

Fully, Freely, & Entirely

Volume 16, Number 2

Newsletter of the Delaware Heritage Commission

Winter, 2005-06

DELAWARE: A GUIDE TO THE FIRST STATE New Edition Coming early 2006

Delaware: A Guide to the First State was initially published in 1938, with second and third printings of the 1938 edition appearing in 1948 and in 1973. A revised edition was published in 1955. It was initially produced under the aegis of the Federal Writers' Project (FWP), a part of the New Deal's Works Projects Administration (WPA), which provided work for 10,000 unemployed or underemployed American writers from 1935 to 1943. In addition to *Delaware: A Guide to the First State*, the FWP produced 47 other state guide books, and about 350 additional volumes dealing with such subject units as natural regions, counties, municipalities, as well as oral histories on such topics as slavery and folk culture. The FWP was proud of its publications because they allowed "Americans [to] discover America." All of the state guide books were published between 1937 and 1941, and were widely praised with the *Washington Post* characterizing the entire series as "first-class literature."



Each state guide book was assigned one or more editors and they, in turn, chose a string of local writers to deal with specific topics. In Delaware the number of local writers employed was near one hundred and the number of essays was in excess of four hundred. The editors checked their writer's accounts for accuracy, reshaped the accounts into good standard prose and then wove them, as seamlessly as possible, into the larger story. *Delaware: A Guide to the First State*, was edited by three native Delawareans, Jeannette Eckman, Anthony Higgins, and William H. Connor.

The book contains numerous photos from all over the state. Many photos are of buildings that still stand today. This edition will also include the original pen and ink drawings by artist John Moll.

-William H. Williams

The Delaware Federal Writers' Project also produced many publications on Delaware subjects—from maritime information to descriptions of public cultural sites. Many of these brochures and guides set the pattern by which the State of Delaware conducts its current public relations practices.

The majority of work by the local FWP never appeared in print. The papers are available for use in Special Collections, Morris Library, University of Delaware.

The FWP papers are bound in forty-eight volumes, each approximately 400 mostly typewritten pages. The forty-ninth volume is an index, prepared after the papers were transferred to the University of



Delaware Library. The volumes contain original writings by Delaware FWP authors, extracts, i.e., verbatim copies of documents from outside sources, and abstracts, or summaries of documents too large to include in complete form. There are bibliographies, charts and graphs, correspondence soliciting research materials, memoranda, newspaper clippings, maps and drawings, and two now-faded sample swatches of cloth depicting the official state colors.

Many of the authors drew on their own experiences and memories for their contributions, and articles often record "personal knowledge" as the source. Recipes for lost "delicacies," folk customs and legends are noted. There are articles on local pirates, criminals and the penalties they could expect at various periods in Delaware's history, as well as articles on supernatural occurrences and "colorful" characters.

The work of 117 writers who contributed to the Delaware FWP is preserved in these volumes; in addition there are anonymous manuscripts. Nearly all manuscripts are dated between the middle of 1935 and early 1941. Not all the writers stayed with the Project through these six years, and others joined as time passed.

-Steven Leech

Photos from the book: at left, Snuff mill, Yorklyn; at right, Saturday afternoon, Harrington

HISTORY OF NEWARK

The Commission was contacted by city of Newark Mayor Vance A. Funk III in the spring about supporting the town's effort to produce a comprehensive and contemporary history. After some investigation it was determined that Newark may be the only town in Delaware to not have a modern-day history. Many other hamlets and villages in the First State captured the patriotic fervor and penned histories in the 1970s so they could be part of the bicentennial in 1976. Newark's most detailed history was written in the late 19th century.

The Commission is hosting bi-monthly meetings and has invited residents from all over the town to attend and contribute their expertise. It was decided to use *Delaware: A Guide to the First State* as a model for Newark's book. We hope to engage a number of researchers and writers so that as many people as possible can be a part of the important work. The final product will be a collaborative effort compiled by a cross-section of friends and neighbors.

The book will be completed in time for Newark's 250th anniversary in 2008. In 1758 King George II recognized the legal being of Newark by granting permission for the townspeople to hold an annual harvest festival on the common green, now the present-day Academy Building lawn at the corner of Main and Academy Streets (across from the Opera House, above)



One interesting tidbit so far is that of the Main Street McDonald's. Opened for business on March 15, 1960 at 374 E. Main Street, it was the first McDonald's in Delaware, and one of the first on the East Coast. Initially the restaurant had a walk-up window where folks placed orders then ate in their cars. Hamburgers sold for 15 cents; sodas, 10 cents; fries, 10 cents; and milkshakes sold for 20 cents. That was the extent of the menu. Combining a hamburger, fries and shake created the All-American meal and sold for 45 cents. In 1977 the store added a new, but now commonplace convenience, the drive-thru window, the 3rd such drive thru on the East Coast. The restaurant was opened by Len Dukart and family, friends of founder Ray Kroc in Chicago. The Dukarts still operate a number of McDonald's in the region.

ROGER E. NATHAN Commission loses a friend

A number of years ago the Commission was fortunate to encounter Roger Nathan. Roger was an avid historian and, though not a Delaware citizen (he lived in Woodstown, N.J.), Roger always "crossed the bridge" to the state of his birth in search of fun and unique history.



A trip to Roger's home and his basement was a feast for the senses for any historian. Roger collected *National Geographic Magazine* and various artifacts.

In this photo Roger stands next to a marker near Newark with help from the resident cat.

Roger became interested in the Mason-Dixon Line and the story of the Delaware boundaries in the mid 1970s. It was at that time that he began to search for the Mason-Dixon markers and to look for answers to the state's unique boundary questions like "the wedge" and the "12 mile arc" -- our northern circular boundary.

After a few years of study and research Roger completed a self-guided tour of the Delaware boundaries and had personally located each Mason-Dixon marker. He quickly became an expert of oolitic limestone (from which the markers were quarried), the Penn and Calvert families, and Mason and Dixon themselves.

In 2000 Roger captured his years of study in fine detail in the Commission book, *East of the Mason-Dixon Line: A History of the Delaware Boundaries*. He then made himself available for Commission-sponsored marker tours and Mason-Dixon lectures.

Roger died in October after a brief illness. The Commission was set to have Roger lead another tour of the line in Kent County in December. ***The event has been rescheduled for March 4, 2006.***

It was our pleasure at the Commission to have known and worked with Roger Nathan. Donations may be made in Roger's memory to the Woodstown-Pilesgrove Library, 14 School Lane, Woodstown, NJ 08098, or the Rotary Club of Woodstown, P.O. Box 431, Woodstown, NJ 08098.

WHAT'S DOWN THERE? The Roosevelt Inlet Shipwreck

The Middle Atlantic region has a long tradition of colonial settlements. Delaware is unique in its settlement history having had the footprints of Swedes, Dutch, and the English beginning in 1664. These groups all worked with the indigenous Native Americans and later the African American community living in what would later become Delaware. Not far off our coast lay roughly 600 wrecks of colonial vessels.

The Harbor of Refuge, a body of water north of the breakers at Lewes Beach and at the mouth of the Broadkill River is the final resting place of Delaware's newly discovered shipwreck. The wreck is 2,700 feet off the beach in 14 feet of water. That sounds simple enough and divers should be able to pick the site clean, right? Wrong. Wild underwater currents and the constant flow of water in and out of the Broadkill combined with zero visibility have made the archeology a challenge.

Fascinating artifacts have been uncovered and the history is beginning to unravel the mysteries of the ship. A keel has been found and the approximate length of the ship is 71 feet. With each dive archeologists are finding ceramic pieces of all shapes and sizes. The vessels reveal a great range and diversity: blue-gray stoneware from Germany; white-glaze stoneware and tea ware from Britain; glass; polished stone; metal artifacts; and even porcelain from China. Two finds are of most interest to researchers: Frankfurterware, made by the Germans for the Dutch, and creamware. Creamware is most revealing. It was the inadvertent invention of Josiah Wedgwood. Wedgwood was looking to produce white porcelain in order to compete with the Chinese but when fired his invention yellowed. To his delight the Queen was charmed by his yellow porcelain and hence creamware was born. This find is important, Wedgwood serendipitously invented creamware in 1762 so this discovery helps the researchers date the sinking of the ship -- sometime after 1762. Most of these vessels contained beer, wine, oil, and ink. One wine bottle brought to the surface contained a seal from a South African vineyard.



Another interesting find was the discovery of up to eight millstones. The stones are of various sizes and have not been furrowed revealing that they were on their way to our shores for use in the growing colonial mill industry. The stones are also in one piece suggesting they are German or English. French millstones were usually in four pieces and banded together with a metal strap.

An additional unique discovery is that of German mineral water in tall angular vessels akin to a bowling pin. Not just a late 20th century phenomenon, the trade of mineral water began in the 1600s. One mineral water container had the seal of the company embossed on the face. After some investigation and a volunteer's trip to Germany it was discovered that the same company is still in business.

The most interesting artifact may be the discovery of antimony (Sp on your periodic table of the elements). Today antimony is a key component in the semiconductor industry. In its metalloid form antimony resembles metal in appearance but does not react chemically as a metal. In the colonial period it was used in casting applications for such things as tools, cookware and household devices. We have all come in contact with this element as antimony sulfide is one of the ingredients in the modern match.

Researchers, using the information they have been able to uncover, date the sinking between 1762 to 1775. This ship, they believe, was an in-bound vessel from Europe and possibly a two-masted civilian brig (center). To date, no munitions or cannons have been found on board.

In recent years the term globalization has been used to define 20th century trade and relations among countries but this shipwreck suggests that globalization was very much a part of the 18th century. This ship was likened to a department store and supermarket combined carrying goods of all types ranging from Britain, to the European continent, to the Far East and Africa. The wreck also suggests a wide Atlantic Coast trade network with Delaware being a key component in the transfer of goods on a regional and global scale.

One last mystery remains -- the ship's country of origin. Stay tuned...

The Face of Farming: Delaware's Farm Families

A photographic project with oral histories by McKinstry Scholar Kathleen Buckalew.

The family farm is a valuable aspect of Delaware's history and culture. I want to document what I can before it is gone forever. My goal is to show the farmers of Delaware, what they do and the importance of their work. I am hopeful this project will bring a greater understanding to the value of farmers and the family farm and how this precious commodity is quickly disappearing from the First State's landscape.

-K. Buckalew



Debbie Mitchell, Hockessin, Del.



Loblolly Acres



Bennett Farms



Jay Baxter, Georgetown, Del.

Kathleen Buckalew is the staff photographer for Hagley Museum and an independent photographer/researcher. For more information on this farm project please contact Kathy at buckalew@comcast.net.



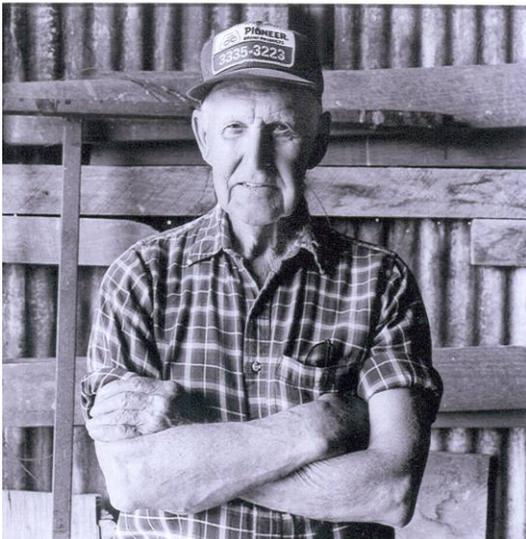
“I planted every one of these chestnut trees by hand, 16 acres of land. This was supposed to be a little retirement project and it just exploded. I feel that this life change was fated, that this is where we are meant to be. It’s been a lot of fun, and we’ve met some good people. Being out in the field is great. We see a lot of fox, we think a cougar is in the back corner of the woods, we saw his prints in the snow, we have owl that live here, and osprey, deer come and rub the trees, eat the nuts. We’ve created an entire little forest out here.”

-Nancy Petitt



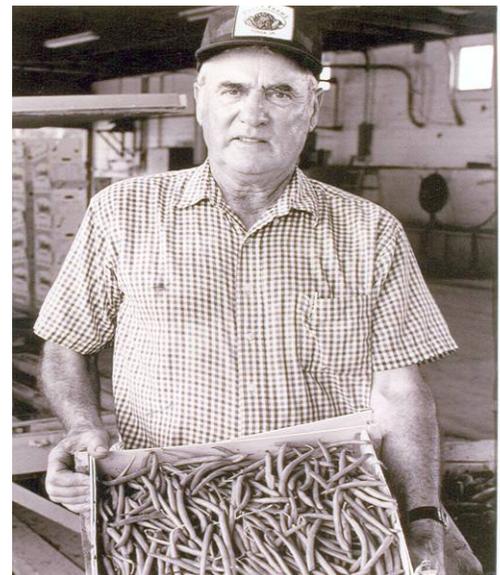
“I love being a farmer. I love being able to get up in the morning and see all the animals and be independent and do my own thing. I think farming brings you closer to nature, closer to God. To me, it’s a wonderful thing to be outside in the spring, to know the fields are plowed, to smell the fresh dirt, it just gives you something. I feel sorry for all those people who have never been able to experience this.

-Jo-Anne Lessard



“I like to see a good harvest and know I had something to do with it. I love to plow the ground and smell the fresh earth and see the ground turned over. I’ve seen good times and bad and we’ve had some rough times, but that goes along with the business. But farming was good to us, I enjoyed it, I still enjoy doing some of it. I can’t say I ever regretted getting into farming.”

-Corbitt Collins



I’ve worked on the family farm since I was a kid, driving tractors when I was ten years old. I remember working with mules, 55 years ago. I like doing this because every day is different. I can’t stand doing the same thing over and over again. I like being out in the open, but when you see all these houses squeezing in, it just breaks my heart.”

-Jack Papen

BEN FRANKLIN Celebrates the big 3-0-0

Ben Franklin will blow out 300 candles on January 17, 2006. Franklin, a much revered figure from our colonial past and one of our most recognizable founding fathers had a keen interest in Delaware. As a printer, Franklin's company produced a series entitled, *Laws of Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex upon Delaware*. This and two other collections – “Ben Franklin: Printer” and “Ben Franklin: Scientist” can be found at the University of Delaware's Morris Library Special Collections department.



For a schedule of events please visit www.benfranklin300.org.

Some highlights:

National Constitution Center

- “Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World”
- “Franklin Firsts and Facts” (Begins in June)

Independence Seaport Museum

- “Boatloads of Ben: Franklin's ‘Strong Inclination for the Sea’”

Atwater Kent Museum

- “Franklin's Legacy of Public Service”

Lights of Liberty

- “Ben Franklin's Ghost”

Franklin Institute

- “Franklin...He's Electric”

Independence Hall Park

- “Franklin's Hands On History”

Born in Boston in 1706 Franklin spent his formative years as an avid reader and was sent to work in his brother James' print shop at age 12. Franklin was fascinated with print work, reading, and writing. At the age of 15 he and James founded *The New England Courant*, a newspaper of sorts in Boston. Some of Franklin's articles in the *Courant* poked fun at the New England Puritan clergy and this led to his “escape” to Philadelphia where he would once again search out work as an apprentice printer. It was in Philadelphia that Franklin began to thrive in a series of business ventures. It was also during this time that he married Deborah Reed in 1730.

In 1729 Franklin purchased the newspaper the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. He wrote many of the articles himself and also penned the nation's first political cartoon. Later he would produce *Poor Richard's Almanac*, experiment with fire prevention and electricity, and begin his life in politics.

BLUE HENS IN BRONZE New statue coming soon

Funding has been approved for the creation of a statue honoring the Delaware Continental soldier from the American Revolution. An accurate depiction of a Continental is being produced by Charles Fithian of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Mr. Fithian has a unique interest in military dress and will outfit the soldier down to the accurate stitch count of the tunic. The depiction of the soldier at right was produced for the book *The Delaware Continentals* in 1941. Much research has been done in recent years and most historians agree that this probably wasn't the look of the real Delaware soldiers.



Sculptor Ron Tunison of New York has accepted the job of creating the statue. Once complete, the work will stand in the small amphitheater on the Court Street approach to Legislative Hall

Mr. Tunison has previously worked to capture Delaware history in his work. He was the sculptor of the bas relief on the Delaware Monument (below) placed on the Gettysburg battlefield in April of 2000.



Look for updates on the sculpture in future issues of this newsletter and on the Commission website. We will also publicize unveiling festivities when available.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Each year in Delaware a town or organization gets serious about its history and they decide it is time to up the ante.

Many historical societies in Delaware find themselves to be the repository of all things old and cherished in their towns and this means they are growing in terms of archival material, storage space and more. In many cases this requires a larger budget which in turn leads to more volunteers and fundraising. Added to all of this is the acquisition of historic properties and you can see the local historical society is now something resembling a small company.

Many of our Delaware historical societies are addressing the new responsibilities facing them in recent years. It starts with the creation of professional staff. A few years ago the Lewes Historical Society hired a full time director. In 2003 the Seaford Historical Society took the same action. This year The Milton Historical Society took the step of hiring a full-time director. Anne Yarbrough came on board a few months ago and hit the ground running. She is currently over-seeing the construction and remodeling of the Lydia Black Cannon Museum (the former Grace Methodist Protestant Church). When complete, in just a matter of weeks, the Museum will house the society's archival records, a research room, meeting space and exhibit areas.

Recently the Milton Historical Society began an oral history program and will soon create a walking tour of the historic district. A very successful capital campaign raised \$400,000 to complete the Black Museum and also purchase archival materials, office equipment and more. A professional approach to town history is how Delaware historical societies are responding to the services they provide. The first issue of their newsletter "Common Ground" is available now.

If you are in Milton in the near future, stop by the restored and reopened Lydia Black Cannon Museum, 210 Union Street in the heart of the historic district. Anne will be happy to see you.

For membership information, upcoming events, and information please visit www.historicmilton.org or contact the MHS at:

P.O. Box 112
Milton, DE 19968

BOOK KIOSK

Del. Heritage Press books available in Archives lobby

In November the Delaware Public Archives set aside some space in the building's lobby for a kiosk displaying books published by the Commission available for purchase.



The Commission began publishing books in 1991 with the release of *Captain Thomas Macdonough: Delaware-Born Hero of the Battle of Lake Champlain*. We will soon release *Delaware: A Guide to the First State*. The Guide will be the 24th book in the collection with other titles on the way in 2006.

Please stop by the Delaware Public Archives (above), 121 Duke of York Street in Dover, for a peek at our book collection. At this point we are set up for cash and check sales but we will soon have the capability for credit card and debit card purchases.



Above image taken from the Commission book, *World War I Remembered*. Painting by Gayle Porter Hoskins.

The staff of the Archives was instrumental in the creation of the kiosk and the Archives' director Russ McCabe has been a gracious host to the Commission as we have called the Archives home for over a year.

The Delaware Public Archives is open Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. and has extended hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays closing at 8 p.m.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

BASKET WINNERS FROM DELAWARE BOOK FAIR AND AUTHORS DAY

Kids basket – Frank Ianni
Delaware Goes to War basket – Joan Sabbato
Colonial Delaware basket – Bruce Burgoyne

This year marked the conclusion of the Delaware Book Fair and Authors Day. After ten fun and successful years it is time to kick it up a notch! Next year will mark the first annual

Delaware Book Festival
November 4, 2006, Dover, Del.

Details this spring!

Lewes 375 update. Many projects are already underway: The planting of 16,000 tulip bulbs from Holland; forty tall ships to participate in “Sail Lewes,” fireworks, and much more next summer!

April 21 – Kick off of events marking the summer-long celebration.

- Rededication of the deVries monument
- Ceremonial meeting of the Delaware State Legislature

August 4

- Fireworks

September 14-17

- Sail Lewes, the Tall Ships Festival

October 17

- New Netherlands Institute and Holland Society of America to hold annual meeting in Lewes.



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