s curved northern boundary. Among the important events that took place here were Delaware’s decision to separate from Great Britain and Pennsylvania and the writing and adoption of the first
state constitution, both in 1776.” In addition to this previously documented national significance, the property is also nationally significant under the National Historic Landmark theme study on the Underground Railroad as the site of the Hunn-Garrett Trials of 1848 where two prominent Delaware abolitionists of the Quaker faith were sued by the owners of fugitive slaves from Maryland.¹

The Green remains relatively unchanged from its historic plan and the New Castle Court House serves today (2018) as a museum of Delaware history, owned and operated by the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. The Sheriff’s House is owned by the National Park Service and is planned to eventually house offices for First State National Historical Park.

![New Castle Court House and Sheriff’s House](image)

**Figure 61:** New Castle Court House and Sheriff’s House. Paula S. Reed and Associates, Inc. 2016.

**Physical Description**

The New Castle Court House, attached Sheriff’s House (Figure 61), and The Green adjoining them were described in detail in the New Castle Green Baseline Documentation, which was completed in 2013 and prepared by the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs with Gwen Davis, Alice H. Guerrant, Lynn Riley, Suzanne Savery, Stephanie Shaw, and Jesse Zanavich. In addition, the Courthouse is described in the 2003

National Historic Landmark Update. The Sheriff’s House was the subject of a historic structure report, which was completed in 2016.

The New Castle Green Baseline Documentation records the following description of the Court House, which comes from the NHL Update:

Located on the southeast corner of the Green and fronting Delaware Street, the Court House is a two-and-one-half story, early Georgian-style brick building. The building is composed of three sections built between ca. 1730 and 1845. The oldest section of the building is the central, five-bay block which was built between 1730 and 1731. The four-bay-wide east-wing section was built in two stages, 1765 and 1802. The west wing was constructed in 1845. The building had been modified for several different uses since the State and Federal Court system left the building in 1881. The entire building was restored by the State of Delaware between 1955 and 1963 for interpretation to the public as part of the state museum system. The main block of the building was restored primarily to the appearance documented in the 1802 Benjamin H. Latrobe “Survey of the City of New Castle.” Extensive archeological investigation produced information that was used to recreate the layout and missing details of the earlier appearance of the building.

The Court House is a two-and-one-half story, brick Georgian-style building. The deck-on-gable roof is surmounted by an eight-sided, frame cupola detailed with a dome that is supported by an open arcade of round arches with keystones and springers. The roof deck has a wood balustrade across the full width that terminates in brick piers. A tall thin metal spire with an orb-and-arrow weathervane caps off the cupola. The facade and rear elevations terminate in simple moulded cornices on the two earliest sections of the building, and no cornice is present on the 1845 wing. Side elevations on all three sections display simple board raking cornices in the gable ends. The foundations of all three building sections are stone, either dressed or field stone. The building faces a filled terrace that was placed in 1822. Detailed with a dressed stone retaining wall and a brick flooring laid in a herringbone pattern, the raised terrace is accessed by two [actually three] short sets of stairs with well-worn marble risers, providing access from Market and Delaware streets. A flagpole is set on the terrace near the Market Street stairs. The metal railing that edges the terrace was placed in 1830.

Facing southwest the facade of the courthouse is composed of three sections. The central projecting five bay section is the earliest portion of the building. The brickwork of the central section is laid in Flemish bond. The openings are symmetrically arranged with a central entry flanked by two 16/16 wood windows on either side on the first floor. The windows on the first floor display radiating jack-arch lintels while the second-floor window lintels are a simple row lock. Three marble steps provide access to the entrance frontispiece. The surround consists of half-round Doric pilasters supporting a full entablature
New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House

and pediment. The paneled double-leaf door is surmounted by a 12-light transom. On the second floor, a Juliette balcony in the central bay has a balustrade similarly detailed to the one at the roof line. It is accessed by a single-leaf [two-leafed] door and is flanked by two 12/12 wood windows on either side. An unusual decorative corbeled belt course occurs between the floor levels. This single course runs horizontally at the upper level of the lintels on the first floor windows. At the outside edge of the end windows, it turns vertically for ten courses then turns at a right angle toward the corner of the building. It continues around both corners on to the side elevations, then turns another right angle and continues vertically for six courses, then turns another right angle at the level of the window sill on the second floor.

The two-story, four-bay wing attached to the southeast elevation was built in two stages of two bays each. The scale of the wing is smaller than the central block. The facade brickwork is laid in Flemish bond. The 12/12 wood windows are regularly arranged on the first and second floors. They display radiating jackarch lintels on the first floor and soldier-coursed lintels on the second floor. Rebuilt interior end chimneys pierce the roof at the ridge. The facade is capped off with a simple moulded cornice. The earlier section dates from 1765 and displays a belt cornice in the spandrel between the floors. The later section was built in 1802 and is punctuated by a formal frontispiece, less detailed than the entry in the main block. The paneled, single-leaf door is flanked by flat pilasters that support a full entablature and pediment.

The two-story, five-bay addition on the northwest elevation has a shallow-pitched gable roof and interior end chimneys. The entry is located in the central bay and has two concentric rowlock brick arches for a surround. The 9/9 wood windows with lug sills are symmetrically arranged with a blind window over the central entry. One bay of the main block of the building extends beyond the facade of the wing on each side. Visible details on both of the side elevations of the main block are identical. One window per floor is exposed and displays 9/9 wood sash with radiating jack-arch lintels. Garret windows are visible on the upper half story, and are 6/6 wood sash. A simple belt course separates the second story from the attic level and occurs at the sill level of the garret windows.

The northwest elevation of the 1845 wing is laid in seven-course common bond and is two bays wide. The fenestration is regularly arranged and composed of 9/9 wood sash windows with lug sills. The lintels on the first floor are single-row header-coursed brick, and there are no visible lintels on the second floor. Two bolt-anchor plates are placed between the windows at both floor levels. There is a simple raking cornice on the slopes of the gable end.

The rear elevation of the northwest wing is four bays wide and laid in seven-course common bond. The fenestration is irregular with a blank space above the rear door. The windows on this elevation are 9/9 double-hung sash wood
windows that have single-course rowlock lintels and lug sills. A wall of the Sheriff’s Yard intersects the elevation between the first bay and the rear entrance. Brick detail above indicates a masonry wall was formerly attached at this location.

The rear of the main block has no openings but does display a bricked-in rear door that has a large stone lintel. The central section of the first floor is of randomly coursed field stone. A radiating arched lintel in the lower portion of the wall indicates the location of a seventeenth century abandoned well from the site of the earlier courthouse at this location that burned in the early eighteenth century. The second-story wall is brick laid in common bond. This elevation displays a cornice with full entablature across the full width of the main block.

The rear of the southeast wing is divided into two bays with one 6/6 double-hung wood window on the second floor of the older section. One 9/6 double-hung wood window occurs on the newer section second story with a single-panel entry door in the bay below. A handicap-access ramp provides access to this entrance of the building. The southeast elevation of this wing has a large single-run staircase providing access to the first level because of the sharp slope of the lot in this section. Built of brick, the risers appear to be of reused stone. Windows on this elevation are 6/6 wood sash windows with lug sills on the first and second levels with 6/6 wood sash garret windows with lug sills in the gable end. A frontispiece that matches the one on the facade of this wing is located in the eastern bay of the first floor. A simple raking cornice finishes the elevation detail.

While the exterior of the building was restored to the appearance shown in the Benjamin Latrobe drawing of the building in 1807, the interiors have been restored and reused based on ghosting of original fabric left by previous renovations and interpretation needs of the museum. The court room space was generally restored to the appearance of a description and drawing from an 1837 account that proposed building a new fireproof wing attached to the northwest side of the building. The arrangement of the wooden dais for the judges platform, placement of benches for witnesses and prisoner’s dock, as well as seating for grand and petit juries generally conforms to arrangement in that drawing. Two original columns that flank the prisoner’s dock are original features of the space. The present staircase, a dog-leg stair placed in the north corner of the room, was relocated to that location during the restoration of the building in the 1950s.

On the second floor, the stairway opens into an area known as the Assembly Hall or Waiting Room, with a fireplace on the northwest wall. The Robing Room (currently an exhibit space), a small well-lit space, is accessed from the hall. The more formal of the two entries into the Assembly Room is from this
stairhall. The Assembly Room occupies the full length of the main block and slightly more than half its width. A large fireplace is placed on the southeast wall beside the entry from the stairhall in the east wing. The balcony on the main facade of the building is accessed from this room. Spaces in the east wing include the stairhall to the rear of the block, the Reynolds Room, and the exhibit room. The Reynolds Room has a winder stair in the northeast corner of the room that accesses the office below. The exhibit room, accessed off the stairhall, occupies the full width of the wing and slightly over half of its length. A large fireplace, centered on the southeast wall, dominates the room.

The interior of the 1845 west wing is arranged with one room on each side of a central hall with a dog-leg staircase along the back wall. Rooms on the first floor are finished with plaster walls and display simple structural vaulted ceilings indicating its fireproof construction. On the second floor, the hall has been truncated to include more area in the northwestern office space.²

Attached to the Court House is the Sheriff’s House, an Italianate building dating from 1858 and designed by Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan (Figure 61). It was once part of a larger complex that included a jail with two levels of cell blocks and an exercise yard for prisoners, enclosed within a high stone wall. The jail, yard, and wall have been removed. Sloan modeled the New Castle facility on his correctional complex in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

The Italianate style brownstone Sheriff’s House is a remnant of a much larger complex that included a thirty-eight-cell jail and a high, stone-wall enclosure for the prison yard. The jail and yard were behind the Sheriff’s House. The jail was closed in 1901 and demolished about ten years later. The house eventually became New Castle police headquarters from 1971 to 1997. Before that, it housed the New Castle Club in the mid-twentieth century.³

The Sheriff’s House fronts onto Market Street behind the courthouse. Part of the prison yard wall remains extending behind the building and along its north side. The front (east) wall consists of ashlar brownstone whereas other walls are of coursed brownstone. First- and second-story windows are round-arched with four-light sash. Square windows in the raised basement at the front elevation have louvered shutters. The front façade is five bays with a central entrance. The center three bays step outward beneath an elaborate pediment. The cornice is heavily modillioned with a plain frieze band beneath. The modillions are only at the front elevation. A protruding belt course runs along the sill level of the second-floor windows. Pronounced cut quoins finish the corners. A flight of steps with iron railings leads up to the front door, which has two leaves, beneath a round, arched,

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two-light transom. Each door leaf has six vertically arranged panels. The interior of the building retains several jail cells, original woodwork and wood and marble mantelpieces. The Sheriff’s House is discussed in detail in a Historic Structure Report by John Milner Architects, dated September 16, 2016.

The Sheriff’s House upon restoration will become the Headquarters and Visitor Center for First State National Historical Park.

Figure 62: Aerial view of the The Green, New Castle. Google Maps 2018.

The Court House, Sheriff’s House, and other buildings occupy The Green (Figure 62). The following quote from the New Castle Green Baseline Documentation describes The Green:

Initially laid out by Dutch Governor Petrus Stuyvesant in 1655, the New Castle Green (“the Green”) is defined by its open lawn setting interspersed with mature trees; brick walkways; and prominent historic buildings which, within the area of the associated Preservation and Conservation Easement, includes the Old New Castle Court House (“the Court House”) and the Arsenal building.

The circulation pattern of the brick pathways culminates in a small, circular section located at the Green’s approximate center. The pathways radiate from this center section in four directions, connecting to the sidewalks of East 3rd St. (near the Delaware St. Intersection) and Market St. (near the Sheriff’s House); along the Arsenal’s northeast (side) elevation; and near the Academy at another primary pathway, which extends from near the adjacent Immanuel Church Cemetery’s southern point along 2nd St. all the way to 3rd St. A few smaller pathway offshoots provide crisscrossing shortcuts and connections to the surrounding buildings.
New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House

Located throughout the Green are associate landscaping objects, such as several wood and metal benches and, set along the circular center, a single metal, painted-black lamp post featuring a fluted base and tapered body. There are also several markers present, including a historic marker commissioned in 1932 (set along the corner of 3rd and Delaware St.) and, near the Green’s center, two small markers dedicated to fallen and MIA soldiers.4

The Court House, Sheriff’s House, and The Green all retain a high level of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, feeling, and association with their respective periods of construction. Although all three resources have been altered over time, they still retain a substantial amount of original material and design features. While The Green predates most of the surrounding buildings, it maintains its original intent and location and retains the feel and association with the past, of a village-central greenspace.

Evolution of The Green, New Castle: Market Plaine to Government Center

When Peter Stuyvesant, director of the Dutch New Netherland colony, determined to build Fort Casimir on the Delaware River in 1651, he knew that he would need more than a fort in the region to quiet the New Sweden claims; he would also need Dutch settlement.5 Stuyvesant therefore established a rudimentary town grid, beginning with two blocks of “town lots,” which were referred to in deeds as the first and second row “below the fort.”6 The initial settlement of perhaps eighty to one-hundred people stalled after the Swedish seizure of Fort Casimir in 1654, but quickly grew following Dutch repossession in 1655 to as many as 600 by 1657.7 The town was named New Amstel and, in 1656, became a colony of the City of Amsterdam. As the most prominent and accessible deep-water port on the South (Delaware) River, New Amstel replaced the older Fort Christina settlement as the center of Dutch trade and administration in the South River region.8

In November 1655, Director Stuyvesant appointed Jean Paul Jacquet as Vice Director of the South River. Jacquet was charged with ensuring Dutch dominance in the peltries trade with the Minqua and Lenape in the region as well as the growing trade in tobacco and European goods with Swedish and Dutch colonists. Vice Director Jacquet was additionally responsible for maintaining the fort and encouraging the development of New Amstel:

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5 See Section One, Chapter 1.2 for context of European settlement in the lower Delaware River region.
6 Lots were granted as early as 1652. For example, the 1657 conveyance of the fourth lot below the fort to Peter Laurensen noted, “the aforesaid lot had been granted to the said Pieter Lourensen in the year 1652, but as no patent was given him at the time, the same is issued to him now.” Fernow, Documents, 7:182.
8 November 1655. Stuyvesant’s instructions to Vice Director of the South River Jean Paul Jacquet: “He must not suffer by any means, that ships or vessels go above or below Fort Casimir to carry on a trade or negotiations with the savages or Christians, but the same must be compelled, to remain before or near Fort Casimir and trade there or on the shore just below the Fort, for their greater security and to prevent mishaps.” Fernow, Documents, 7:114.
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[I]n order to favor more the concentrated settlements on the Southside of the Fort, he shall upon occasion clear a good street behind the houses already built and lay out the same in convenient order and lots of about 40 to 50 feet width and one hundred feet length, the street to be at least 4 to 5 rods wide.9

Though the fort remained the focus of administrative and trade activity, a lot sale in 1656 indicates that the land located west of the original lots may have been used as a public “common,” “bestowed upon the widow of Roeloff de Haes, A Lot for a House and Garden, situate on the South River of New Netherland near Fort Casamier, being the first Row on the North of the Common Road” (Figure 63, see parcel 2).10

The Dutch did not enjoy their dominance on the South River for long; the ongoing conflict between the Netherlands and Great Britain (Dutch-Anglo Wars) prompted British King Charles II to lay claim to all of the Dutch New Netherland territory in 1664. The king’s brother James, the Duke of York, claimed the lower Delaware (South River) territory as well. The New Amstel port town was renamed New Castle and came under the administration of Sir Robert Carr. The busy river trade continued with New Castle remaining the primary port of call on the Delaware River. New Castle lot sales (after confirming those sold under Dutch administration) continued apace as the town’s grid expanded west and southward. In 1669, the grant of a lot to John Arskin [Erskine], described the parcel as adjoining “the market” (Figure 64).11 The market tract was described in a document dated 1670 as “the market where the bell hangs,” indicating its public use. At the same time, the tract was identified as the property of Capt. [John] Carr, then chief military officer at New Castle.12 In a 1676 deed, the tract was called the “Market Plaine” and, in 1689, called “the Square or Markett Place.”13

In 1689, the market square was physically defined as an open space enclosed by streets (Figure 65). By then, the three Delaware counties were incorporated into William

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10 Original Land Titles in Delaware, No. 12, 10. Louise Heite’s reconstructed map of the first row of lots shows this road as Hart or Harmony Street. The “Common Road” is presumably an earlier name for this road in a town where street names appear to have changed often. It was shortly after the sale of this lot to the widow de Haes that the land from Fort Casimir south (eventually to Cape Henlopen) was transferred to become a colony of the City of Amsterdam. It was payment on a debt owed by the Dutch West India Company to the City Burgomasters who provided the warships that facilitated the Dutch repossession of the South River territory from the Swedes. In 1704, William Penn granted the inhabitants of New Castle a tract of 1,068 acres “for a common, for the use, behoof and accommodation of the inhabitants of the said town of New Castle.” 1764 charter incorporating the Trustees of the Common, accessed Jan. 18, 2018, https://www.trusteesncc.org/documents.
Penn’s Pennsylvania proprietary. Penn included dedicated public greens or squares in the city’s grid pattern in his designs for Philadelphia (1682) and Dover (1717). Though it is not known if Penn had a hand in the changes to The Green in New Castle, the language of the 1689 directive appears to be influenced by William Penn’s vision:

Whereas the credit, reputation, and advantage of a Town or City is its being well furnished with Good Substantial able and wise Inhabitants, who are both capable and willing to promote the Interest thereof, and being very desirous of advancing what in us lie [sic] the Town of New Castle on Delaware River, have regulated the square of the town aforesaid.14

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Figure 63: New Castle, approximately 1680, recreated map showing the “First Row.” Louise Heite, Map H, nc-chap.org.
Figure 64: New Castle, approximately 1680, recreated map showing the Second Row adjoining “The Market.”
Louise Heite, Map E, nc-chap.org.
The plan created more than a regulated market space; it also carved out five lots on the southwest end of the square, including a fifty-foot wide courthouse lot, and designated
the remaining fifty-five feet on the southeast side and sixty feet on the northwest side to be “the streets leading to the Market place.”\textsuperscript{15} Fifty years later, in 1740, regulations for use of the market square were updated by an act of the Lower Counties Assembly that established “a regular market.” The government-sanctioned market was overseen by a Clerk of the Market, appointed by the Assembly: “That the Clerk of the said Market . . . [is] impowered to make, erect, allot and lett out for Hire, Stalls or Booths for accommodating such Persons as shall attend the Fairs held within the said Town of Newcastle, upon the Green, according to the usual Custom and Usage thereof.”\textsuperscript{16}

The Green or “Market Plain” continued to evolve as a public space through the eighteenth century. In 1703, the stone Immanuel Church was constructed where the blockhouse fort previously stood and the Academy was built in the north corner in 1789. In 1785, the market fairs established in 1740 had become so rowdy that the Assembly banned them. By 1805, when Benjamin Latrobe prepared his “Plan of the Town of Newcastle, State of Delaware,” a strip of land along the length of the southeastern boundary of the “Public Square” was carved off to create a new, dedicated market space (Figure 66).

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 66:} Detail from 1805 Latrobe Plan of Newcastle. Delaware Public Archives.
\end{center}


The widened “Market” street was permanently occupied on the south end by rows of “market stalls.” In 1826, a three-story arcaded market house was constructed. The upper stories housed the town government. An 1849 sketch from the Rea & Price Map of New Castle County shows market stalls lined up behind the Market House/Town Hall (Figure 67).

![Figure 67: 1849 Rea and Price, “County Buildings, New Castle.” Library of Congress.](image)

**New Castle as Colonial and State Capital of the Lower Counties**

As late as 1669, administration and justice in New Castle, both military and civilian, was part of the fort function. The 1669 trials stemming from the Long Finn rebellion took place in the crumbling remains of Fort Casimir. In 1670, the New Castle “High Court” proposed construction of a new “fortification of block houses” on the market tract, then owned by Captain John Carr. The magistrates, including Capt. Carr, proposed that the cost of the work would be “charged to the general and public account throughout the entire river” (meaning all three counties) with the proviso, “if war does not break out with the natives … the aforementioned block houses shall be used as public buildings, such as Town hall, jails and other public needs.” Indeed, war did not break out with the Indians. Instead, the Dutch invaded and repossessed their New Netherland colony, including New

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18 “[Propositions of Capt. Carr concerning defenses in Delaware],” in *New York Historical Manuscripts*, vol. 20–21, 15.
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Castle, in 1673. The short-lived Dutch revival ended in 1674 as part of the treaty ending the third and last Anglo-Dutch War. In 1675, New Castle town magistrates sought a more permanent arrangement for government facilities.

With the Duke of York’s colonial government firmly back in control, it was proposed that the block house fort built in 1670 should be replaced with a courthouse and prison. In an August 1675 letter to Governor Andros, the New Castle magistrates expressed their “humble desire the fort lying [on the other side] may be removed for the making of a Court house and that somme other conveni[ence] may be made by itt for a prison both being very necessary for this Towne and river.” 19 The language seems to imply that the block house materials were reused to build a courthouse and jail, probably on the same spot or possibly “removed” to another location on the market tract. This courthouse was in use in 1682 when William Penn first arrived to claim his proprietary territory. Penn was met by John Moll and Ephraim Herman, who held the power of attorney from the Duke of York to formally deliver possession of the land to Penn. In a ceremony called “livery of seisen” Penn was given the key to the fort. He also received a piece of turf with a twig upon it and a porringer with river water and soil, representing the land, trees, and waterways of his land grant from the Duke of York. 20

In 1689, the town magistrates determined to “regulate” the market square, in which a dedicated “Courthouse Lot” was assigned. Situated at the center of a row of five lots platted on the southwest end of the market block, the Courthouse Lot measured fifty feet wide, “fronting the Street going from the River to the Kings Road,” and approximately 150 feet in depth. On either side of the Courthouse Lot were two additional lots, each said to be sixty feet wide, the width of the five lots in total was described as 300 feet. 21 It is said that the 1675 courthouse, which was constructed with 1670 block house materials, was given over to the congregation of the Immanuel Church. The church was founded in 1689 after a new frame county courthouse was constructed on the Courthouse Lot. 22 The new courthouse building would soon be at the center of regional politics as the union of Penn’s “ Territories” with his Pennsylvania province quickly became strained.

The people who occupied the Territories, more commonly called the Three Lower Counties, were predominantly Swede, Finn, or Dutch, as well as the more recent arrivals of Presbyterian Scots-Irish. They did not share a historic or religious connection with Quaker-dominated Pennsylvania. Though the Lower Counties initially welcomed the union with Pennsylvania as their first opportunity to participate in a representative

19 “Magistrates to Gov. Andros concerning affairs at Newcastle,” in New York Historical Manuscripts, vol. 20-21, 97; see also Fernow, Documents, 7:539.
government, their territorial status bred an underlying resistance to control by the more densely populated Pennsylvania counties. In an effort to appease the Territories, Penn’s 1683 Pennsylvania charter gave the Lower Counties equal representation in the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

Penn’s tenuous hold on the Lower Counties began to unravel in the 1690s as pirate attacks on the exposed Delaware coastal settlements went unanswered by the Pennsylvania government, despite a new property tax imposed on all the counties. Representatives from the Lower Counties in the Pennsylvania Assembly refused to attend the legislative session. New Castle County even failed to hold an election to select their representatives. As the Pennsylvania government ground to a halt, Penn faced a threat by the British Crown to take proprietary control from him. Penn returned from England to set things straight. In 1701, he proposed a new charter that would allow the Lower Counties to have their own semi-autonomous legislature, though still remain under the control of the Pennsylvania governor.

The first meeting of the Lower Counties’ Assembly consisted of four representatives from each of the three counties. It was held in November 1704 in the New Castle County courthouse (built 1689). In May 1705, residents of the Lower Counties elected six delegates from each county for the April session. The Assembly met in the spring and fall of each year, presumably occupying the courtroom otherwise occupied by the county courts. The building also housed the county jail. In 1729, an occupant of that county jail planned his escape by setting fire to the building. His failed escape nonetheless destroyed the old courthouse.

In 1732, a new brick New Castle Court House was constructed on the foundation of the 1689 courthouse. It was completed in time for the February 1733 meeting between the proprietors of Maryland and Pennsylvania in an attempt to once again reach an agreement on the boundaries between Maryland and the Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania. The Articles of Agreement, signed by the parties on May 10, 1732, laid out the instructions for a survey of an official boundary, here summarized by Roger E. Nathan:

The line of division was to run due west from Cape Henlopen to a point in the middle of the peninsula and then northerly to a point tangent to a 12-mile circle around New Castle. Then the line should run around the circle until it was due

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25 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 100.
26 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 101–10.
27 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 113.
28 Breviate, 50.
north of the tangent point and then should run due north until it intersected an
east-west line 15 miles south of Philadelphia.29

Years of disagreement followed before a decision was made in Chancery Court in
1750 on how to proceed with the surveys, including how to determine the center point of
New Castle. The Commissioners assigned to the task decided to use the “spire” of the New
Castle Court House cupola; however, the survey completed by surveyors Charles Mason
and Jeremiah Dixon in 1765 only measured the twelve-mile distance west from the spire to
the tangent point.30

While the General Assembly of the Lower Counties met in the assembly hall on the
second floor of the Court House, the courts occupied the main first-floor space. A number
of courts shared this space:

The colonial Court of General Sessions met at New Castle every third Tuesday
in February, May, August, and November. The Orphans Court would also meet
concurrent with this Court as needed. The Delaware Supreme Court and Court
of Oyer and Terminer met in April and October.31

By the 1760s, the General Assembly and New Castle County government had begun
to outgrow the Court House building. In 1765, additions constructed on the southeast and
northwest gable ends of the building housed court offices.

The Delaware State and the American Revolution

Delaware’s status as a semi-independent entity did not come easily. Unlike many of
the other British colonies in America, Delaware did not begin with a royal charter or
proprietary grant. Its brief tenure as New Sweden was overshadowed by Dutch and later
English claims. From the 1630s until the 1750 trans-peninsular survey, Maryland’s Lord
Baltimore periodically asserted his claim—sometimes violently—to the Delaware territory.
The Duke of York’s 1664 claim to the land was not supported specifically in his royal
charter for the New Netherland territory. This called into question the validity of the
Duke’s 1682 conveyance of the territory west of the Delaware River to William Penn and
Penn’s subsequent “Act of Union,” which gave himself power to govern the Three Lower
Counties (or Pennsylvania Territories, as Penn called them).32

Though Penn managed to hold onto control of the Lower Counties, he faced
increasing resistance there to Pennsylvania rule. The new Pennsylvania charter, proposed
by Penn in 1701, gave the Lower Counties an independent legislature, but gave the royalty

29 Nathan, East of the Mason-Dixon Line, 19.
30 Nathan, East of the Mason-Dixon Line, 27–38. Nathan provides a detailed discussion of the surveys. See
Section One, Chapter 1.3 of this report for more detailed discussion of the boundary survey.
31 Robin K. Bondo, Cynthia R. Snyder, and Anthony D’Antonio, Jr., “New Castle Court House,” National
32 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 107.
commissioned Pennsylvania governor veto power over all legislation and the power to appoint judges. When the new Assembly representing “the Counties of New-Castle, Kent and Sussex upon Delaware” met for the first time in 1704, they took on the essential form of an independent colony. Delaware’s semi-autonomous status as a colony nominally attached to the Pennsylvania proprietary set the stage for its role in the American colonies’ path to independence from Great Britain.

As tensions grew between the American colonies and Great Britain, the relatively benign relationship between the legislature of the Lower Counties and the Pennsylvania governor became more contentious. Whereas previously the governor gave easy approval to laws passed by the Delaware assembly, after 1770, the governor (first John Penn, then Richard Penn) returned a number of bills unsigned. Of particular significance, according to Delaware historian John Munroe, was a bill vetoed by Governor Richard Penn in April 1773. The legislation would have removed the Pennsylvania government’s control over the Lower Counties’ levy courts, making them elective, “as they had long been in Pennsylvania,” rather than appointed by the governor. Delaware citizens had strongly supported the repeal of the British Stamp Act and Townsend Revenue Act as unrepresented taxation. The notion that Delaware taxes would continue to be levied by non-elective (non-representative) courts did not sit well in the context of the growing colonial disaffection with England.

Given the uncertainty of the times, it was with great relief in the Lower Counties that the official boundary of Delaware was certified by the Penn proprietary in April 1775. The act, notes Munroe, marked “the end of the reliance of the people of the Delaware counties upon the Penns.” The murmurings of independence rippling across the American colonies strengthened the resolve of the Delaware Assembly in New Castle to assert their own independent identity. Initially this came in the form of an instruction to the delegates attending the second meeting of the Continental Congress “to insist on an equal voice for their colony.” Congress obliged, and then asked in December 1775 that Delaware supply its own battalion of soldiers for the newly formed Continental Army.

It was in the spring of 1776, however, that the Three Lower Counties were given the opportunity to declare their own independence. The Second Continental Congress suggested that each colony make a break from Great Britain by nullifying British authority in their colonial governments. The Lower Counties’ primary link to the British crown was through Pennsylvania’s royally commissioned governor—and the governor-appointed levy

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34 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 232.
35 See Chapter 2.1 for context on the Revolutionary War.
36 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 233–34. The boundaries between Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were officially established by the 1750 trans-peninsular survey and the 1768 Mason-Dixon survey.
37 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 237.
courts that they tried unsuccessfully to remove just three years previous. Thus the Delaware Assembly dispensed with their last links to Pennsylvania and the Crown:

Resolved unanimously, That all persons holding any office, civil or military, in this Colony on the 13th day of June instant [1776] may and shall continue to execute the same, in the name of the Government of the Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex, upon Delaware, as they used legally to exercise it in the name of the King, until a new government shall be formed.

The time for reconciliation with the king had passed. Members of the Delaware congressional delegation were free to vote their conscience.

Less than a month later, the Continental Congress prepared to vote on a resolution declaring the independent United States of America. Delaware delegates insisted that each delegation be counted as a single vote, allowing small colony-states to have an equal voice in these momentous proceedings. A Delaware vote in favor of the declaration would thus require that a majority of the delegates vote aye. McKean was favorable, but Read, who still held hope for reconciliation, was opposed to the resolution. Caesar Rodney, the Kent County representative, was at home after fulfilling his duty with the Kent County militia suppressing a loyalist gathering in Sussex County. While a vote on the resolution was delayed until July 2, 1776, at McKean’s request, Rodney traveled from his home in Dover through the night to reach Philadelphia in time for the vote, assuring Delaware’s vote in favor of independence. The document was approved on July 4, 1776, and a copy signed by most delegates on August 2, 1776, including the signatures of Delaware delegates Caesar Rodney and George Read. Thomas McKean signed a later copy. In celebration, New Castle patriots read the Declaration of Independence from the second-floor balcony of the Court House while royal insignias displayed inside were removed and burned. In the Sussex County town of Lewes, cannons were fired in celebration. In Dover, the courthouse portrait of King George III was reportedly “burned in a bonfire on courthouse square.”

Even as the American Revolution continued to unfold across the colony-states, the Delaware Assembly met in the New Castle Court House to form its new state government. In September 1776, a convention of thirty delegates, ten from each county, submitted the constitution establishing “The Delaware State.” The government would consist of two

38 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 239.
40 Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 239.
43 Bushman, Hancock, and Homsey, Proceedings, 24.
legislative branches collectively called “the General Assembly,” including “the House of Assembly” with twenty-one members (seven per county), and “the Council” with nine members (three per county).\(^4^4\) The office of governor was replaced with a president, elected by the legislature. The president, unlike the former royally commissioned governor, did not have the power to dissolve the legislature. Judges were also elected by the popularly elected Assembly. Popular elections for representatives to the Assembly, and for county Coroner and Sheriff, were to take place annually on the first of October.\(^4^5\)

The newly formed Delaware State Assembly continued to meet in the New Castle Court House through the spring 1777 session. Yet in that session the delegates passed an act to move the seat of government to Dover, in Kent County. The stated purpose of the move was, according to the language in the bill, “that the seat of government should be made as central and convenient to all the inhabitants of the state as possible,” noting that the “holding of the Assembly in the town of New-Castle has been long found extremely burthensome to the good people of the counties of Kent and Sussex.”\(^4^6\) The move to Dover, which may also have been prompted by New Castle’s vulnerability to British attack from the Delaware River, did not take place until the following session in October 1777. This very real danger was highlighted just a few months later when British warships occupied the Delaware River and Bay through the winter of 1777–78.

**New Castle from 1777 to 1850**

Despite losing the state capital franchise in 1777, the town of New Castle continued its vital role as a deep-water port on the Delaware River following the conclusion of the American Revolution in 1783. Steamboat shipping on the Delaware River was encouraged by the Delaware Assembly in 1787 when John Finch was given “the exclusive right and advantage of making, constructing and employing the steamboat,” using his new invention.\(^4^7\) The harbor was improved with “ice piers” in 1794 and 1803, to protect the busy wharves from winter storms and ice flows.\(^4^8\)

Other transportation improvements, including the New Castle and Frenchtown Turnpike Company (1816) and New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad (1832), enhanced the New Castle port’s connection with Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington City (D.C.). But it was two other significant transportation improvements that ultimately marginalized

\(^4^4\) This even distribution of representation, despite the preponderance of the population located in New Castle County, laid some groundwork for the later U.S. constitutional debates in 1787.


\(^4^6\) *Laws of the State of Delaware*, 2:619–20. On Oct. 28, 1779, noting that the only existing copy of the May 1777 law authorizing the move to Dover “had fallen into the hands of the British troops, and hither to hath not, and probably will not, be recovered,” a new act was passed authorizing the Assembly to meet in Dover—or any other town if necessary. *Laws of the State of Delaware*, 2:677)

\(^4^7\) *Laws of the State of Delaware*, 2:895.

\(^4^8\) Cooper, “History of New Castle, Delaware.”
New Castle. In 1829, the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal was carved across the peninsula, providing direct water access between Baltimore and Philadelphia. The more direct route of the Philadelphia, the Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad (1838), of which the New Castle & Frenchtown became a minor branch, eventually provided a faster, cheaper option for shipping goods between the larger port cities.

Throughout this period several changes were made to the Court House. In 1802, a second addition was added to the southeast 1765 wing, which wrapped across the rear of the Court House connecting all sections of the court building (see Figure 66). A plaza with cast-iron railing was constructed in front of the Court House in 1820. Finally, in 1845, the 1765 northwest addition was removed, and a new fireproof wing was added. Fireproof construction included granite, brick, and metal-clad doors.

The Hunn-Garrett Trials: A Precedent Set in the New Castle Court House

Few Americans today (2018) are aware that Delaware was a “slave state” where human bondage remained legal throughout the American Civil War. Delaware is located south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Like Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri during the Civil War, Delaware was labeled a “border state,” or a slave state that remained loyal to the Union. Unlike Maryland, Delaware’s vote to stay in the Union was relatively uncontested. By the 1840s-50s, enslaved labor in Delaware was largely limited to Sussex County and larger plantations in Kent County. New Castle County, with a larger population of Quakers, became an important route along the Underground Railroad, a clandestine chain of “de-pots” (safe houses) operated by men and women—both black and white—known as “conductors” who helped enslaved people find their way to freedom in the North.

Compared to neighboring Maryland where the number of people held in bondage at the time of the first U.S. Population Census in 1790 was over 100,000 (32 percent of the total population), the Delaware enslaved population of African Americans was relatively low at just under 9,000 individuals (15 percent). These numbers in Delaware plummeted over the next several decades to under ten percent in 1800, and about six percent in 1810 and 1820. By 1820, there were fewer than 5,000 enslaved individuals in Delaware. The decline was largely due to the agricultural shift from tobacco cultivation, the primary cash crop through much of the eighteenth century, to wheat and other grains in the nineteenth century.


Many of the African American men, women, and children held in bondage through the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, resided in Sussex County, where larger farms could support the labor force. Smaller-scale farmers to the north were more likely to hire free black or white laborers as needed during planting or harvest seasons. By 1860, while Sussex County counted over 1,300 enslaved people, Kent County had only 303, and New Castle County just 254.

Delaware’s position adjoining Maryland’s Eastern Shore, a slaveholding stronghold, and the “free states” of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, made it a natural route for escaping enslaved people. The presence of a relatively large free black population, along with its concentration of Quaker abolitionists, added to its development as an active link along the Underground Railroad. It was a trio of these players whose actions on behalf of the Hawkins family brought the New Castle Court House into the national spotlight in 1848 during the Hunn–Garrett trials. Samuel D. Burris was a free black living in Kent County who regularly conducted people escaping slavery along the Delaware routes. John Hunn was a Quaker farmer living near Middletown, also in Kent County, described as an “engineer” on the Underground Railroad (housed and made arrangements for individuals escaping slavery). Thomas Garrett, a wealthy Quaker businessman in Wilmington and perhaps the best known of the three operators, was described in William Still’s 1872 record of the Underground Railroad as a “station master” (Figure 68). Burris and Garrett had been active on the network previous to the 1845 incident that brought them notoriety, but for John Hunn it was, as he described it, the “first time I had ever been called upon to assist fugitives from the hell of American Slavery.”

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51 John Dickinson manumitted his fifty-nine enslaved people over the course of several years, beginning in 1777, one year after the Philadelphia Friends Yearly Meeting publicly denounced slavery. Though never officially a member of the Quaker sect (his father and his wife were both Quaker), Dickinson generally embodied Quaker ideals. In 1786, Dickinson submitted abolition legislation to the Delaware Assembly, which failed to pass, and attempted to include abolition of slavery in the 1787 U.S. Constitution. Jane E. Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography,” The John Dickinson Writings Project, accessed Jan. 25, 2018, www.uky.edu/DickinsonWritingsProject/biography.php.


54 Though only Hunn and Garrett faced court proceedings resulting from the Hawkins escape, Burris would face his own trial in 1847 resulting from a foray into the South to help escaping enslaved people. His sentence was to be sold into seven years of slavery. Garrett enlisted Wilmington abolitionist Friends, who arranged for the purchase of Burris at the auction in order to set him free. See Still, *Underground Railroad,* 746.
The incident began in December 1845 as Samuel D. Burris led Samuel and Emeline Hawkins and their six children from Maryland’s Eastern Shore to the Hunn farm. Samuel Hawkins was a free man, but his wife and children were the property of Charles W. Glanding and Elizabeth Turner. It was John Hunn’s neighbor who alerted the Middletown magistrate of the unusual activity at the Hunn farm. The Hawkins family was taken to Middletown and there identified as fugitives by William Chestnut and Robert Hardcastle who aimed to return them to their owners for the reward:

When the family was taken before the magistrate [William Streets], Robert Hardcastle identified Emeline’s two sons as being the escaped slaves of Charles Glanding. Samuel Hawkins produced papers supporting his claim of being free. A will was also produced indicating his wife was also free. Streets drew up commitment papers for the Hawkins family and they were taken to the New Castle jail to sort out the issue in front of a judge. John Hunn wrote a letter to Thomas Garrett which was delivered by Samuel D. Burris who traveled on to Wilmington with the other four men in his party.

On December 6, 1845, the Hawkins family arrived in New Castle where they were remanded to the custody of Jacob Caulk, the sheriff of New Castle. Apparently, the commitment papers were not completely and sufficiently filled out and duly notarized, but Sheriff Caulk agreed to hold the Hawkins family until new commitment papers could be obtained in Middletown and brought to New Castle.

Thomas Garrett met the Hawkins family in New Castle on Sunday, December 7, 1845. He obtained a copy of their commitment papers and returned to Wilmington where he consulted with Senator John Wales, Garrett’s friend and attorney. The following day, Garrett returned to New Castle with Senator Wales, with the intention to present Chief Justice James Booth with a Writ of Habeas Corpus. Chief Justice Booth reviewed the documents presented to him and pronounced there was not enough evidence to detain the Hawkins family and
they were set free. “Judge Booth decided that there was no evidence in which to hold them, that in the absence of evidence, the presumption was always in favor of freedom.” Thomas Garrett arranged for a carriage to take the wife and small children, while the rest of the party was to walk into Wilmington and to Garrett’s store. From there, the entire party traveled on, uneventfully, to Byberry, Pennsylvania where they settled.\footnote{Bondo, Snyder, and D’Antonio, “New Castle Court House,” National Historic Landmark documentation update, 2003, https://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp. James Booth, Jr. was Chief Justice of the State (Delaware).}

For the Hawkins family, their bumpy ride on the Underground Railroad had a successful outcome. Samuel Burris, a free black whose family resided in Pennsylvania, spent fourteen months in jail awaiting trial. By state law, Burris’ conviction for aiding the Hawkins’ escape required that he be sold at auction as a slave for a period of seven years.\footnote{Janet Lindenmuth, “The trial and punishment of Samuel Burris, conductor on the Underground Railroad,” Widener Law Library Blog, Dec. 13, 2012, http://blogs.lawlib.widener.edu/delaware/2012/12/13/the-trial-and-punishment-of-samuel-burris-conductor-on-the-underground-railroad/} John Hunn and Thomas Garrett’s trial came without delay; they were not at risk of being enslaved. The incident, however, would soon bring them significant trouble.

Glanding and Turner, who claimed to own Emeline Hawkins and her children but were denied their “property” by Judge Booth’s decision in 1845, sued Hunn and Garrett under the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act. Under the Act, it was illegal to assist in the escape of any “fugitive from labor.” Anyone convicted of aiding an escaped enslaved person was subject to a fine of $500.\footnote{Lindenmuth, “Trial and punishment of Samuel Burris.” Lindenmuth cites Records of the Second Congress. Session II, 1793, Chapter 7, 302–305.} The trials of John Hunn and Thomas Garrett were held in the U.S. Circuit Court at the New Castle Court House, presided over by U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney.\footnote{Chief Justice Taney served from 1836 to 1864 and is best known for his 1857 Dred Scott v. Sanford decision in which he said affirmed that enslaved people were property, not subject to rights as citizens of the U.S.}

Both were tried on several counts of violating the Act:

Because of his larger role in the transport of the Hawkins family from New Castle to Wilmington and then on into Pennsylvania and freedom, the charges against Thomas Garrett included seven counts of Capias trespass and seven counts of debt. John Hunn’s participation was somewhat more limited, only having fed and sheltered the family, so his charges were limited to seven counts of debt. When the respective cases were brought to trial in May of 1848, the jury empaneled to hear the case was made up of Sussex County men who were predominately pro-slavery in their views.

In the end, both men were found guilty of all charges. The charges against John Hunn were broken down into two separate trials. The first trial, \textit{Glanding v. Hunn} for debt was concluded on May 24, 1848 with a judgement for the plaintiff. The second trial, \textit{Turner v. Hunn} for debt ended on May 25, 1848 with a judgment for the plaintiff for the amount of $1,583.31. The total judgement against him caused the sale of his property in Middletown and all his inherited
property in Camden and Kent County and forced him and his family to move in
with relatives.

Thomas Garrett was subject to four separate trials. The first, held on May 26,
1848, *Glanding v. Garrett* for debt found for the plaintiff in the amount of
$1,100.38. The second trial, held the next day, *Turner v. Garrett* for debt, also
found for the plaintiff in the amount of $2,561.08. The third and fourth trials
were held on the same day, May 29, 1848 and were for the offense of Capias
trespass. *Glanding v. Garrett* found for the plaintiff in the amount of $1,035.76
and *Turner v. Garrett* found for the plaintiff in the amount of $940.67. Although
the total judgement against Thomas Garrett exceeded five thousand dollars, he
was able to get a compromise judgement that reduced his total fine to
$2,061.00.⁵⁹

The broader significance of the Hunn and Garrett trials lay in the legal precedent
set for the application of the fines. Chief Justice Taney justified the large fines assessed to
both Hunn and Garrett—which bankrupted both men—in his written opinion, saying the
1793 Act implied a $500 fine for each fugitive given assistance. Hunn’s lawyer argued that
the Act implied a $500 maximum fine. Taney’s assessment held and the men were required
to pay the fines. Both men were forced to sell their property at auction and rebuild their
lives. Both men also remained unrepentant and continued to help fugitive enslaved people
along the Underground Railroad.

Thomas Garrett never wavered in his commitment to helping fugitives from slavery
and he never attempted to hide his activities. He kept a record of the men, women, and
children he aided, reportedly numbering nearly 3,000 in all. Shortly after Garrett’s death in
1871 at the age of eighty-one, fellow abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison wrote in a letter to
Garrett’s son:

The thousands that passed safely through his hands, on their way to Canada and
the North, will never forget his fatherly solicitude for their welfare, or the dangers he
unflinchingly encountered in their behalf. Stripped of all his property under the Fugitive
Slave law, for giving them food, shelter, and assistance to continue their flight, he knew not
what it was to be intimidated or disheartened, but gave himself to the same blessed work as
though conscious of no loss.⁶⁰

It is said that at the conclusion of the auction of Thomas Garrett’s property, the
presiding Sheriff turned to Garrett and said: “‘Thomas, I hope you’ll never be
catch at this again.’ ‘Friend,’ was the reply, ‘I haven’t a dollar in the world, but
if thee knows a fugitive who needs a breakfast, send him to me.’”⁶¹

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⁵⁹ Bondo, Snyder, and D’Antonio, “New Castle Court House,” National Historic Landmark documentation
update, 2003. There does not appear to be a modern definition for “Capias trespass.” A “capias” is an order for
arrest, but in this case may refer to something more like kidnapping; “trespass” in this case probably refers to
Garrett having interfered with the owner’s property.


New Castle after 1850

The New Castle Court House, as completed in 1732, did not include jail facilities for holding accused or convicted criminals within the court building. By the late eighteenth century, a dedicated jail house and workhouse were constructed behind the Court House (Figure 66). The jail was replaced several times over the next century. In March 1856, a prison escape prompted the Levy Court Commissioners to appropriate $7,700 for repairs to the building then standing behind the Court House. Another escape in November of that year was reported in the local newspaper: “They cut a hole through the floor and pass out through the yard by punching a hole in the wall.” The report continued:

The prison is comparatively useless. Some measure will have to be taken by the Levy Court either for the erection of a new one or the making of the present prison a secure place for the confinement of criminals.

On March 23, 1857, the Levy Court appropriated $15,000 build a new jail and to repair the old Sheriff’s house. The Commissioners reported that the plan for the jail would be “somewhat similar to the jail of Montgomery County, at Norristown, Pa.,” which they had previously visited, “and have engaged S. D. Sloan, Esq. an architect well known to our people, to furnish a design.” By August, the plan had changed to include a new Sheriff’s house as well, this description apparently taken from a newspaper article:

The walls of the new prison are built of brown stone, from Trenton, N. J., and their thickness and apparent solidity, and heavy iron doors and door casings, impress one with an idea that escape would be almost impossible… Messrs. Carman & Dobbins, of Philadelphia, the contractors, are practical brick and stone masons, their extensive operations enables them, as we are told, to do work much cheaper than it can be done by many other firms. They quarry and cart all their own stone, do their own carpenter work and burn many of their own brick… They have taken the contract to erect the new prison at $28,000. We understand that the wooden doors and frames are given out to carpenters in this city. J. M. Poole & Co. have contracted with Messrs. Carman and Dobbins to supply the iron work for $4,000… The prison when completed will contain 38 cells—they are 8 by 11 feet about 10 feet ceiling with but one small window near the ceiling. The doors will open into common corridors on the first and second floors. Each cell will be supplied with water from a cistern on the roof, and a water closet, and they will thus be entirely separate. The roof will be covered with slate, having an iron balustrade all the way around. The size of the prison will be 51 by 115 feet. The Sheriff’s house will occupy the same position

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62 A timeline created by the National Park Service indicates the 1857 jail was the sixth jail on The Green.
63 Quoted in Deirdre E. Hoffer, “New Castle Sheriff’s House, Excerpts from the New Castle Levy Court Minutes and Other Sources, Chronology from 1856 to 1912,” (unpublished manuscript, provided by NPS Northeast Region, 1998).
64 Hoffer, “New Castle Sheriff’s House.”
it did before, being 50 by 52 feet. A wall from the Sheriff’s house will enclose the prison leaving a space of about 20 feet for a yard.\textsuperscript{65}

The prison yard was the site of the pillory and whipping post (Figure 69). Delaware was the last state in the Union to dispense with whipping as a punishment in 1972 (last whipping in 1952).\textsuperscript{66}

The Levy Court funding of the new jail facilities and Sheriff’s House indicates that tax revenues in New Castle County continued to rise. New Castle town, though steadily losing its prominence as a river port, was developing its manufacturing base:

In 1870 there were twenty [manufactures] in the town of New Castle alone, and by 1900 this number had risen to thirty-one. The resultant effect on the local population was dramatic with a doubling of population between 1870 and 1880. Civic improvements, including gas service in 1857 and piped water in 1873, as well as improved streets and police protection, were evidence of New Castle’s economic health and civic vitality. Harbor improvements included the construction of additional ice piers in 1874, 1875, 1879 and 1882. In 1875 the town was incorporated as a city.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{65} Quoted in Hoffer, “New Castle Sheriff’s House.”


\textsuperscript{67} Jett and Cesna, “New Castle Historic District.” The New Castle Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1984 with national significance under Criterion A for its “importance as an early Delaware Valley settlement, as the colonial capitol of Delaware, and as a regionally important port of entry and transfer point for travel across the Delmarva Peninsula.” Additionally, the district was listed under Criterion C for its architecture, documenting “almost three hundred years of architectural development.”
The post–Civil War dominance of the railroads in transportation, particularly the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad over the vital Baltimore-Philadelphia route, was the final blow. With New Castle no longer a vital port of call, the New Castle County government seat was removed to Wilmington in 1881.\(^\text{68}\)

After 1881, the New Castle Court House housed the town government, “housed public school rooms, a men’s club, vocational training classrooms, the post office, and private businesses,” including the New Castle Court House Tea Room (1920s–1955), and was used as an arsenal from 1884 to 1914.\(^\text{69}\) Restoration of the building began in the 1930s with a WPA project that removed the mid-nineteenth century alteration. Beginning in 1955, the state of Delaware restored the building to its appearance in about 1800 and opened the New Castle Court House museum in 1963.\(^\text{70}\)

The New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House complex, situated within the remarkably preserved historic landscape of the town of New Castle, encompasses much of the continuum of Delaware history and its diverse peoples. Beginning with the establishment of the Dutch Fort Casimir, the town grew around its market space and government buildings. On The Green, the town’s earliest inhabitants—Swede, Finn, Dutch, and later English—interacted with their neighbors through trade of products, locally grown or items arriving at the busy harbor. The 1732 Court House, a third-generation government building for the town and county which also served as a state government building, was the site of important political decisions affecting inter-colony/state relations, independence, and judicial precedent concerning the institution of slavery and the rights of citizens who opposed it. The wide range of interpretive opportunities presented by the New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House complex continues into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, addressing questions of justice for African Americans after the Civil War from Reconstruction through the decades of institutionalized segregation.

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\(^{68}\) Jett and Cesna, “New Castle Historic District.”

\(^{69}\) Jett and Cesna, “New Castle Historic District.”

\(^{70}\) Bondo, Snyder, and D’Antonio, “New Castle Court House.”
“I am a farmer, settled after a variety of fortunes near the banks of the River Delaware in the province of Pennsylvania. I received a liberal education and have been engaged in the busy scenes of life; but am now convinced that a man may be as happy without bustle as with it.”¹ These are the opening lines of John Dickinson’s first in a series of Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, written beginning in 1767, perhaps with thoughts of the Dickinson plantation which his family called “Poplar Hall” near Dover, Delaware.² The Dickinson Plantation in Kent County, on the St. Jones River, is “near the banks” of the Delaware River. Although he portrayed himself in the document as having a small farm and modest wealth, Dickinson was a highly educated and very wealthy political leader and plantation owner through the Revolutionary period.

The John Dickinson Plantation is significant for its associations with John Dickinson who is known for his internationally famous Letters, which provided a calm and

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² “Poplar Hall” is used on the DDHCA webpage on John Dickinson, in reference to the family calling the plantation “Poplar Hall.” “At the new plantation, which they called Poplar Hall, John was schooled by his parents and a series of tutors.” “John Dickinson,” State of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, accessed July 27, 2018, https://history.delaware.gov/museums/jdp/aboutjd.shtml.
straightforward evaluation of the disputes between England and the American colonies from a legal and economic standpoint. He wrote many other pamphlets and articles in the pre-Revolutionary period. Dickinson went on to author the Articles of Confederation and serve as one of the authors of the U.S. Constitution. He was raised on the plantation, spent time there when he could in adulthood, and rebuilt the mansion house after it was destroyed by a fire in 1804. The plantation remained in the Dickinson family until 1933.3

This chapter makes four specific points about John Dickinson and his role in American and Delaware history, which could be further investigated through additional research. First, Dickinson was directly associated with the values expressed in American founding documents, the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights. Second, John Dickinson had significant and complicated associations with slavery, manumission, and emancipation. Third, Dickinson held an important role in the history of American intellectual thought. The fourth point is that the John Dickinson Plantation highlights the changing nature of interpretation at historic sites. Dickinson brings many of the abstract concepts that frame this Historic Resource Study to the human level, and his plantation—a place with which he was closely associated—provides a space within which these concepts and other issues in American history can be explored.

**Physical Description**

The John Dickinson Mansion stands at the heart of what was once a 1,368-acre plantation, located about five miles south of Dover in Kent County.4 The south-facing brick house today occupies a 400-acre tract at the southeast corner of the intersection of Delaware Route 1 and Kitts Hummock Road.5 The land, which is part of the former plantation, contains the mansion house and modern support buildings and belongs to the State of Delaware. The John Dickinson Plantation operates as a museum administered by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. It is also a component of First State National Historical Park.

The Dickinson Mansion is located a short distance south of Kitts Hummock Road. A parking lot and visitor center, constructed to look like a barn, are directly off the road.

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3 While several dates are given in various sources for the time of the end of Dickinson family ownership of the plantation, the DDHCA webpage on the John Dickinson Plantation states that the plantation remained in the family until 1933. “About the Museum,” State of Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, accessed July 25, 2018, https://history.delaware.gov/museums/jdp/jdp_history.shtml.

4 According to the John Dickinson Plantation staff, Samuel Dickinson’s will specified the acreage as 1,368. Munroe lists 3,800 acres. Munroe, Colonial Delaware, 144. Other sources give the acreage as 13,000 or 1,300. Delaware: A Guide to the First State incorrectly refers to the Dickinson House as “Kingston-Upon-Hull” and gives the size of the original plantation as 1,300 acres. Federal Writers’ Project, Delaware: A Guide to the First State, 395. Maynard identifies Kingston-Upon-Hull as a different house that was once part of the 13,000-acre Dickinson Plantation, located to the southeast of the Dickinson Plantation House in what is now the Ted Harvey Wildlife Area. Maynard, Buildings of Delaware, 236. The 1977 National Register/National Historic Landmark nomination also gives the acreage as 13,000.

driveway continues to the Dickinson Mansion, which is oriented away from the road and toward the St. Jones River. The river once looped closer to the house than it does today. A dirt road leads from the front of the house south to a former landing on the river. The river flows eastward into the Delaware Bay. The landscape around this house is flat, cultivated farmland, retaining much of its historic character. Trees line the former path of the St. Jones River and marshlands extend beyond the trees in the vicinity of the river and its former channels. Dover Air Force Base is located just to the northwest of the plantation.

The main block of the house faces almost due south. It is a two-and-one-half story, five-bay brick building with a raised basement and side gabled roof. Georgian in style, it has a five-bay façade with a central entrance. A molded brick watertable marks the first-floor level, and a projecting belt course the second-floor level. A character-defining feature of the front wall is glazed header brickwork accentuating the Flemish bonding. The symmetry of the plan is broken with one chimney rising from the west gable end and none in the east gable. Instead, the east chimney is in the north (rear) wall. The east-end wall is covered with stucco. The north and west walls each have English bond brickwork, with alternating courses of stretchers and headers. The headers are not glazed in the side and rear walls (Figure 71).

![Figure 71: John Dickinson Mansion, view from the northwest. Paula S. Reed and Associates, Inc. 2016.](image)

Windows in the raised basement level are topped with segmental arches and have vertically placed wood bars to ventilate and secure the openings. Photographs of the house from about 1900 (Figure 72) and 1936 (Figure 73) do not show these basement windows clearly enough to determine whether the current windows follow an earlier precedent. At the main level, windows have sixteen-over-sixteen-pane sash, and at the upper level
twelve-over-twelve panes. The current windows replicate the windows shown in the photographs from 1936 and about 1900. Wood carved jack arches top the first story front windows. These were not present in the photos from 1936 and about 1900.

Figure 72: Photograph of John Dickinson Mansion, approximately 1900, view from the northwest. Delaware Public Archives.

Figure 73: 1936 Historic American Building Survey photograph of John Dickinson Mansion, view from the northwest. Library of Congress.
The back/north wall of the main section of the house has an oddly configured fenestration pattern. Windows and doors are crowded toward the west end of the north wall, since a chimney and fireplaces occupy the east end of the back wall. There are windows at the basement and first and second levels to illuminate the northwest rooms, an entrance into the stair hall, and a window above it between levels to light the stairway at the landing. This nine-over-nine light window is smaller than the other windows. Near the center of the wall, a door enters to the basement. The east gable-end wall has two windows at the first story and one at the second story centered between the two lower windows. There is a vertical-barred window into the basement.

The main entrance is centered in the front/south wall. It has a six-panel door beneath a five-light transom. A flight of wood steps leads to an open wooden deck with built-in benches along each side. The photo from about 1900 and the 1936 HABS photo show a nearly flat roofed porch supported by columns over the entrance porch. The benches were present on each side. A second entrance is in the north wall. Currently it has a gabled roof over the porch deck and built in benches along each side. The 1977 National Register/National Historic Landmark nomination photos show no roof, although the benches are present. No earlier photographs of the back of the house have been found.

Two additions telescope outward from the west gable end. The first, immediately adjacent to the main section dates from the 1790s, uses some materials from an earlier 1752 addition, and the second, attached to the first, dates from the 1830s. The first addition, one-and-a-half stories high and three bays in length, includes a dining room taking approximately two-thirds of the space. Two small rooms occupy the remaining space. The southern room is a pantry with shelves. The northern room is a historic plantation office with fireplace. The door to the second addition is located in the plantation office. The front wall is laid in Flemish bond, without a watertable. The side and rear walls are common bond with 5:1 stretcher/header row ratio. It has a raised basement and marks in the masonry at the front elevation indicate that the openings may have been reduced in size with an infill of bricks under the present sill level. The central bay was an entrance directly into the dining room as recently as 1997 when Historic American Building Survey (HABS) drawings were made (Figure 74). This entrance also shows in the photograph from about 1900 and that from 1936 with a porch similar to the one at the front entrance, including benches along the sides of the porch. Currently there is an entrance into the dining room from the exterior north wall. In the 1997 HABS drawings, this opening is indicated as a window.


The dates for the two additions were supplied by the John Dickinson Plantation unit of First State National Historical Park. Citations for the sources of these dates were not available for the preparation of this Historic Resource Study.

A number of alterations were made to the house in 2006. The current configuration of the rooms in this addition has changed. Information on the nature of those changes and research on the construction history that led to them was not available for this Historic Resource Study.
Therefore, the change in exterior door locations happened after the drawings were done in 1997. The dining room addition has a chimney extending from the southwest corner serving the small office or sitting room. The dining room fireplace was in the east wall against the main house. It was removed in 2006. Main level windows have twelve-over-twelve lights and also had this glazing pattern in the photograph from about 1900. There is a shed-roofed dormer window on the south roof slope.

The second addition dates from the 1830s. Constructed as a kitchen and quarter, it is not as tall as the dining room addition. The kitchen has a deep, recessed porch across its front elevation, supported by brick columns, creating an outdoor workspace. A set of steps leads down from this porch area to the cellar under the dining room. The kitchen has doors to the exterior on all three walls and a cooking fireplace in the southwest corner of the room. Windows have six-over-six light sash and there is a shed-roofed dormer on the south side.

Figure 74: Historic American Building Survey first floor plan, 1997. Library of Congress.

The interior of the main part of the house divides into three general sections: a wide central stair passage, a large room to the east, and two smaller square rooms to the west. Each of the smaller rooms has a diagonal corner fireplace that shares the west gable-end chimney. The large east room has a fireplace centered in the windowless north wall. The second-floor plan is similar, except that a small room is partitioned off in the front of the hallway. All of the interior woodwork was replaced after a fire in 1804 when the house was rebuilt. Some woodwork is the product of various renovation campaigns in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. The staircase is consistent with the 1804–1806 reconstruction of

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9 According to staff at the John Dickinson Plantation, “Explanation about the changes to the central bay entrance: Due to archaeological evidence (a continuous drip line), it was determined that there was no door on the south side of the mansion during John Dickinson’s time. The dining room entrance was removed from the south side of the mansion and placed on the north side. During Samuel Dickinson’s time, the room was described as having three windows in front and three windows in back.”
the house, with a delicate Federal style curved handrail, turned newel and reeded balusters. Other features include fully paneled walls with raised panels and ovolo-trimmed architraves around fireplaces, doors, and windows.

In the twenty-first century, the house was repainted inside and out based on analysis of the historic paint colors by Catherine Masek. A cove cornice was added onto the house, based on physical evidence. The cove cornice is visible in the photograph of the house from about 1900, but not in the 1936 photo (Figures 72 and 73). The 1982 HABS photographs show a modillion cornice that was probably added during the 1950s renovation (Figures 75 and 76). According to the NR/NHL documentation, “The restoration of the house was based on Dickinson’s correspondence and written instructions of the 1804–1806 period.” The house has been refurnished with period pieces and some formerly owned by the Dickinson family.

Figure 75: Historic American Building Survey photograph, view from the northwest, 1982. Library of Congress.

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11 Greenfield, “John Dickinson House.”
The landscape around the house includes a formal boxwood garden in the front (south) yard area and a kitchen garden to the southwest of the house. W. Barksdale Maynard reports in his book, *Buildings of Delaware*, that Alden Hopkins restored the grounds with the help of Donald H. Parker from Colonial Williamsburg in 1954. Hopkins “was a leading practitioner of the Colonial Revival movement in landscape architecture, known best for his work on the garden restorations at Colonial Williamsburg and the University of Virginia. After his tenure as the Garden Club of America Fellow at the American Academy in Rome, Hopkins worked at Mount Vernon before becoming the first resident landscape architect at Colonial Williamsburg, where he partnered with Arthur A. Shurcliff.” The Cultural Landscape Foundation also lists the Dickinson Mansion garden as one of Hopkins’ works.

A feed barn was reconstructed based on specifications from 1800 in 1985–86, and the visitor center, designed to look like a regional barn was added in 1988–89. There are no above-ground remains of the slave dwellings or other plantation buildings. The John Dickinson Plantation currently has six reconstructed outbuildings: the feed barn, granary, double corn crib, stable, smoke house, and a slave and tenant house. A fenced-in herb and vegetable garden is attached to the slave and tenant house. Samuel Dickinson’s grave is also located on the grounds.

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John Dickinson’s Early Life

Born into wealth, John Dickinson came from a planter family residing at Crosiadore, which was located on the north shore of Dickinson Bay on the Choptank River in the Trappe district of Talbot County, Maryland. The house stood until the late twentieth century, when it was demolished.\textsuperscript{13} John Dickinson was born at Crosiadore on November 13, 1732. In 1740, the Dickinson family left Maryland and purchased land in Kent County, Delaware, on the St. Jones River, near its opening into the Delaware River. On this land, John’s father, Judge Samuel Dickinson, established his plantation and built a brick house completed in 1740.\textsuperscript{14}

Young John Dickinson grew up on this plantation called “Poplar Hall.” He was educated by a private tutor, William Killen, an Irishman who later became the first chancellor of Delaware.\textsuperscript{15} In 1750, Dickinson left Delaware to study law in Philadelphia. Three years later he traveled to London to continue his studies at Middle Temple at the Inns of Court. He returned to Philadelphia in 1757 and became a prominent barrister and orator.\textsuperscript{16}

John Dickinson and the Prelude to Revolution

In 1759 Dickinson was elected to the Delaware Assembly and became its Speaker of the House. In 1762, he was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly. Although Dickinson was not Quaker, his wife was, and he embraced the Quaker principles and for the most part lived by them, most notably the right of peaceful resistance and protection of civil liberties.

In the 1750s and 1760s, a movement emerged to persuade the Crown to take over the Pennsylvania proprietary from the Penns and replace it with a royal charter. Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Galloway led the anti-proprietary party. John Dickinson opposed this movement and, in 1764 published \textit{A Speech on a Petition for a Change of the Government of the Colony of Pennsylvania}, argued that the proprietary government, despite its shortcomings, was an effective buffer between the colony and the British Parliament.\textsuperscript{17} The issue with the proprietary and anti-proprietary factions was in part a divergence in opinion between the generally prosperous Quaker base in the Philadelphia area and the newer populations on the frontier who backed the Penns. The three lower counties of Pennsylvania (later Delaware) generally supported the Penn proprietary. The division between the two factions faded when Parliament initiated a series of actions to gain revenue from the colonies, causing them to act as one in opposition to Parliament’s policies.

After the Seven Years War, known as the French and Indian War in America, England looked for ways to increase revenues to pay for the costly conflict, much of which

\textsuperscript{13} Michael Bourne, “Crosiadore,” Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties #T-143, Maryland Historical Trust. demolished 1976.
\textsuperscript{14} Greenfield, “John Dickinson House.”
\textsuperscript{15} Greenfield, “John Dickinson House.”
\textsuperscript{16} “John Dickinson Biography.”
\textsuperscript{17} Munroe, \textit{Colonial Delaware}, 225.
John Dickinson Plantation

took place in the colonies. Parliament put forth a series of income producing measures in the form of taxes and duties on items sent to the American colonies. These provisions met with increasingly hostile resistance in the colonies, culminating with the American Revolution (or War for Independence). John Dickinson played a large role in these disputes, always taking a moderate stance and advocating for peaceful resistance as opposed to armed conflict.

One of the early revenue measures was the Stamp Act of 1765, by which Parliament imposed a tax on all paper used for printed documents. John Dickinson was the primary draftsman of resolutions for the Stamp Act Congress in opposition to the Stamp Act, which appealed not to Parliament but to the King for American colonists’ rights, with the argument that taxes should not be imposed without representation. He wrote several pamphlets urging peaceful resistance and civil disobedience over violence, which was growing throughout the colonies. Dickinson stated his views in the pamphlet, *The Late Occurrences in North America, and the Policy of Great Britain, Considered* (1766). Parliament rescinded the Stamp Act in March of 1766, but at the same time passed the Declaratory Act which affirmed the right of Parliament to enact any kind of legislation for the colonies that they chose.

The Townsend Acts followed in 1767 with a new tax on glass, lead, paper, paint, and tea. Charles Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed this new tax, which was named for him. With these new taxes, Dickinson again took up his pen and wrote his now famous series, *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1767–68), which called for unification in opposition to the tax from all of the colonies. The *Letters* were widely distributed and read across America, Britain, and Europe, propelling Dickinson to fame as a political figure in the American colonies and fed widespread protest against the acts. In 1770, Parliament repealed all of the duties in the Townsend Acts except for the one on tea, which they left in place to affirm that they had the power and authority to set taxes as they saw fit. The retained tax on tea eventually led to the Boston Tea Party in 1774.

In response to the destruction of tea in Boston Harbor, Parliament established the Coercive Acts (called the Intolerable Acts in America) to punish Massachusetts and to set an example for the other colonies. Among these acts was one closing the port of Boston. Although Dickinson opposed war and revolution, he believed that the colonies should be prepared for war while also negotiating for peaceful resolution. Accordingly, after the passage of the Intolerable Acts and the closing of Boston Harbor, Dickinson served on numerous committees, founded the First Philadelphia Regiment and became its colonel, and called for a colony-wide congress to be held in Philadelphia. He was involved with other congressional bodies, including the Committee of Public Safety and the Committee of Secret Correspondence. Thus, Dickinson was a leader prepared for the possibility of

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18 Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 225.
19 Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”
conflict while advocating peaceful solutions, strengthened through unity among the colonies.

The concluding lines of Dickinson’s first of the Letters proclaim the importance of the colonies banding together and uniting as one: “It appears to me that it would have been sufficient for the assembly to have ordered our agents to represent to the King’s ministers their sense of the suspending act and to pray for its repeal. Thus we should have borne our testimony against it; and might therefore reasonably expect that on a like occasion we might receive the same assistance from the other colonies. Small things grow great by concord. A FARMER.”

John Dickinson and the American Revolution

John Dickinson continued in his belief that peaceful resistance was the key to resolving differences with England. As shown with his Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, he wrote to appeal to reason and to lay out a legal argument supporting the Colonies’ opposition to taxation without representation. His subsequent Letters to the King were intended to avert a break with England. However, the sentiment in the colonies swirling around him increasingly followed the more incendiary voices calling for revolution and independence.

As a member of the First Continental Congress in September and October of 1774, Dickinson wrote four of the six documents it produced. These included a list of grievances and a petition to the King. The congress was divided between those who wanted to work toward reconciliation, and those who wanted a total break with England. Compromise prevailed this time.

In 1775, during the Second Continental Congress, Dickinson wrote the “Olive Branch Petition” and co-wrote the “Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms.” These documents once again attempted to seek reconciliation, the latter by suggesting to the king that the Americans were prepared for a long fight and that they were committed to the cause for representation. Nevertheless, Dickinson believed that the colonies didn’t stand much chance of winning a war with England without help from outside and without a strong central government to hold them all together.

In “Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms,” which Dickinson wrote with Thomas Jefferson, Dickinson’s consistent philosophy of resolution appears in the concluding paragraphs:

Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow-subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them that we mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored.—Necessity has not yet driven us into that

20 Dickinson, Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, 12.
desperate measure, or induced us to excite any other nation to war against them.—We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of separating from Great-Britain, and establishing independent states. We fight not for glory or for conquest. We exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies, without any imputation or even suspicion of offence. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death.

In our own native land, in defence [sic] of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it—for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before.22

Dickinson’s fame through his many publications gave him great influence over Congress and the general public, especially in Pennsylvania. He also gained enemies as the proponents of revolution and independence gained support. Eventually the more radical members of the Congress seized power, weakening Dickinson’s influence. Yet, because of his belief that in the event of revolution the colonies would need a strong constitution for them to survive as a nation and also to protect the rights of dissenters, Dickinson wrote the first version of the Articles of Confederation in 1775, which provided for a strong central government. The document was eventually substantially revised to weaken the power of the Confederation’s central government.23

In his last speech against independence before Congress on July 1, 1776, Dickinson said that the colonies were not ready for a revolution because they had no agreed upon constitution and no support from other countries. He declared that American rights would be safer under Britain’s constitution. When the final vote was taken for independence on July 2, knowing that the vote should be unanimous and unwilling to vote against his conscience, Dickinson chose not to attend the session.24 He also did not sign the final version of the Declaration of Independence.

His position on independence dearly cost Dickinson’s reputation and esteem. His fellow Pennsylvanians and Americans disapproved because he did not join their cause for independence and revolution. The British disliked him because he was considered to be the leader of the independence movement, despite his moderate views, due to his prolific writings on the topic and opposition to Parliament’s actions. Yet he was one of only two members of the congress who joined the military in support of the Revolution. In 1774, he founded the First Battalion of Associators in Philadelphia. Then, shortly after the

23 Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”
24 Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”
Declaration of Independence was signed, he led the regiment into New Jersey as its Colonel. It was a short-lived expedition due to desertions in his and other units. Also, Dickinson feared for his family at British and Tory hands and also from Americans who opposed his views on the Declaration of Independence. The British burned Dickinson’s home during their occupation of Philadelphia. In response, Dickinson resigned his military commission and moved with his family back to his house in Kent County, Delaware. There his sentiments for moderation and negotiation mirrored those of the local population.\(^\text{25}\)

In 1777, John Dickinson enlisted in the Delaware militia as a private. When the British moved northward from Elkton, Maryland toward Philadelphia, the militia participated in the Battle of Brandywine. Dickinson was promoted to Brigadier General but resigned the commission later that year and returned to his family in Kent County. He spent the next few years working with the Continental Congress to formulate military policy and draft documents used in peace negotiations.\(^\text{26}\)

**John Dickinson and the New Republic**

After the war, John Dickinson was elected President of Delaware in 1781. Shortly thereafter, he moved back to Philadelphia and was then elected President of Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, the Articles of Confederation that Dickinson had initially drafted in 1775, and which had been reworked to loosen the language to make them weaker, proved to be inadequate to the task of creating a unified central government. James Madison proposed a convention in Annapolis to examine and refine the Articles to strengthen the Confederation’s control. Dickinson was one of three representatives from Delaware at the gathering, which convened on September 11, 1786. Dickinson was elected president of the convention, but since only five of the thirteen states attended, the delegates decided to adjourn and call for another convention in Philadelphia in the spring of 1787.\(^\text{27}\)

The Philadelphia meeting came to be called the Constitutional Convention. This time there were five delegates from Delaware, including John Dickinson. The delegation supported provisions to strengthen the central government, but were, along with other small states, concerned about the mechanism for selecting representatives to the new Congress. Should it be proportional to population or equal for all states? Eventually, the attendees worked out the “Great Compromise,” creating two houses, the lower to be allocated by population and the upper by equal representation among all states.\(^\text{28}\) Dickinson promoted the idea of two houses, as he was uniquely affiliated with both a large state and a small one—Pennsylvania and Delaware. The Delaware delegation enthusiastically supported the compromise. When the details were worked out, the new proposed


\(^{26}\) Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”

\(^{27}\) Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 250.

\(^{28}\) Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 250.
constitution sent out to the states’ legislatures for review and approval. Delaware was the first state to ratify the new U.S. Constitution on December 7, 1787. Dickinson also promoted the idea of including a clause prohibiting slavery in the constitution, but it was rejected. Dickinson was not able to sign the final document, having left the convention early due to illness. His friend and fellow Delaworean George Read signed for him.

John Dickinson is said to have never confirmed as a Quaker due to his belief that violent resistance was sometimes a necessary evil. But many of his beliefs espoused in his writings clearly aligned with the Quaker principles, perhaps through the influence of his Quaker wife, Mary Norris Dickinson. Dickinson continued to write about social and political issues throughout his life. He served briefly as the president of the Delaware constitutional convention in 1791–92 and introduced a bill for the gradual abolition of slavery, which did not pass. Dickinson also served as an advisor to other political figures, most notably Thomas Jefferson during his presidency. He and his family moved to Wilmington where he remained until his death in 1808. He continued to maintain an interest in the plantation, although it was occupied by tenants.

John Dickinson carries the title “Penman of the Revolution” because of his prolific writings in the years leading to the revolution, his work in the war, and his role in drafting the Articles of Confederation and contributions to the Constitution.

**History of the John Dickinson Plantation**

A devastating fire in 1804 that destroyed everything except for the mansion’s brick exterior walls necessitated rebuilding of the house. The original construction was in 1740 after Judge Samuel Dickinson, John’s father, purchased the assembled the plantation and had the house built. Two wings telescoping out from the west end wall are said to have been added in 1752 and the 1830s. The original house had three stories and a hipped roof. For the rebuilding, John Dickinson decided to reduce the house to two stories, and change the roof form from hipped to side gabled.

While John and Mary Dickinson spent much of their time away from the plantation, having houses in Philadelphia and Wilmington as well, the Kent County house and lands were leased to tenants. An article written by The Friends of The John Dickinson Mansion described the Dickinson plantation tenants:

This property was his favorite, but all his land was carefully supervised with much intervention on his part. While John was influencing the political arena of Philadelphia, his tenants were growing wheat, rye, barley, and raising orchard fruits.

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29 Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”
30 Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”
31 Greenfield, “John Dickinson House.”
32 Reconstruction work documentation is located at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and copies are at the John Dickinson Plantation.
Each tenant, whose backgrounds varied, oversaw the upkeep and production of a portion of his land. Many tenants reported to John on a regular basis. If they could not meet the lease agreements, they often had to find work elsewhere. The successful tenants specifically followed the lease agreements to produce market quality grain. Other tenants agreed to produce more than crops. William White, who tenanted “Homeplace,” was required to produce candles, soap, lard, wool, flax, beef and pork among other things. Tenants are often viewed as a landless population, but in the case of William White, he owned land in his own right. Other tenants for John included free blacks and poor white farmers who owned very little or never acquired land.33

In shifting to a labor force of tenant farmers, Dickinson was part of a trend in central Delaware agriculture (and the larger Mid-Atlantic region): “Once dependent on a labor pool filled largely by slaves, many nineteenth-century farmers now found themselves relying on a new labor force made up of former slaves and other free blacks, recent immigrants from Europe and Great Britain, and poor whites who lacked the resources to purchase or tenant their own farms.”34

When John Dickinson died in 1808, the large property passed to his daughter Sally Dickinson, who continued to manage the plantation until her death in 1856. The Dickinson family retained the property until 1933, after which it passed through several owners until 1952, when a twelve-acre parcel including the mansion was purchased by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware: “They presented the site to the State in Constitution Day ceremonies that year. The mansion opened as a museum in May 1956, after three and a half years of restoration.”35

The mansion with its immediately surrounding lands (thirteen acres) was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961 and affirmed in 1977. A National Register/National Historic Landmark form was completed for the property in 1975. The Historic American Building Survey (HABS) also recorded the house in 1936 with photographs. The photographs were updated in 1982. As it appears currently, the John Dickinson Mansion is for the most part an 1804–1806 reconstruction that John Dickinson managed and directed. He was living in Wilmington at the time but remained interested and involved with the plantation. The house was again renovated in the 1950s with replacement of some woodwork to attempt to recreate the 1740s appearance. Additional rehabilitation work was done in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

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35 “About the Museum.”
Slavery on the John Dickinson Plantation

The large Dickinson plantation relied on a population of enslaved black laborers to carry out the agricultural and household activities required to keep such a sizable holding running. While in Talbot County, Maryland, the Dickinson family grew tobacco, but in Delaware they converted to less labor-intensive wheat and other grain crops. Nevertheless, the family continued to hold a large number of African Americans in bondage at the Dickinson plantation and on their other properties. However, John Dickinson eventually manumitted his enslaved persons, first conditionally in 1777, and then unconditionally in 1786. 36

In his public life, Dickinson, with his Quaker leanings, gradually came to the belief that slavery was morally wrong. As early as 1776, Dickinson wrote An Essay of a Frame of Government for Pennsylvania, in which he “proposed a law be passed stating that ‘No person hereafter coming into, or born in this country, to be held in Slavery under any pretense whatever’ and a law be repealed that discouraged manumission by requiring owners to provide ‘security’ for even young and healthy former slaves.” 37 With Dickinson and other Quaker leaders in Pennsylvania objecting to the continued legality of human bondage, the Pennsylvania legislature passed an Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in 1780, which prohibited importation of new enslaved people, declared that children born to enslaved women would be free at age twenty eight, but kept those people enslaved at the time of the act’s passage as slaves for life unless they were otherwise manumitted. Legal bondage ended in Pennsylvania when legislation freed the few remaining enslaved people in 1847. 38

Dickinson introduced language into the U.S. Constitution to abolish slavery and also to the Delaware state constitution, but neither passed. His efforts, however, resulted in the inclusion of Article 1, Section 9 into the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited importation of enslaved people into the United States after January 1, 1808.

In 1777, John Dickinson manumitted men, women, and children he held on the plantation. On May 12 of that year he drafted a Deed of Manumission, naming each of the enslaved people in intended to set free:

To all Christian People to whom these Presents shall come, I John Dickinson of Fairhill in the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, at present in Dover Hundred in the County of Kent on Delaware, send Greeting, Whereas I am now possest of these Negro Men, Augustus, Joe, Toby, Abraham, Nick,

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37 Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”

Nathan, Ned, Isaac, Will, Caesar, Dick and Jerry, also of these Negro Women, Mary, Flora, Sidney, Rachel, Violet, Dinah, Abby, Laetitia, Peggy and Nelly, also of these Negro Boys, Charles the Child of Ruth, Pompey the Child of Priscilla, Jim the Child of Dinah, David the Child of Abby, and Jemmy the Child of Rachel, and also of these Negro Girls, Rose and Amelia the Children of Sidney, Violet and Rose the Children of Nanny deceased, Lydia the Child of Abby, Nanny the Child of Dinah, Sal & Esther the Children of Priscilla, Nancy the Child of Ruth, and Rachel the Child of Laetitia, And whereas I desire to prevent a Continuance of Slavery, now know Ye, that on Condition that each of the said Negros and each and every other Negro belonging to Me, if any there be, whose Name is above omitted, respectively shall honestly diligently and faithfully serve and obey and work for Me my Executors Administrators and Assigns for and during the Term of twenty one Years from the Date hereof, I do manumit set free and discharge from all further Servitude each of the said Negros who shall have served as aforesaid for and during the Term aforesaid And I do hereby declare, that every Child, that shall after the Date hereof be born of the Body of any of th[e] before mentioned Negro Women and Negro Girls, is and shall be from the Birth of such Child entirely free and clear from any Claim pretence or Demand of Servitude to be made by Me my Executors Administrators or Assigns, But, if I my Executors Administrators or Assigns shall maintain any such Child from its Infancy untill it becomes capable of performing Service, to which Maintenance I hereby bind myself my Executors Administrators and Assigns as long as I or any of them shall keep the Mother of such Child in Service, in such Case every such Child so maintained, and also taught to read and write before the age of ten Years, shall serve Me my Executors Administrators and Assigns as long as the Mother of such Child shall be kept in Service as aforesaid, In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this twelfth Day of May in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and seventy seven.39

In this document, Dickinson held his enslaved people for a period of twenty-one years before they would be freed, but promised to maintain children and teach them to read and write before the age of ten. However, John Dickinson later reconsidered and freed those that remained unconditionally, starting with a few in 1781 and the rest in 1786. A number of his former enslaved laborers remained on the property as tenant farmers. Dickinson provided for those who were no longer able to work.40

With its deep associations with John Dickinson, the “Penman of the Revolution,” the John Dickinson Plantation provides an opportunity to bring his complex character to life on the grounds on which he grew to maturity and formulated the groundwork of his political thought. But the plantation history also opens a window on so much more; visitors

39 “Manumission of John Dickinson’s Slaves.”
40 “Manumission of John Dickinson’s Slaves.” See also “The Slave Holder”; and Jane E. Calvert, “John Dickinson Biography.”
consider the lives of the women who influenced John Dickinson, the enslaved laborers who were the foundation of much of his wealth, and the tenant farmers who continued to work the land for the Dickinson family. The John Dickinson Plantation maintains a research repository on site, with documents pertaining to the Dickinson family, the enslaved individuals, and the many tenants of the plantation.
CHAPTER 2.6

THE GREEN IN DOVER
AND THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

The Green in Dover is significant as the setting for the political activity surrounding ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787. The Delaware Assembly was the first to ratify the U.S. Constitution, thus becoming the “First State” in the Union—a title still held dear by Delaware citizens. The Delaware ratification debate took place in and around The Green, while the final vote occurred in the Golden Fleece Tavern adjoining The Green. The Green was a public gathering place where political opponents could speak their minds or vendors could sell their wares on market day. It served as the staging area for the Delaware militia in the Revolutionary War and was the site of significant political demonstrations for and against ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. In quieter times, The Green was often occupied by livestock, a common use of the public common. The Green is the central contributing historic resource in the Dover Green Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.

Physical Description

The Green lies in the heart of old Dover, established by William Penn in 1683. Centered in the original plan of Dover, The Green is a rectangular open space, oriented east-west, with a street called “The Green” defining its perimeter. State Street, going north-south bisects The Green.

Prominent buildings stand along the edge of The Green, including Dover’s Georgian Revival style Old State House, built between 1787 and 1792. With its completion in 1792, the building served as both state house and as the Kent County courthouse. The Old State House is a Georgian-style brick building with Flemish bond masonry, a slightly projecting central entrance pavilion topped with a dominating Palladian window, cut-stone window headers and belt course, a balustraded roof deck, and a central arcaded cupola/bell tower. The tower and current roof form were reconstructed in 1973. The building was restored and largely reconstructed in the 1970s. Additional renovations were made between 2005 and 2007. The most recent work included the re-pointing of exterior walls, replacement of exterior windows and doors, replacement of the roof, plaster-wall repairs, floor restoration, re-painting of the building’s interior based on research of historic color schemes, upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems, installation of a new HVAC

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1 Maynard, Buildings of Delaware, 253, 255.
system, installation of equipment that makes the building fully accessible to people with disabilities, and installation of a fire-suppression system.²

Golden Fleece Tavern, built in the 1730s, was the site of important meetings during the colonial period and the early days of the nation. Like many eighteenth century taverns, it was a place to meet and conduct business. The original Golden Fleece Tavern was demolished around 1830 and replaced with the Capitol Hotel, which operated until the 1920s.³ There is a popular tavern called the Golden Fleece, which is in business today, about two and a half blocks from the site of the original tavern, but it has no connection with the original establishment, except for the name. At the northeast corner of State Street and The Green, the current nineteenth-century brick building on the site of the original Golden Fleece Tavern is Flemish bond with a low-pitched hip and gable roof, two bays wide facing onto The Green.

The Parke-Ridgley House is also on The Green, the oldest part of which dates from 1728. It is located at The Green. It was built for Thomas Parke, but it has been the home of the Ridgley family for generations since 1769. The house is a two-story, four-bay brick dwelling with Flemish bond and glazed headers. It had a pent roof, now missing. The original four-bay section followed the hall and parlor plan.⁴

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⁴ Maynard, Buildings of Delaware, 253.
In addition to the buildings noted above, other buildings border The Green. Most of them today serve as law offices and other private or governmental business functions. The Green itself is an open greenspace, a landscaped park, which it has been since the 1840s. Before the 1840s, The Green was a market place and a busy commercial landscape. Throughout its history, the open landscape of The Green has functioned as a public gathering place in front of the county courthouse and statehouse, a place for political discourse and military parades, festivals and music.

![Figure 78: January 1678 Survey of land occupied by John Briggs and Mary Phillips on St. Jones Creek. Original Land Titles in Delaware.](image)

**Establishing Kent County and Dover, Delaware**

Following the 1664 English takeover of Dutch New Netherland and the South (Delaware) River territory, the area comprising today’s Kent County was part of the lower court district called “Whore Kill Court.” In June 1680, the “Whore Kill Court” was divided into two districts: the southern Deale County (also called Deale Court) and St. Jones

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5 *Original Land Titles in Delaware, 59.*
County centered on St. Jones Creek. After the 1682 transfer of the “Three Lower Counties on Delaware” from the Duke of York to William Penn, Deale was renamed Sussex County and St. Jones was renamed Kent County. Kent County was the least developed of Penn’s Three Lower Counties. By 1684, about 100 men, and a few women, had received grants of land within the county’s boundaries. While a few tracts were surveyed for as little as thirty acres, most were over 100 acres to as much as 2,000 acres. Many of the larger grants were likely acquired by land speculators, but the 1678 survey of 450 acres for John Briggs and Mary Phillips along St. Jones Creek showed that at least some of the grantees had actually settled on the land (Figure 78). Still, in the 1680s, Kent County was sparsely occupied, without “a village of any importance within its borders,” prior to the establishment of Dover.

William Penn sought to rectify Kent County’s lack of a town in which to conduct county government in 1683, when he ordered the establishment of the town of Dover:

I hereby order thee to lay aut or cause to be layd aut in ye Land appointed for ye Town of Dover in ye County of Kent one high street one hundred & fifty foot wide & two back streets each sixty six foot broad to run from ye water side through & one Cross Street one hundred & fifty foot broad where ye high road crosseth ye sd Town Land; & to lay aut ye Lotts in ye sd Town, so as each may contain One Acre and an half of Land; & to Grant to any Person yt [that] shall make Application to thee for a Lott, one Lott in ye sd Town, they building forthwith on ye Same, & paying unto me as a Ground Rent, yearly One Bushell of good Winter Wheat or four Shillings & I do also order yt [that] ye Court House & Prison be built in ye Cross Street of ye sd Town.

It was more than a decade before the Kent County government moved to fulfill Penn’s order. In February 1694 (1695 new calendar), the “Inhabitants of Kent County” purchased 200 acres of Brothers Portion on the southwest side of St. Jones Creek from Richard Willson [sic]. Kent County court was reportedly held in James Maxwell’s tavern,

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9 Stratham, “Dover Green Project,” 11. Stratham cites Kent County Warrants & Surveys D3 #123, Delaware Public Archives. Penn’s ground rent payment in wheat, rather than the more common seventeenth-century form of payment in tobacco, indicates the shift in Delaware toward wheat as a cash crop was already occurring by the 1680s.
located nearby on the King's Road until 1697, when a courthouse and jail (gaol) were constructed on the as yet unplatted town land.\footnote{11}

Figure 79: Copy of the plan of Dover drawn in 1740. Delaware Public Archives.

Twenty more years would pass without a Dover town plat. Finally, in 1717, a plat was provided by the Pennsylvania proprietor, William Penn (Figure 79).\footnote{12} The town was designed around the existing courthouse and was similar to Penn’s Philadelphia plan, including wide streets with several squares or greens providing open space for public use. The “Court House Square,” commonly called The Green, was platted adjoining the existing courthouse to serve as the market square and public gathering place. Residences, taverns, and shops grew slowly on the lots surrounding The Green. In 1722, the old courthouse lot was sold, and a new courthouse was constructed on higher ground on the east side of The Green.

Dover grew slowly as the county seat of a largely rural population.\footnote{13} Some of the more prominent families—Ridgely, Rodney, and Dickinson—owned large plantations nearby, as well as houses in town. The rural town character would change after 1777, when


\footnote{12 There is no known copy of this original plan. The plan pictured in Figure 78 is a 1768 copy of a plan drawn in 1740.}

the new and independent Delaware State government was moved from the British-infested Delaware riverfront at New Castle to the safer inland location at Dover.

**The Green in Dover, the Delaware State, and the U.S. Constitution**

The Green in Dover was identified on a 1740 town plan as the “Court House Square,” a public space associated with the seat of county government. The Green, as it became known, would have hosted crowds gathered for criminal trials, elections, or for public debates in times of political upheaval, in addition to its commercial role as a public market space. In 1764, the governor of Pennsylvania and the Three Lower Counties designated a “publick Fair” to be held in Dover twice annually, “for the Selling and Buying of Horses, Cattle, and all Sorts of Goods and Merchandize.”

The Dover Market Fair, which occupied The Green for two days every April and October from its inception in 1764 through 1785, was also likely a place of lively public discussion as the American colonies’ response to British control unfolded.

As the seat of Kent County government, Dover was home to a number of established and rising lawyers from high-placed families, many with close ties to Philadelphia. Several, including John Dickinson and Caesar Rodney, played central roles in the developing independence movement in the American colonies. Rodney in particular, who served as the Speaker of the Delaware Assembly and officer in the Delaware Militia during the turbulent times, helped more than any to raise the profile of Dover and Kent County in Delaware politics. With the county courthouse and government offices located around The Green, this public space itself became a significant site for mass meetings and military reviews.

In July 1774, when calls went out to appoint Delaware representatives to the First Continental Congress, Caesar Rodney called a “mass meeting” of the public in Dover. With over 700 people in attendance, that meeting likely occurred on The Green as it was the only public space large enough to accommodate the crowd. In May 1777, fears that British General Howe’s troops might attempt to take Philadelphia caused Delaware’s militia to be called up for service. In June, Brigadier General Caesar Rodney ordered nine companies raised, including infantry and the “Light Horse,” and to “parade them at Dover” before marching to encamp at Naaman’s Creek near Wilmington. In 1780, it was part of the Delaware Regiment, dressed in their fine blue coats, who paraded for review on The Green.

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before marching south in the campaign leading to the siege and British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia.\textsuperscript{17}

The Delaware State government moved to Dover beginning with the October 1777 legislative session. The Kent County Courthouse, built in 1722 on Lot 26 on the east side of The Green, was reportedly too small to house the state legislature and the county operations. Thus, the Legislative Council, which numbered only nine members, met in a room in French Battell’s Golden Fleece Tavern, located on the north side of The Green.\textsuperscript{18} Within these tavern walls on January 23, 1779, the Legislative Council gave reluctant approval to the United States’ Articles of Confederation, calling some of the articles “unequal and disadvantageous to this state.”\textsuperscript{19} Despite their objections, the Council and Assembly resolved to ratify the Articles, citing the exigency of the ongoing war “under the full conviction of the present necessity of acceding to the confederacy proposed, and that the interest of particular states ought to be postponed to the general good of the union … [and] will, in due time, remove as far as possible the objectionable parts thereof.”\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, much of the ensuing work of the legislature revolved around the war, collecting tax revenue as requested by the Continental Congress, raising recruits and supplies for both the county militia and the Delaware Regiment of the Continental Army, and codifying punishments for deserters and pardons for reformed loyalists.

The peace agreement of 1783 that ended the war established the United States of America as a nation recognized by Great Britain and other European governments and set

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
  \bibitem{17} Ward, \textit{Delaware Continentals}, 315; Federal Writers’ Project, \textit{Delaware: A Guide to the First State}, 184. The Sons of the American Revolution erected a monument to the “immortal southern campaign,” which now stands on The Green across from the Old State House.
  \bibitem{18} \textit{Minutes of the Council of the Delaware State from 1776 to 1792}, Issue 6 (Wilmington: The Historical Society of Delaware, 1887), 179, accessed Jan. 5, 2018, https://books.google.com/books?id=H9U4AQAAMAAJ. In November 1777, the Council paid “Mr. French Battell” £15 for “fire, candles, &c.” and over £150 “for sundry expenses of the Council.” This arrangement continued through 1779. In April 1780 the General Assembly met in Lewes, then returned to Dover in June, again meeting in Battell’s Tavern. In January 1781 they met in New Castle and returned to Lewes in June 1781. October 1781 through October 1782, they were back in Dover, but no payments to a tavern-keeper was recorded, only per diem payments to the visiting members. Records between October 1782 and January 1783 were lost, however, the Council continued to pay “Mrs. Elizabeth Battell, for the use of a room” during ensuing sessions through 1787. The payments were much reduced—as low as £6 to a high of £20 (Feb. 1787) where previously (1780) the payments reached a high of £3,100. \textit{Minutes of the Council}, 569, 533, 543, 594, 627, 1044, 549. The House of Assembly, consisting of twenty-one representatives, reportedly occupied the “Lodge Room” in Bell’s tavern known as “General Washington.” Stratham, “Dover Green Project.” Stratham cites James B. Jackson, \textit{The Golden Fleece Tavern} (Dover, Del.: Kent County Delaware Committee, 1983), 20–21.
  \bibitem{19} “Preamble,” \textit{Laws of the State of Delaware}, 2:645. The debates in the committee tasked with writing the Articles of Confederation centered around two of the articles: First, they focused on how to determine taxation quotas. Northern states preferred taxation based on population, including enslaved individuals, while Southern states preferred taxation based on land/building valuation (wealth). Second, they discussed how to proportion votes in Congress. Larger states preferred votes proportioned by population, while smaller states (Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland) preferred one vote per state. Delaware was the twelfth state to ratify the Articles of Confederation; Maryland was the last state, in 1781. “The Articles of Confederation: Primary Documents in American History,” Library of Congress, accessed Jan. 2, 2018, www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/articles.html.
\end{thebibliography}
The United States confederacy was now free to govern itself. The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, ratified by all thirteen states between 1777 and 1781, was considered by many to be an imperfect governing document that gave too much power to the individual states. Some believed a stronger central government, specifically a Congress with the power to levy taxes and to regulate interstate trade, would stabilize the United States’ economy and improve prospects for the future. Following the successful negotiations between Maryland and Virginia in 1786 to regulate their interstate trade and the tax revolt known as Shay’s Rebellion in Massachusetts, Congress resolved in February 1787 to convene a full convention of state delegates in May 1787 to discuss a revision of the Articles of Confederation.\(^2^2\)

The Delaware legislature acted immediately upon the recommendation of Congress to elect delegates to represent the state at the May convention. On February 3, 1787, the Legislative Council and House of Assembly agreed to meet “in the Council Chamber” to select the delegates.\(^2^3\) The Delaware delegates, Richard Bassett, Gunning Bedford Jr., Jacob Broom, John Dickinson, and George Read, were instructed “not to agree to any system depriving the states of the customary equality of suffrage in the Congress.”\(^2^4\)

The Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia from late May through mid-September 1787. For nearly four arduous months, delegates from twelve of the thirteen states (Rhode Island was not represented) hammered out their vision of the new republic, based largely on the “Virginia Plan” developed by James Madison. Madison was a member of the landed gentry of Virginia and a close friend of Thomas Jefferson. Though the two men shared a belief that the central government should be representative of the people, Madison, unlike Jefferson, envisioned a reduced role for state government under his plan. Madison’s plan included a bicameral Congress; the lower House of Representatives to be popularly elected with the number of representatives to be proportional to each state’s population. The upper house, or Senate, would also be proportional in Madison’s plan, its members elected by the lower house (rather than by state legislatures).\(^2^5\) It was an arrangement that would ensure majority representation from the larger, more heavily populated states.

The Delaware delegation to the Constitutional Convention, along with those from other small states, would never agree to such an arrangement. Popular versus state representation in Congress remained one of the important points of debate through the first half

\(^{2^1}\) Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 573–75.

\(^{2^2}\) The U.S. government under the Articles of Confederation also lacked an executive and judicial branch, and Congress was a single entity not directly elected by the people. Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 598–600, 621.

\(^{2^3}\) Minutes of the Council, 1039–40.


of the convention, pitting the larger states—particularly Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts—against the smaller states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Connecticut. On June 30, Gunning Bedford pleaded the cause of the small states with unequalled ardor when he argued that the large states were “closely united in one scheme of interest and ambition,” and referred to South Carolina as “puffed up with the possession of her wealth and negroes.”

I do not, gentlemen, trust you… . Will you crush the smaller states, or must they be left unmolested? Sooner than be ruined, there are foreign powers who will take us by the hand.26

The final resolution, known as the “Great Compromise,” came in July. It was based upon a Connecticut delegation proposal in which the House of Representatives would be popularly elected with “one representative for every 40,000 inhabitants, the count to reckon five slaves as three freemen,” and the Senate—still elected by the House representatives—to have “equality of representation” for each state. The compromise was approved by the convention on July 16 by a narrow margin: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, and North Carolina in favor, Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia opposed, with Massachusetts divided in its vote and New York unrepresented by then.27 Though there was still a great deal of work to do. With perhaps the stickiest of points now agreed to, the delegates moved on to complete the task.

On September 17, 1787 the convention approved and signed a draft of the new Constitution. It would now go to the states for ratification, requiring nine of the thirteen to ratify the document to go into effect.28 Not all of the delegates signed the draft Constitution, however, including four of the seven Virginia representatives. All five of the Delaware delegates did however sign the document and immediately rushed a copy to the Delaware legislature for ratification. Delaware President Thomas Collins received his “printed copy” on September 21, remarking in his return letter to George Read, “I am extremely pleased with the system and shall give every aid in my power to the after

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27 Middlekauff, Glorious Cause, 639–41. A later amendment to the Constitution would alter the Senate elections to popular votes. The Great Compromise was described in The Federalist Papers, essay number 62 titled “The Senate,” (written by either Alexander Hamilton or James Madison) as “the lesser evil” given the competing principles of the larger states versus the smaller states. On a more positive note the writer pointed out the advantages likely to arise from the compromise: “that the equal vote allowed to each State is at once a constitutional recognition of the portion of sovereignty remaining in the individual States, and an instrument for preserving that residuary sovereignty… . Another advantage accruing from this ingredient in the constitution of the Senate is, the additional impediment it must prove against improper acts of legislation. No law or resolution can now be passed without the concurrence, first, of a majority of the people, and then, of a majority of the States.” [Alexander Hamilton or James Madison.] “The Federalist Papers: No 62,” Avalon Project, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed62.asp.

28 Middlekauff, Glorious Cause, 648.
proceedings which may be necessary for the furthering into effect fully the Constitution.”

The legislature received the copy from President Collins on October 25, at the start of the fall legislative session. In his transmittal letter to the legislature, Collins urged their immediate attention to arranging “a convention of Delegates, to be chosen by the people of the State,” as required by Congress, that would decide whether or not to ratify the proposed Constitution.

Elections for the Delaware State convention took place on November 26, 1787. Though controversy surrounded the Sussex County elections, ten delegates from each of the three counties were chosen “for the purpose of deliberating and determining on the said Constitution.” The legislature had received numerous petitions of support for the Constitution from Delaware citizens; one petition recommending the state cede a ten-by-ten square mile district to the federal government for the capital city (location to be determined by the government). The convention convened on December 3, 1787, reportedly in Battell’s Golden Fleece Tavern (the legislature having recessed until January 1788). It took the thirty men less than a week to agree to ratification, according to a report in the *Maryland Journal*:

We hear from Dover that the deputies to the state Convention (agreeable to the appointment of the General Assembly) met and formed a house on Monday the 3rd instant: James Latimer, Esquire, was chosen President on Wednesday; the new Federal Constitution was ratified by unanimous vote on Friday.

The Delaware ratification document gave hearty approval to the Constitution:

We the Deputies of the People of Delaware State in Convention met having taken into our serious consideration the Federal Constitution proposed and agreed upon by the Deputies of the United States in a General Convention held at the city of Philadelphia on the seventeenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven, Have approved, assented to, ratified, and confirmed and by these Presents, Do, in virtue of the Power and Authority to us given for the purpose for and in behalf of ourselves

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30 Minutes of the Council, 1065.

31 Minutes of the Council, 1082. For discussions concerning the Sussex County elections, see Minutes of the Council, 1073–82.

32 “Delaware Convention Proceedings: Maryland Journal (December 14, 1787),” ConSource, accessed Jan. 8, 2018, www.consource.org/document/delaware-convention-proceedings-maryland-journal-1787-12-14/. “There are no Journals or records of debates for the Convention. The Journals of the House of Assembly for 11 January 1788 indicate that the President of Delaware laid the Convention’s ‘proceedings’ before the House, but the ‘proceedings’ apparently have been lost except for a fragment. The only extant Convention records concern its expenses. Pay vouchers, which include the days the delegates attended, are in the Executive Papers, Folder 1787, Convention for Ratifying the United States Constitution–Accounts. Records of the Convention’s expenses are also in the Account and Waste Books of the state auditor.” Kaminski et al., Documentary History, 45.
and our Constituents, fully, freely, and entirely approve of assent to, ratify, and confirm the said Constitution.

Done in Convention at Dover this seventh day of December in the year aforesaid and in the Independence of the United States of America the twelfth. In Testimony whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names.\footnote{“Ratification Document,” Delaware Public Archives, accessed April 10, 2018, https://archives.delaware.gov/ratification-document/}.


Delaware was the first state in the Union to ratify the new U.S. Constitution, thus becoming the “First State” in the new federal union. Though the \textit{Maryland Journal} reported that “Pennsylvania is debating the ground by inches; after sitting almost a month,” four days after Delaware’s affirmative vote, the Pennsylvania convention also voted to ratify the Constitution.

\textit{Construction of the New Kent County Court House and Delaware State House}

The thirty men who formed the ratification convention in Dover were forced to meet in a tavern chamber, likely the same room used for the last ten years by the much smaller Legislative Council, reportedly because the county courthouse was too small.\footnote{Stratham, “Dover Green Project,” 122.} The county, in fact, did not even own the lot on which the courthouse stood until an act of Assembly in 1775 was passed “for vesting the Court House and public offices with the lots of ground whereon the same are erected.”\footnote{Laws of the State of Delaware, 1:563.} The act additionally transferred the adjoining lot to the north (Lot 27) to county ownership. This was in lieu of a deed for the lots (three in all) on which the 1722 courthouse stood and appeared to be in preparation for construction of a new courthouse:

As to the said Court House, until another shall, by order of the Levy Court for the said county of Kent, be built in the place and stead thereof, upon some part of the said lots and alley; and such other Court House, when built, to and for the use of the Justices of the Supreme Court of this government, for the holding
the said court for the said county of Kent, as long as the said court shall from
time to time be adjourned and continue; and at all other times, for the use as the
Justices of the Court of Common Pleas, and Justices of the Court of Quarter
Sessions for the said county of Kent, for the holding courts therein.37

The American Revolution, however, was just beginning to take shape, putting the
planned construction on hold. Though materials were purchased in 1777, they were used
instead to build an arsenal.38

Finally, in January 1786, the Kent County Levy Court resolved to construct a new
courthouse, one big enough to also accommodate state business. The commissioners
placed in charge of the new construction proposed raising the old courthouse and county
office building in order to reuse the bricks for the new courthouse foundation:

The Commissioners now submit a plan for the New Court House, sixty feet in
front by forty feet in depth (exclusive of the Bow window)… . If the building
were seventy feet long it would better suit the purpose for which it was de-
signed, as the rooms intended for the sessions of the two branches of the
Legislature would then admit of Galleries for an audience when the doors were
permitted to be open.39

The commissioners apparently got their wish as materials for the galleries, includ-
ing “10 doz ballasters” and “eight small columns for the Gallery,” which were purchased in
1787.40 Construction began in 1788, just as the new federal government began to take
shape, and was completed in 1792, when George Washington began his second term as
President of the United States.

The Green through the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

For nearly one hundred years, The Green in Dover was the site of large gatherings,
from public fairs and markets to political rallies and military reviews. In 1785, the Delaware
legislature suspended the state charter for the public fairs held in The Green and elsewhere
in Kent, due to the sale of “strong liquors” by “strangers,” which caused “grief and annoy-
ance of the virtuous part of the community.”41 Forty years later, unsanctioned gatherings
on The Green continued to cause trouble for the community. In 1829, the Dover commis-

37 Laws of the State of Delaware, 1:563.
39 Stratham, “Dover Green Project,” 79. Stratham cites Delaware State Museums, State House Building File
“Construction Activities 1786–1796.”
41 Stratham, “Dover Green Project,” 31–32. Stratham cites Allison Wehr Elterich, “Private Interest/Public Good:
Legislation of Land Use, 1683–1881, And Its Effect on the Dover Green” (master’s thesis, University of
Delaware, 1993), 59.
the Sabbath day” and “to suppress, extinguish and prevent all bonfires from being lighted or kept up on the public square of the said town.” In 1841, it was livestock, and more specifically grazing cattle, that had become the nuisance, prompting the commissioners to order Mr. Hayden to “procure a place for penning his cattle other than the public square.” The Dover commissioners finally passed an ordinance to control the use of The Green in 1842, outlawing the erection of a “privy, pig pen … deposit of ashes, shells, rubbish or other manure … unlawful to exhibit a Stud Horse on the public square … [or] to keep ducks, geese, or chickens on the public square.” In 1849, trees were planted and the square was enclosed by a fence, thus limiting access to The Green and enhancing its image as a landscaped park.

During the American Civil War, The Green was the occupied by Union troops sent by President Abraham Lincoln to guard the polls during the 1862 elections. The Green again became a political “soap box” where parties gathered to promote their causes with demonstrations and lengthy speeches. In June 1861, the Democrats held a “peace convention” on The Green in Dover. The Union party held a gathering in March 1863, in which participants paraded around The Green and speakers declared Delaware would remain loyal to the Union. In 1866, former U.S. Senator from Delaware, James A. Bayard, gave a “Democratic” speech on The Green. Bayard, a strong Democrat, had resigned his seat in 1864 when forced to take the loyalty oath. A Wilmington lawyer, Bayard was also known for his successful representation of the slaveholders in the 1848 Hunn-Garrett trials.

Delaware did remain in the Union through the Civil War, though still a slave state like Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. In 1862, the Delaware legislature turned down President Lincoln’s offer for compensated emancipation, and in 1865, they failed to ratify the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery in the United States. The amendment passed without the help of Delaware or Kentucky, ending institutionalized slavery in the U.S. in December 1865. Delaware and Kentucky were thus the last states in the Union to free its enslaved people.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the Dover government struggled to enforce the livestock ban on The Green. In July 1868, Mrs. E. A. Dean was requested to remove “Chicken Coops from off the public square.” In the spring of 1870 the local newspaper, Delawarean reported:

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46 Enslaved people in the Confederate states had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The other “border states” (slave states that remained in the Union) freed their slaves prior to 13th Amendment ratification: Maryland in 1864 and Missouri in January 1865.
The Green in Dover and the United States Constitution

Lovely—Dover Green looks lovely. The recent rains and present balmy atmosphere has clothed this miniature park with a verdure and freshness that is good for sore eyes. It is to be hoped it will not be used as a public pasturage as was the case last year. The Town Commissioners have issued their orders on this and other important subjects and our citizens will govern themselves accordingly.47

The efforts to maintain the landscaped appearance of The Green grew with the Victorian-era fascination with landscape aesthetics, popularized with the 1858 construction of New York’s Central Park.

In 1873, the Kent County government built a new courthouse on part of Lot 35 on the south side of The Green, conveying the old dual-use building to the state for $15,000.48 The State House, by then eighty years old, was renovated and enlarged in the Victorian-era Second Empire architectural style (Figure 80). By 1909, the legislature had determined that the building was again too small and proposed demolition of the old State House in order to build a larger, “new cement building.”49 It was a Dover Green resident, Mabel Lloyd Ridgely, and the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Delaware (based in Wilmington) who saved the State House and implemented its restoration to its original Georgian Revival style (Figure 81). This would not be the last time the Delaware legislature heard from Ridgely.

By the early twentieth century, women in the United States were actively agitating for the right to vote. Women from Delaware played a significant role in the fight for women’s suffrage, an effort that very nearly came to conclusion in Dover on The Green and in the Delaware State House. In 1916, the National Women’s Party was formed with Delaware-native Mabel Vernon as one of the founding leaders of the group. Mabel Lloyd Ridgely served as president of the Delaware Equal Suffrage Association. In 1917, a group of women protesters were arrested in front of the White House. Seven of those women were from Delaware, including Mabel Vernon, Florence Bayard Hilles, Annie J. Magee, Naomi Barrett, Annie Arniel, Catherine Boyle, and Mary Brown.50

48 Stratham, “Dover Green Project,” 86. Stratham cites Delaware State Museums, State House Building File, “Legislative Papers; Senate Journal 1873.”
By 1919, the woman suffrage movement accomplished a major achievement when Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. But the fight was still not won as thirty-six states were required to ratify the amendment before it could become the law of the land. Within ten months, thirty-five states had given their approval. With many of the woman suffrage movement leaders hailing from Delaware, hopes were high that a
Delaware vote to ratify would provide the historic final confirmation of the amendment. Supporters of the amendment, as well as anti-suffragists led by Delaware natives Mary Wilson Thompson and Emily Bissell, descended on Dover.51

Mabel Lloyd Ridgely actively worked to persuade members of the Assembly to ratify, and she predicted a positive vote. In an interview with the Wilmington *News Journal*, Ridgely stated:

Delaware was loyal to America in 1776. She will be loyal to America in 1920. She will prove her loyalty by her action in the historic state house at Dover, whose walls witnessed the birth of the first state of the union, and will witness the birth of justice to the daughters of the Union.52

As competing rallies filled The Green outside the State House, the Senate approved ratification on May 5, 1920. The first vote in the House was delayed, however, when suffrage supporters kidnapped the Speaker of the House, reportedly holding him in the basement of the Golden Fleece Tavern to prevent him from casting a negative vote.53 Then, after nearly a month of debate, the House tabled the ratification vote and closed the session. Delaware would not be the deciding vote. That honor would go to Tennessee on August 24, 1920.54

The Green was an important gathering place throughout much of Dover’s history. It was a witness to Delaware’s “First State” ratification of the U.S. Constitution, to the opposing ideologies of the American Civil War, and to the fiery rhetoric surrounding the woman suffrage debates, as well as to the common comings and goings of Dover residents and their livestock. Still largely unchanged from its original plan as a public space, The Green remains a significant site in the unfolding history of Dover, Delaware, and the United States.

54 “The 19th Amendment in Delaware.”
CONCLUSION

The seven sites that comprise First State National Historical Park—Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract; Fort Christina Park; Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church; New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House; Ryves Holt House; John Dickinson Plantation; and The Green, Dover—encompass a continuum of history on the American continent as it evolved along the Mid-Atlantic coast. The national significance of First State National Historic Park as a cohesive whole is derived from each site’s ability to illustrate important themes in the context of American history.

The peopling of the American continent, here, specifically in the Mid-Atlantic region, covers an extended period of American history. Beginning with the American Indian (Lenape) occupation and initial contacts with European explorers and Dutch and Swedish traders, it is exemplified by the Beaver Creek Rock Shelter and preserved segments of the natural landscape of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract. As Dutch, Swedish, and finally English colonial settlements overtook the Lenape claims to the land, the landscape began to change with the establishment of farms, villages, towns, and manufactures, represented by the largely intact Quaker cultural landscape of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, and the individual sites of Fort Christina Park, Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church, Ryves Holt House, the New Castle Court House, Green, and Sheriff’s House complex, the John Dickinson Plantation, and The Green in Dover.

The development of agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce in the colonies formed the foundation of the United States as a nation and eventually as a world power. The histories of the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, John Dickinson Plantation, the New Castle and Dover Greens, and the Ryves Holt House, illustrate the important role of grain products in agriculture, the development of milling manufactures, and the vital role of market commerce along the coastal waters of the Delaware River. These were the economic drivers that underpinned much of early American history.

Three of the FSNHP sites are significant in the context of America’s political growth from the colonial and revolutionary period to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and through the divisions that grew out of slavery leading up to the American Civil War. The New Castle Court House, John Dickinson Plantation, and The Green in Dover provide a physical link to the men and women whose words and actions helped to build the new United States republic out of a collection of colonies and proprietaries that were often at odds with each other. The independent spirit of the former colonies-turned-states eventually led to division among the states that embraced the institution of enslaved labor and those that opposed it. These opposing views are exemplified in the history of enslavement on the John Dickinson Plantation, by the Hunn-Garrett Trials in the New Castle Court House, and the debates over abolishing slavery in the Delaware State House and on The Green in Dover.
Conclusion

First State National Historical Park is a remarkable collection of historic sites that illustrate significant themes and moments in American history, from the peopling of the continent along the east coast, through the founding of the United States as a new and independent nation, to the formulation of a republic under the U.S. Constitution and some of the Constitutional crises the nation faced over the ensuing years. The First State historic sites in Delaware provide a microcosm of our inspiring, and sometimes painful, American history.

Suggested Avenues of Further Research and Interpretation

Due to limitations of scope, time, and size of this Historic Resource Study, this document does not attempt to cover a number of subjects potentially appropriate for interpretive development at the various FSNHP sites. Several themes were identified in our own research and others were identified through the process of peer review:

- Development of the Lenape story from the Lenape point of view. As one reviewer suggested, “Discussion around trade and conflict between indigenous peoples and colonists raises the very interesting observation that the Lenape appropriated the trading culture of the Europeans and turned it back on the new arrivals. This nuances how we locate and understand the agency of the indigenous peoples—and it introduces themes that have a real impact on how we understand continuing interactions around politics and property.” This theme could provide meaningful additional interpretation at the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, New Castle Court House, Fort Christina Park, and Ryves Holt House. Archeological investigation of the Lenape occupations in the Beaver Valley would greatly enhance our understanding of the Lenape use of the landscape.

- The HRS presents a brief history of African American enslavement and freedom as it unfolded in Delaware as context for several incidents involving African American enslaved individuals at the New Castle Court House and John Dickinson Plantation. This theme should be expanded to include the voices of the African Americans themselves at these two sites. Additional research should delve into the evolution of slavery and abolition in Delaware, as well as the African American experience as laborers, tenants, landowners, and as marginalized citizens from the earliest arrivals (an African man was among the first arrivals at The Rocks—Fort Christina Park, a “Negro man” is noted as a laborer at Holy Trinity Church, and enslaved laborers on the John Dickinson Plantation from 1743 to 1786), through the decades leading up to the Civil War (New Castle Court House and The Green, Dover), during Reconstruction (The Green, Dover), and through the decades of segregation that followed (Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract; New Castle Court House; The Green, Dover).
The 1698 Holy Trinity (Old Swedes) Church interpretive sphere would benefit from additional research into its Swedish Lutheran roots. Is this the oldest extant Lutheran religious building standing in the United States? If so, then its significance is supported through the national context of religion and toleration in the early colonies.

All of the sites, and in particular the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, Ryves Holt House, and John Dickinson Plantation, provide interpretive opportunity around the role of women in the home, on the farm, and in the political life of the colony and later Delaware State.

Ryves Holt House, Dickinson Plantation, Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, and both the New Castle and Dover Greens—these sites provide opportunity to talk about the dynamics of everyday life at the level of individuals and family. A study of the various milling operations along Beaver Creek would add another layer to this interpretive avenue.

The New Castle Green and Dover Green both present opportunities to interpret how people viewed the use of public spaces over time. One reviewer asked, “how does the Green [Dover] evoke, embody, and implicate the ideologies it intends to commemorate? How is it a conflicted space that speaks to larger conflicts in the formation of the United States? The aside on the removal of the chicken coop from the Green is the perfect storytelling and teaching opportunity to address how small things offer big questions around memory, propriety, and social values.”

Referencing the John Dickinson Plantation, one reviewer suggested, “the exploitation that occurred when property holders allowed free black families to live on small rented plots located on their property and work off rents with their labor (similar in some ways to sharecropping in the reconstruction era) but it did mean the property owner could not sell them or their children.” This interpretive avenue provides an opportunity to look at antebellum and post–Civil War farm tenancies and their social and economic implications. The reviewer also suggested that the John Dickinson Plantation “is better understood as a business investment that forced Dickinson to confront the political and ideological contradictions of slavery and his Revolutionary ideals.”

Archeological investigation of the presumed Fort Christina site would greatly enhance the interpretation of the commemorative park and potentially lead to a better understanding of the early Swedish settlement.

Finally, First State National Historical Park, with its seven noncontiguous associated sites (or units), would greatly benefit from a centralized repository of research materials and reports pertaining to the various park units.


## Appendix I

Names in the 1671 Wharton census of the Delaware

*This appendix is transcribed and annotated by Peter Stebbins Craig.*

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### Appendix I

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APPENDIX II
Site Plan and Annotated List of Cultural Resources in the Beaver Valley–Woodlawn Tract, New Castle County, Delaware

1. 137 Beaver Valley Road, WT#39A, located on the north side of Beaver Valley Road in Chad’s Ford Township, Delaware County, PA.
Two-story, four-bay brick house with additions. The original component dates to approximately 1740, according to the FRST Woodlawn Tract leased building inventory. Jack Michel and Pam Rizzo’s research notes that the house belonged to John Chandler in 1773. It was associated with Ferra’s Mill. The 1875 PA Map lists it as occupied by Mrs. H. Tempest.

2. 140 Beaver Valley Road, WT#125, located on the north side of Beaver Valley Road in Concord Township, Delaware County, PA.
Two-and-one-half story four bay stone house with the upper half story constructed of brick, with additions and extensions. The oldest part of the house dates from approximately 1767, according to the leased building inventory. The property also contains a stone end bank barn with framed gables. Michel and Rizzo’s research places this house as belonging to William Green in 1825. The 1875 PA map identifies it with C. Watkins.

3. 601 Beaver Valley Road, WT#9A, located on the north side of Beaver Valley Road, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, DE.
Two-story, three-bay stone house with additions. The FRST leased building inventory dates this house to approximately 1780. The 1849 map lists this house as belonging to C. I. DuPont. The 1869 map shows Charles Leach, as does the 1881 map.

4. 701 Beaver Valley Road, WT#5A, located on the north side of Beaver Valley Road, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, DE.
Two-and-a-half-story stone house with the date 1752 inscribed in the front wall. There are several additions. This property was the original grant to William Hicklin in 1722 and descended to his grandson, Joshua. By 1814, it was in the hands of Jesse Green and, in 1819, David McCullough. Louis Sacriste acquired the property in 1825 followed by Charles I. DuPont in 1837. In 1852, the house transferred to Cheney Hannum and numerous changes of hand until Thomas Cockerill acquired the property in 1867. Jacob Twadell purchased the property in 1891. The 1881 map shows the access to this property coming from the northeast, across Beaver Creek.

5. Mill Site, WT# ??, located at the northeast edge of the Woodlawn Tract along Beaver Creek in Chadds Ford Township, Delaware County, PA.
Ruins and evidence of a race and buildings, possibly a house, blacksmith, and
wheelwright shop. This was The Green Sawmill complex (Pam Rizzo, personal communication, April 15, 2016). On the 1849 map, it is identified as Perkins’ Saw Mill, with a dam indicated to the east of the mill site. The 1875 Birmingham Township, Delaware County, PA, map identifies the property as H. Hinkson’s Saw Mill. The mill house on the north side of Beaver Creek and a dirt trail that follows the creek has stone walls, a chimney, and fireplaces intact. The property was a part of the land associated with 140 Beaver Valley Road (WT#125A).

6. House site, WT #??, located on the north side of Beaver Creek and downstream from The Green Mill complex. It is said to have been a log house. (Pam Rizzo, personal communication, April 15, 2016). Visible remains are a retaining wall and part of a foundation wall. Woodlawn Tract maps and the 1914 topographic map identify this as the H. M. Pike House. It seems to have been associated with the adjacent woolen/paper mill.

7. Mill Site, partial stone foundation wall and raceway depression, located on the south side of Beaver Creek, Brandywine Hundred, New Castle County, DE. Louis Secriste established a woolen mill here in 1825 that was later owned and operated by C. I. DuPont. Associated with the house at 701 Beaver Valley Road. According to the Amos C. Brinton manuscript, this mill was converted to a paper mill, destroyed in a flood in 1843, and not rebuilt.

8. Ferra’s Mill Sites, located on the north side of intersection of Beaver Dam Road and Beaver Creek Road along the north side of Beaver Creek, Chadd’s Ford Township, Delaware County, PA. This is a collection of several mill sites that eventually became the Ferra/Tempest mill property. The house located at 137 Beaver Valley Road is associated with the property. This mill site included a merchant flour mill, a woolen mill, and a paper mill. According to Amos C. Brinton’s 1891 manuscript, the farthest downstream of this mill group was a grist and corn mill of John and Andrew Gibson, built about 1745. This mill was located between the east and west branches of Beaver Creek and served by a race leading from the west branch. John Farra acquired the mill in 1808 and enlarged it, according to Brinton. After Farra died in 1839, Louis Smith acquired the mill and then Joseph Brinton.² Farra developed a woolen mill in 1811 and then converted it to a paper mill. This was just upstream from the grist mill site. When Farra died, his son-in-law Francis Tempest continued the paper mill. The paper mill operated into the twentieth century. During Prohibition (1920–1933), the paper mill is said to have manufactured illegal liquor, which was smuggled out of the mill with the bottles encased in rolls of paper.³

These mill sites are visible with depressions in the ground indicating the location of raceways and ponds. There are also partial walls and ruins, particularly evident of the paper mill, which was a brick building. The sites are along beaver Creek where

³ Irenée Du Pont, interview, Sept. 6, 2017.
it parallels Beaver Dam Road, running close along its north side.

9. At the confluence of the branches of Beaver Creek is the site of the oldest Beaver Valley mill, a grain mill, said to have been established in 1712 by Joseph Robinson. There are other mill sites in the vicinity such as Smith's Mill at the intersection of Smith's bridge Road and Creek Road, but they are outside of the boundary of First State National Historical Park.

10. 800 Beaver Valley Road, WT#11A, located along the southwest side of Beaver Valley Road at the hamlet of Beaver Valley. Two-story, five-bay, two-part stone house, dated approximately 1811. There is also a stone garage and a frame-bank barn. The barn is identified as WT#11 and is located just south of the house. In the early twentieth century this was the Hendricks farm (1914 map). On the 1849 map, it is identified as belonging to A. (Amor) Chandler. On the 1881 map, it is identified with Jonathan W. Day.

11. 810 Beaver Valley Road, WT#85A, located on the south side of Beaver Dam Road at its junction with Beaver Valley Road. The date listed in the Woodlawn tract leased property inventory is approximately 1800. The house has at least three parts: stone, stucco and frame with siding. In addition, there is a square, spring house with a shallow hipped roof and a frame garage. The 1849 map identifies it as occupied by D. Farra. The 1869 map notes only J.C. The 1881 map lists Jonathan Chandler and the 1914 map identifies the property as J.G. Highfield’s.

12. 100 Ramsey Road, WT#13, located at the junction of Ramsey and Thompson’s Bridge Road on the south side of Ramsey Road. The house is an L-shaped frame structure with sided walls and six-over-six windows. In addition to the house, there is a frame garage. The house appears to date from the third-quarter of the nineteenth century. It is not present on the 1849 map. It does, however, appear on the 1869 map with the name J. A. Grave. In 1881, it is listed as belonging to Jonathan A. Graves, who had seventy-four acres with two other houses. On the 1914 map, it belonged to Woodlawn Trustees, but had been acquired from Luff.

13. 400 Ramsey Road, WT#143MPH, located on the south side of Ramsey Road. Dating from approximately 1920, this is a frame American Foursquare house with a frame garage. The house is three bays wide with paired single-pane sash windows, central entrance, and a hipped roof. It does not appear on the 1914 map, or earlier maps; however, it is depicted on the 1960 map of Brandywine Hundred. The land on which it stands has been in the Ramsey Family since at least 1869. The land belonged to W. Smith, according to the 1849 map.

14. 404 Ramsey Road, WT#143DRH, located on the south side of Ramsey Road. The late-Victorian, Gothic-inspired house probably dates from about 1900. It is a frame dwelling with a central cross gable and single-pane sash windows. The property includes a frame garage. The house is shown on the 1914 map on the
lands of Hugh Ramsey. The Woodlawn tract Leased Property Inventory identifies this as the David Ramsey House and that the Woodlawn Trustees purchased it in approximately 1984 or 1985.

15. 406 Ramsey Road, WT#143BRH, located on the south side of Ramsey Road. This one-story, frame gable-fronted house appears to date from about 1915. It does not appear on the 1914 topographical map. Behind the house is a small frame barn, which may predate the house. The leased property inventory identifies this as a Sears and Roebuck prefabricated building that was the residence of Bertha Ramsey. It is on the approximately 195-acre Hugh Ramsey farm that the Woodlawn trustees purchased in about 1984 or 1985.

16. Old Ramsey House, WT#143??, located on the north side of Ramsey Road, opposite 404 and 406. Two-and one-half story, three bay, partially stuccoed stone house with walk-out basement and porch across front. Central entrance. The house appears to have a corner fireplace, east end. Shed dormer added to the rear roof slope. Eighteenth century, possibly around 1780. Barn ruins remain to the west of the house. The building is shown on the 1849 map as belonging to W. Smith. It is on the approximately 195-acre Hugh Ramsey farm that the Woodlawn trustees purchased in about 1984 or 1985.

17. Woodlawn Quarry, WT143#??, located on the north of Ramsey Road on the Hugh Ramsey Farm. The quarry is located in a wooded area to the northeast of the stone farmhouse. It is shown on the 1914 topographical map. It is not shown on the 1881 map, however, although it is recorded as having been active from 1850 to 1910. This quarry produced mica. Another quarry was located on former Ramsey land along Creek Road and Ramsey Run at the southwest edge of the Woodlawn Tract. The quarry was for “Rotten Rock,” used for road construction.4

18. 4501 Thompson Bridge Road, WT#27A. Early twentieth century frame house, three bays with central entrance and central brick flue. Just to the south is a frame shed. On the 1914 topographic map of Brandywine Hundred, the triangular lot of 2.7 acres is identified as belonging to Woodlawn Trustees, acquired from Lowber. There is no indication of the house and shed, although printing on the map could obscure some information. The house could date from approximately 1915.

19. 4700 Thompson Bridge Road, WT#15A. Farmstead with a two-story, three-bay stone house with a one-story, two-bay wing to the rear. The house dates from the eighteenth century. The FRST Leased Property Survey gives the date as approximately 1780. Drip courses across the gables and across the front of the house indicated the locations of pent roofs, which have been removed. Also present is a frame bank barn. The 1849, 1869, and

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Appendix II

1881 maps all list this property with the name Palmer. In 1881, it belonged to Moses Palmer and contained 133 acres. In 1869, it is identified with M. V. Palmer and, in 1849, just the name Palmer. According to a plat of Woodlawn Properties at the Hagley Museum, John Palmer conveyed 96.9 acres to Hugh Ramsey on March 9, 1899. Ramsey transferred it to William P. Bancroft in 1907, according to the plat.

20. **498, 500, and 502 Woodlawn Road, WT#29.**
This is part of a farmstead complex that was once identified as the Daniel Forbes Estate, containing 109.8 acres in a plat map of the Woodlawn Tract at the Hagley Museum. The map dates from April 1907 and was prepared to record the survey of the Forbes property before its sale to William P. Bancroft in 1907. The farm has been divided into three separate leaseholds. The complex contains two houses, a large barn, and several support buildings. The farm is listed as belonging to M. Journey on the 1849 and 1869 maps. The 1881 map identified D. L. Pierson on the property. The 1914 topographic map shows the buildings as they are today. 498 Woodlawn Road is the frame-bank barn, adjacent a small stable, frame milk house, and small corn crib. 500 Woodlawn Road is a two-part frame house which appears to date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. 502 Woodlawn Road is a one-and-a-half story, gable-front frame house that appears to date from the early twentieth century. Adjacent to it is a three-bay, frame gable-roofed garage.

21. **Concrete-parged stone bridge that carries part of the former Creek Road across Ramsey Run, located just south of Ramsey Road.** The road is now a trail, but the bridge remains and is shown on the 1914 topographic map. The bridge has curved-wing walls, coping on top, and a square opening between the abutments. Today, Creek Road, as a publicly maintained road, terminates at Ramsey Road.

22. **Peters Rock is a natural rock outcrop located along the Brandywine and the east side of Creek Road, north of Ramsey Road. It has been a noted landmark.**

23. **Rock Shelter, located along the Brandywine near Beaver Creek.** This American Indian artifact is a recorded archeological site. In addition, Stewart Ramsey reports that American Indian artifacts have been found by Ramsey family members as they farmed their land along Creek Road south of Peters Rock.

Possible Mill Site, located south of Woodland Road along the west bank of Hurricane Run. The 1849 map shows a sawmill located along this waterway, but closer to Creek Road in what is today Brandywine Creek State Park. However, the mill dam is depicted farther upstream and possibly within the lands that now belong to FRST. A field inspection in an area approximately ¼ mile south of Woodlawn Road revealed possible remnants of a dam and race upstream from its intersection with Rocky Run. No other information has been collected on this possible mill site.
Figure 82: Beaver Valley Site Plan, 2017. First State National Historical Park Cultural Resource Inventory.
Appendix II

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