

THE DELANCO TOWNSHIP QUILT

THE THREAD THAT TIES
THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER
AND OTHER TANGLED TALES



Delanco Historic Preservation Advisory Board - 2020

The Delanco Community Quilt Project

In 2016, before John and I moved to town, the Delanco History Board had borrowed a quilt made by the ladies of First Presbyterian Church. It was put on display in the lobby of the township building as part of a celebration of the congregation, where it garnered much attention.

After two years on display, we needed to return the quilt. I had just joined the history board and volunteered to take care of it. The display had been such a hit that we immediately began to search for a suitable replacement quilt to represent Delanco on display. I suggested we create a new quilt from scratch, one that would be a celebration of our history and a product of the whole town – A Delanco Community Quilt.

As a former teacher with a Bachelor of Science degree in Clothing, Textiles and Related Arts, I thought such a project would be a snap, but I clearly underestimated the complexity of the project.

The project was challenging because I had never actually made a quilt before. Thankfully, several talented members of the community walked me through the process and gave me the courage to see it through.

Our history board secretary, Peter Fritz, selected historic photos from the Delanco photo archive. We transferred the images onto fabric, courtesy of our friends at Olde City Quilt in Burlington.

I engaged various community groups and individuals in the project. We met and we sewed the individual squares. In the process, I got to hear their stories, their tangled tales of the community, and I came to better understand our new hometown. Our friends at Village Quilters of Mount Holly helped assemble the squares into the quilt now on display.

This Delanco Community Quilt is dedicated to them with great thanks.

Marilyn Entenmann
Community Quilt Chair
January 26, 2020

THE DELANCO TOWNSHIP QUILT

The Thread That Ties
The Community Together

And Other Tangled Tales

A project of Delanco Historic Preservation

Advisory Board

Marilyn Majka Entenmann, Chair

Acknowledgments

Delanco Bicentennial Committee

The Delanco Story: Its Past and Present (1976)

The John Lester Daniels Photo Archive

Olde City Quilt – Burlington NJ

Village Quilters – Mount Holly

Cinnaminson Quilters

Carolyn Suess Photography

Strassheim Design & Print – Philadelphia PA

Peter Fritz – Brochure design

Delanco Township

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SQUARE 1. MAGNOLIA HALL – MAJ. JACOB PERKINS HOUSE



MAGNOLIA HALL – MAJ. JACOB PERKINS HOUSE - 1789

Jacob Perkins came to our area in 1693, establishing a farm on the Delaware River near Hawk Island. Jacob's grandson, also named Jacob was born there in 1731. He married Elizabeth Hewlings in Old Swedes Church in Philadelphia in 1756. They had ten children. Jacob was given a commission as a Major in the Revolutionary Army. When he returned after the war, he built a brick farm house on the riverbank just west of Bogg's Run. They named it Magnolia Hall. The date 1789 is set in the bricks on the house gable.

A later owner, Charles C. Dunn is said to have put on a major addition after they came in the 1853. There are legends stemming from the pre-Civil War era that the house had a tunnel connecting to the riverbank that could have been part of the Underground Railway system.

After 1875, the Barnitz family acquired the property and renamed it Barnitz Grove. Later owners included Charles and Marilyn Frush and the Lord family. It is now owned by Dr. John Pagliei and his wife Marilyn Entenmann, a proud descendant of Charles Crawford Dunn.

1. DR. JOHN PAGLIEI, CHAIR, DELANCO HISTORY BOARD



DR. JOHN PAGLIEI

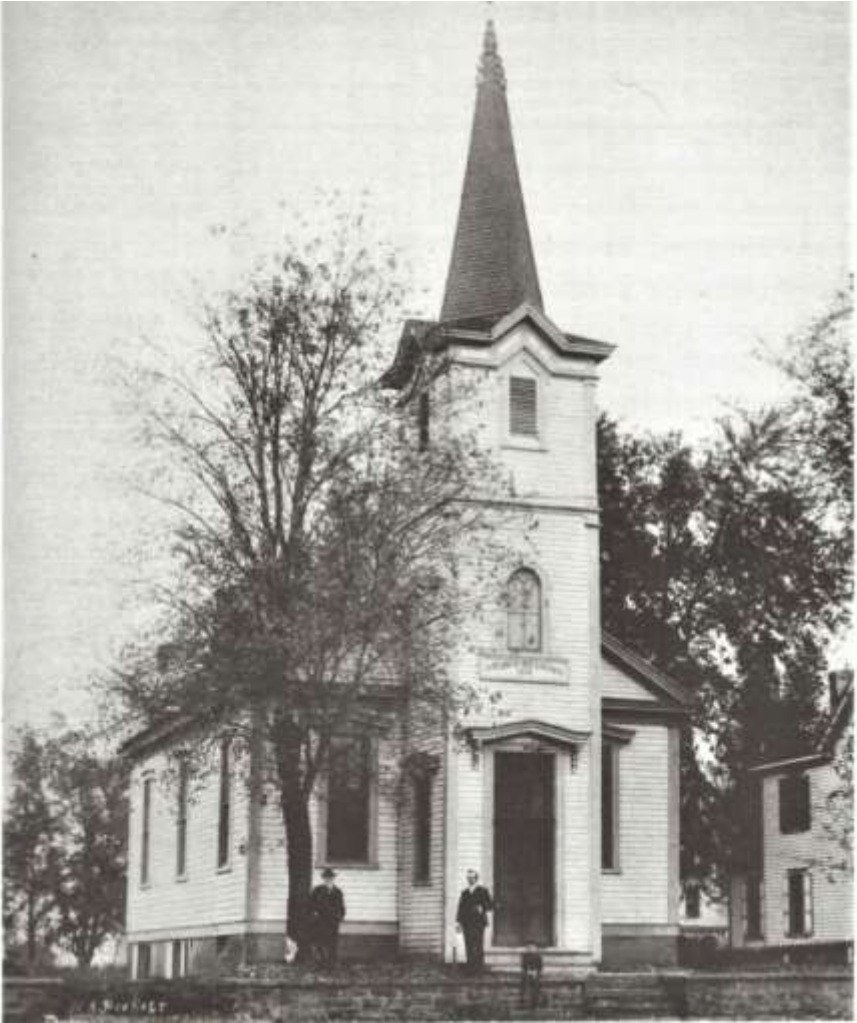
Dr. John Pagliei is the husband of Marilyn Majka Entenmann. In 2016, John and Marilyn purchased Magnolia Hall, one of the oldest homes in Delanco that is still standing. They were drawn to the property because the riverfront farmhouse was owned by Marilyn's ancestor, Charles Crawford Dunn from 1853 – 1875.

Many will recognize John and Marilyn from their appearances in our Memorial Day Parades and other community celebrations.

John now serves as Chairman of the Delanco Historic Preservation Advisory Board. He is a practicing dentist with an office in Jamison, Pennsylvania. John was game to prepare the Magnolia Hall square.

SQUARE 2.

DELANCO METHODIST CHURCH



DELANCO METHODIST CHURCH - 1857

A Methodist Sunday school was established in 1855. The church was erected on Union Avenue in 1857. The belfry was added about 1875. The Dobbins family spear-headed a major renovation about 1900, doubling its capacity. For their efforts, the church was rededicated as Dobbins Memorial Methodist Church.

Later the congregation converted the parsonage into a social center named Del-Meth Hall, now a center of many community activities.

2. ALICE CARL SMITH – ARCHIVIST, DOBBINS CHURCH



ALICE CARL SMITH

Alice Carl was born in Delanco and raised in Dobbins Methodist Church. She married Richard Smith, a teacher from the Riverside School District and moved to Delran. She has served as President of Riverside Historical Society for many years. Alice was appointed Archivist for Dobbins Church and is an excellent source of local history. She wrote [A Sermon in Glass](#), which ties the beautiful stained-glass windows of Dobbins Methodist Church to the families to which they are dedicated.



Alice Smith is our local authority on the Civil War Alligator Submarine. She was pleased to represent the church by quilting their square.

SQUARE 3. WASHINGTON FIRE COMPANY NO. 1



WASHINGTON FIRE COMPANY FIREHOUSE - 1914

The Delanco Fire Brigade was formally established March 8, 1900. In the early days, volunteers fought fires with a hand-drawn carriage equipped with ladders and buckets. They operated out of a single-story frame firehouse on Ash Street. The first group disbanded after a few years because of a lack of proper equipment.

It reorganized on February 16, 1912, a date very close to Washington's Birthday, suggesting the new name, Washington Fire Company No. 1. By May of 1912 they acquired a horse drawn fire wagon with ladders and two 35-gallon soda-acid water tanks.

The firehouse shown was Delanco's second firehouse. It was built on Union Avenue 1914, directly behind the original firehouse. It served the community through two world wars until the new firehouse was built at 1800 Burlington Avenue in 1985. The Union Ave fire house is now owned by Bill Baxter, an associate member of the history board.

The Delanco Emergency Squad was formed in 1939 by members of Washington Fire Company.

3. TODD JOHNSEN, CHIEF, WASHINGTON FIRE CO.



TODD JOHNSEN

Todd Johnsen was elected Fire Chief of Washington Fire Co. No. 1 in 2017. Chief Johnsen is shown here presenting the American Flag during the dedication of Delanco's 911 memorial at the new firehouse at 1800 Burlington Avenue. A section of steel from one of the towers is on display to honor the memory of first responders who were lost.



Todd Johnsen proudly quilted the Washington fire Company's square.

SQUARE 4.

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD STATION



PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD STATION DELANCO - 1859

The Camden & Amboy Railroad was built to carry passengers and freight between Camden and Perth Amboy, with ferry links to New York City and Philadelphia. The line was begun in Bordentown in 1831 reaching north to Perth Amboy. A second line running south from Bordentown to Camden was completed in 1834. Station stops helped fuel development of the river towns of Bordentown, Fieldsboro, Burlington, Beverly City, Delanco, Riverside, Riverton and Palmyra. The river towns depended on the railroad for mail service.

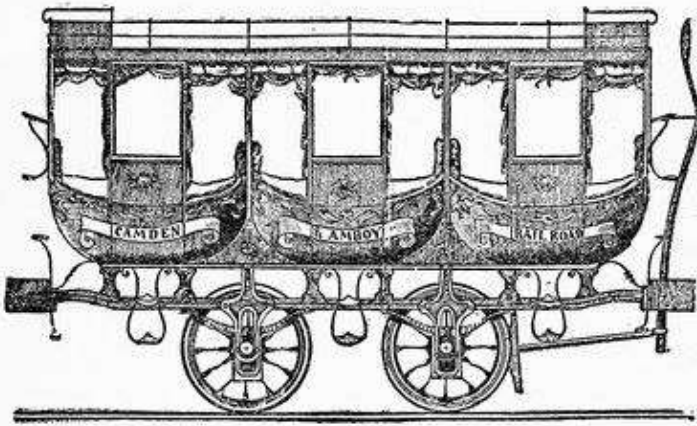
When the railroad came through Delanco, a swing bridge was built on the Rancocas Creek to accommodate steamboat passage to Mt. Holly. In 1824 our hamlet was known as Wallace's Landing. From the 1830s to the 1850s, it was known as Rancocas Crossing for our remarkable railroad bridge. The original platform was built over the Rancocas Creek.

The Pennsylvania Railroad acquired the C&A Railroad for a 999-year lease in 1871 and a new railway station shown above was built shortly thereafter. The main station was located on the southbound side with a platform on the northbound side, Schedules show it handled as many as 35 trains a day in its peak. Passenger service ended April 1, 1976.

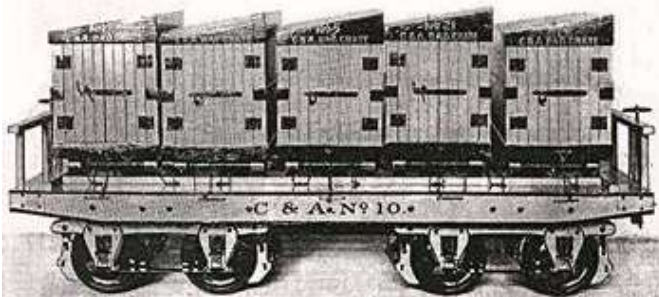
4. CAMDEN & AMBOY - JOHN BULL LOCOMOTIVE AND TENDER



The John Bull locomotive was constructed in England and shipped to Bordentown in pieces, with no instructions for assembly. C&A Mechanic Isaac Dripps was able to assemble it from scratch within a few days.



The original 1834 passenger cars resembled the stage coaches that they replaced, but were soon replaced by saloon-style cars with bench seats.



Freight was hauled in standardized containers, much like airliners today.

SQUARE 5. CARRUTHERS ITALIANATE MANSION



CARRUTHERS ITALIANATE MANSION - C. 1855

Delanco's Delaware riverfront, defined by Delaware Avenue to Second Street from Cedar to Hazel Avenues, was acquired by the Delanco Land Co. from the Perkins Family in 1848. Properties were developed mainly by wealthy Philadelphia industrialists for summer homes.

One of the earliest homes was this two-and-a-half story Italianate home with a three-story tower, built about 1855 by Capt. Henry Gregg, then purchased by the Carruthers family. It was later the home of Rev. Charles C Lathrop. Charles was a wealthy landowner from Louisiana where he was elected to the legislature prior to the Civil War, however he became an Abolitionist and moved his family to Delanco in 1859. He was later elected to the New Jersey Legislature.

When the Lathrop family moved to northern New Jersey in 1876, the home was purchased by Mr. W.H. Johnson. The home became part of the Zurbrugg estate in 1910, then the Schwinn estate in 1924. Rev. Carl McIntire purchased the estate in 1949 and utilized as part of the Bible Presbyterian Home. Sadly, this building was demolished about 1998.

5.

Dr. JAY COHEN



DR. JAY COHEN

Dr. Cohen is a psychiatrist with a practice in Delanco. He earned his medical degree from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and has been in practice more than twenty years.

Dr. Jay Cohen and his wife Joan have lived on the Riverfront in Delanco for many years. Jay has been a member of the Delanco Historic Preservation Advisory Board for twelve years and has served as past chair. Jay collects historic postcards and collateral advertising from Delanco. The Delanco History Board has reproduced ten of these for sale to benefit HPAB programs.

Jay is shown preparing the quilt square for the Carruthers Mansion.

SQUARE 6, RIDGWAY & SON SHOE FACTORY



RIDGWAY & SON SHOE FACTORY - 1885

In 1881, Andress J. Ridgway began manufacturing children's shoes in the garage of his home at the foot of Ash Street in Delanco. He erected a frame factory on the property in 1885. He built an even larger brick factory on the property in 1912. The original frame factory burned in 1922. His son, Andress C. Ridgway joined the firm. At its height, the firm employed about 300 people from Delanco and Riverside.



The annual photo of Ridgway Shoe Factory employees taken in 1912

6. MARILYN MAJKA ENTENMANN, COMMUNITY QUILT CHAIR



Marilyn working with an eager girl scout to prepare their square. Many of the girls had not worked with fabrics before doing this project.



Marilyn conceived the Community Quilt and chaired the committee.

SQUARE 7.

DELARANCO HOTEL - 1855



DELARANCO HOTEL & TAVERN IN 1907

Town founder Richard Wilmerton originally named the town Delaranco in 1848. The Delaranco hotel was built by wharf-builder, Henry Kreiner in 1852 on the bank of the Rancocas Creek next to the railroad crossing. It has changed hands and names many times over the years and was owned by Peter Parr (the man on the porch with hands on hips) in 1907.

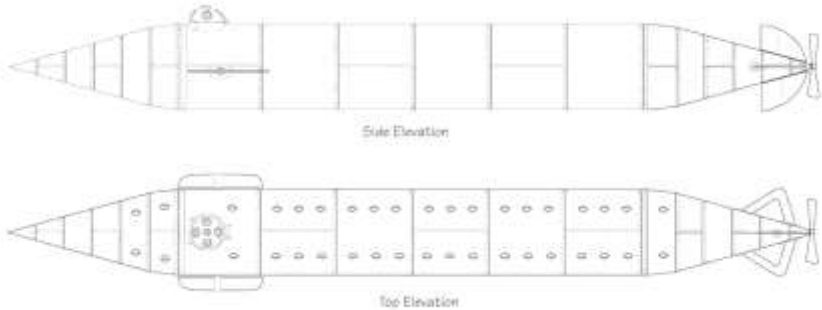
The lobby of the hotel was a warm and comfortable place for railroad passengers to wait for trains to take them to New York and Philadelphia.

It was also a popular meeting spot for local groups. Frenchman Brutus DeVilleroi, the inventor of the Alligator submarine, met with his crew as they trained for about three months during the winter and spring of 1860 – 1861. See the story of the Alligator below. At one time, Delanco Township Committee held their meetings in the tavern.

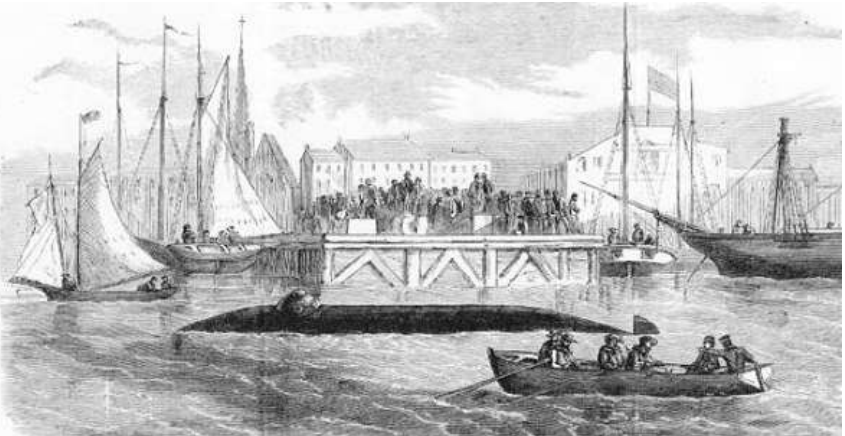
The tavern of the hotel was closed by Prohibition in 1919 and did not reopen following its repeal in 1933 due to local option laws. The hotel could not sustain itself financially and closed about 1934. It was demolished in 1937.

THE TALE OF THE ALLIGATOR CIVIL WAR SUBMARINE

In 1859, French inventor Brutus deVilleroi had an underwater vessel built in Philadelphia for the purpose of recovering salvage for profit. He trained a crew of Delanco/Riverside watermen in the Rancocas Creek.



When the Civil War broke out in 1862, deVilleroi sold his plans to the US Government, who built a similar, but larger vessel, the first submarine ever built by the US Navy.



Submarines were considered infernal machines to surface mariners.



One of many artist's conceptions of the US Navy's first submarine. This version shows a deployed snorkel and man-powered screw-propeller. Both vessels were lost over time, but the search for them continues.

SQUARE 8. DELANCO SHIPYARDS ON THE RANCOCAS

STANDARDIZED MOTOR TUGS

Designed by J. Murray Watts, N. A.

BUILT BY

DELANCO SHIPBUILDING CO., Inc.

DELANCO, N. J.

These sturdy tugs framed of oak for hard service are built and carried in stock. Reasonable price and quick delivery. Write for blueprints and description.



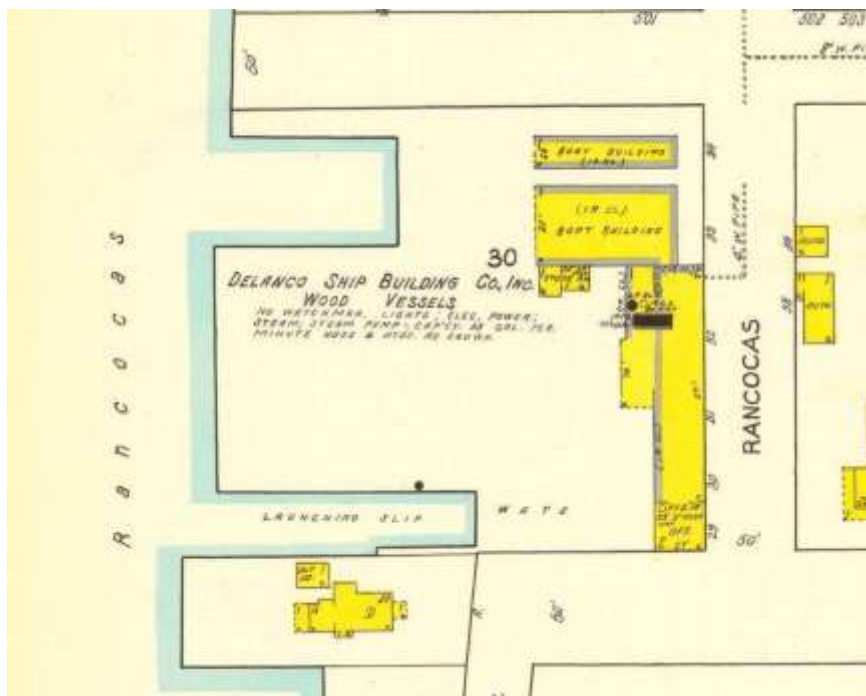
Magazine advertisement for a Delanco motor tug



A Delanco Motor Tugboat on the shipway at Rancocas Construction

The shipyard was and is located at the foot of Poplar Street on the Rancocas Creek. Though the shipyard has been inactive for years, the motorized shipway remains operable. The shipway and residence appear on the Sanborn map below.

8. DELANCO SHIPYARD FROM THE 1921 SANBORN FIRE MAP



The shipyard ran from Poplar to Ash and Rancocas Ave to the Creek.



An early "fisheye" photo of a wooden tugboat under construction at the shipyard at the foot of Poplar Street. Address J. Ridgway's home on Ash Street appears in the background. The 1885 Ridgway Shoe Factory does not appear in this photo.

SQUARE 9,

SHIPPS STORE



SHIPPS STORE ON UNION AVENUE

Shipps Grocery Store was founded by John H Shipps on Union Avenue between Laurel and Mulberry Streets. It was later operated by Joseph H. Shipps who employed this trio standing in front of the store. They made deliveries in this grocery wagon, drawn by their horse, Topsy.

Shipps Store was the first in Delanco to introduce early southern fresh produce. Residents were astonished to find they could purchase large, fine, ripe tomatoes even in the snows of December.

The business closed during World War II. The Shipp family removed the storefront, replacing it with brick and the shop was converted to a living room for the family. We've learned from a resident that the header beam spanning the shop space was actually a steel I-beam left over from construction of the Frankford Elevated project in Philadelphia.

Though much altered, the structure at 610 Union Avenue is still easily recognizable from this photo.

9. **JOE MERSINGER, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**



JOE MERSINGER

Superintendent Joe Mersinger came to Delanco Schools on July 1, 2014. He came from John Hydock Elementary School in Mansfield, where he served as principal. He currently serves as both superintendent and principal for Delanco Schools.

Joe has said he is a teacher at heart. He has expressed an interest in all Delanco students gaining ownership in our community by learning our local history. Since coming to Delanco, he has been very supportive of the work of the Delanco History Board.



M. Joan Pearson Elementary School in Delanco was named after a beloved former principal who was killed in a plane crash in 1987.

SQUARE 10. TOMMY FITZPATRICK WATERMAN



TOMMY FITZPATRICK – DELANCO WATERMAN

Tom Fitzpatrick was a fine example of the Delanco waterman lifestyle. Tom was born here in 1887. He and his wife Katie lived in a houseboat on the Delaware breakwater. Tom and his wife sold bait, repaired and rented boats, fished, trapped and hunted. In his spare time, he carved duck decoys, which he sold locally. He is known to have carved over 2,000 of them in his lifetime. Tom was also quite musical and regularly played accordion professionally in a nightspot in Riverside. When he died in 1958, the houseboat was sold, launched and towed away.

10.

KATE FITZPATRICK, TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE



KATE FITZPATRICK

Kate Fitzpatrick is the granddaughter of Tom and Katie Fitzpatrick. She remembers their houseboat being very neat, like a dollhouse and without running water. Kate has been very active in the township and has served on the township committee for many years. She has her home on the Rancocas and proudly considers herself a “river rat”.



Tom and Katie Fitzpatrick and family on the stoop of their riverfront houseboat, which was tied to the telephone pole in case of a flood.

SQUARE 11.

HICKORY STREET SCHOOL



HICKORY STREET SCHOOL - 1902

In 1848, Richard Wilmerton, Delanco's founding father, set aside land on Union Ave. between Chestnut and Hickory as open space. Address Ridgway contributed land on Walnut to complete the town square as it appears today. To date, only two structures have ever been built there.

A Delanco Town Hall was built on Union Avenue at the corner of Hickory Street in 1883. It was built by a civic association of town leaders with private funds. It had a stage and was used for rehearsals and public performances of theatrical and musical works. In later years it was used for indoor sports activities. It was finally demolished in 1952.

The two-story, eight-room Hickory Street School was built in 1902. It was located on Hickory Street at the corner of Walnut Street opposite the Town Hall. Bonds were issued by Burlington City Loan & Trust. Many current residents attended the school and remember the teachers that taught there. It was a sad day when the building was demolished. The school bell was removed and taken first to Walnut Street School, then to M. Joan Pearson School where it is currently on display.

11.

BARBARA SPARROW, DELANCO RESIDENT



BARBARA SPARROW

Barbara Sparrow grew up in Delanco and attended Hickory Street School from 1st to 4th grade, 1965 to 1969. Her 1st grade teacher was new teacher, Miss Byerly, who promised to attend their 8th grade graduation. Barbara was cast as Clara in their production of Nutcracker. Her 3rd grade class with Miss Coleman was on the 2nd floor, and the novelty of using the stairs and the fire escape for fire drills were memorable. She had Mrs. Connell for 3rd and Mrs. Devenny for 4th grades. Barbara was pleased that Miss Byerly, now Mrs. Johnson, did attend their 8th grade graduation; a promise kept.

Barbara recalls that the school was demolished on September 4, 1984 when efforts to preserve the school failed. She remembers the school bell and the stone number 1902 for the school's construction were preserved.

Barbara's daughter, Heather Phillips, is now the librarian for Delanco. Barbara still lives near the site of the old Hickory Street School. She wrote that she was honored to do the square for Hickory Street School.

SQUARE 12.

DELANCO CAMP MEETING



DELANCO CAMP MEETING IN 1897

In 1897, the Delanco Methodist Church held a grove meeting. It proved to be so successful that participants desired to make it an annual affair. In the winter of 1898, Rev. George Ridout and three prominent church members approached Charles Fletcher to purchase his 20-acre wooded grove for the purpose of establishing a permanent camp meeting ground. The agreed price was \$4,000. The group met again in March to organize fundraising. They created a stock association, secured loans, and reached out to other local church communities.

The first annual meeting of the Fletcher's Grove Camp Meeting Assoc. was held June 25, 1898. The first annual camp meeting was held from June 24 to July 5, 1898. The President reported, "We had a glorious camp and fire fell, souls were sanctified and converted, and revivals ensued in consequence."

A large dormitory named Osborne hall was erected in 1902. A frame auditorium, known as the Tabernacle was built in 1904 to replace the original tent. The participants posed for this photograph, including Rev. Ridout and E.S. Hunter, two founders of Delanco Camp Meeting. In 1912 and 1913, ten cottages were erected replacing sleeping tents.

By 1974 the camp had outgrown the grove and moved to a larger site in Tabernacle, NJ where it continues to attract seasonal revivalists. The land in Delanco was sold, buildings demolished and a shopping center built. It continues to operate under the name Camp Meeting Center.



Members of Delanco Camp Meeting in front of the Tabernacle



Osborn Hall and the Children's Temple at Delanco Camp Meeting

Delanco Camp Meeting outgrew its location and moved to a large campsite with a lake in Tabernacle New Jersey. The site was purchased by the Whitesell Co and developed as a shopping center. It was named Camp Meeting Center in deference to its history.

SQUARE 13. WOODS WATERFRONT GAZEBO



WOODS GAZEBO ON DELAWARE AVENUE – Ca 1870

Long before Theophilus Zurbrugg's Mansion was built in 1910 there were other mansions occupying the riverfront block between Union Avenue and Willow Street: The 1855 Carruthers Mansion on the corner of Union (Square 5) and the 1870 Woods property on the corner of Willow. When Mr. Zurbrugg purchased the entire block for his estate, the 3-story Victorian Woods Mansion was moved to the corner of Willow and Third. The Carruthers mansion remained until about 1998.

The riverfront gazebo shown here, built by the Woods family, was left in place. It was modified over the years. Many young couples of Delanco had their wedding photos taken here and high school seniors had their prom photos taken here at sunset. It survived until it became badly under-washed in 2007 and had to be demolished.

In this photo we also see the 1850 Parson's Wharf in the background, at the foot of Union Avenue. The wharf was maintained by the Upper Delaware River Transportation Company. It appears that a tugboat under steam is tied to the wharf. It was demolished in 1969.

13.

DELANCO BROWNIE TROOP 26045



Delanco History Board member Alma Jordan assists a girl scout



Two of the girl scouts that assisted with the gazebo quilt square



The girl scouts show off their projects after a sewing session

SQUARE 14.

HOLIDAY LAKE



In the 1950s Holiday Lake provided sun, sand and a swimming hole. People flocked to the facility until swim clubs became popular.

HOLIDAY LAKE - 1951

In 1951, Roy Riker of Delanco purchased the 52-acre Burk farm on Route 25 and the Rancocas Creek for the purpose of building a seasonal swim club and recreation area. It came to be known as Holiday Lake. It had an excavated 14-acre, spring-fed lake and a two-story clubhouse with a second-floor dance hall. It was a very popular summer destination with both local residents and visitors from Philadelphia.

By the late 1950's, many turned to the Jersey Shore to cool off in the summer heat and the crowds began to thin. In 1970 the Rikers sold to new owners. In 1982, the property was leased to Ed and Kass Bratton, who added amenities such as a paddle boat concession.

Abundant Life Fellowship purchased the land in 1988 and closed the swim club for good in 1990. The church now also operates the large, Living Waters Senior Community overlooking the lake.

14.

ARLENE KUHN ECKHARDT, FORMER RESIDENT



ARLENE KUHN ECKHARDT

Though now living in Florida, Arlene Eckhardt has fond memories of her childhood in Delanco. She lived on Center Street from 1953-1955 and attended Hickory Street School. Miss Oakerson was her first-grade teacher. Arlene enjoyed going to Holiday Lake each summer, swimming and getting ice cream at the stand. Her best friend was Suzie Bright, whose father owned the gas station right over the bridge. Arlene said that even in elementary school they dreamed of owning homes in town.

Arlene wanted to participate in the community quilt project because her father, Ralph Kuhn served as Superintendent of Delanco School from 1953 to 1955... and because of her memories of Holiday Lake.

SQUARE 15. NEWTON-RUSS FARMSTEAD

The original Newton farmstead, now on the NJ Historic Register, was divided over the years among the Russ, Burk and Pennington families.



NEWTON-RUSS FARMSTEAD ON THE RANCOCAS CREEK



Rear view of the Pennington farmhouse from about 1960.

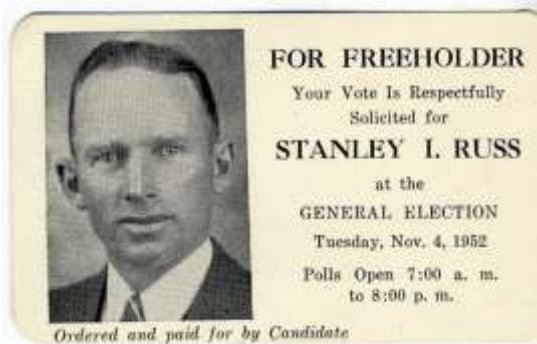
The small square building at the rear was the original farmhouse, which was gutted by fire. The three-story creekside addition was built at a later time.

15. NEWTON, RUSS AND PENNINGTON FAMILY FARMS



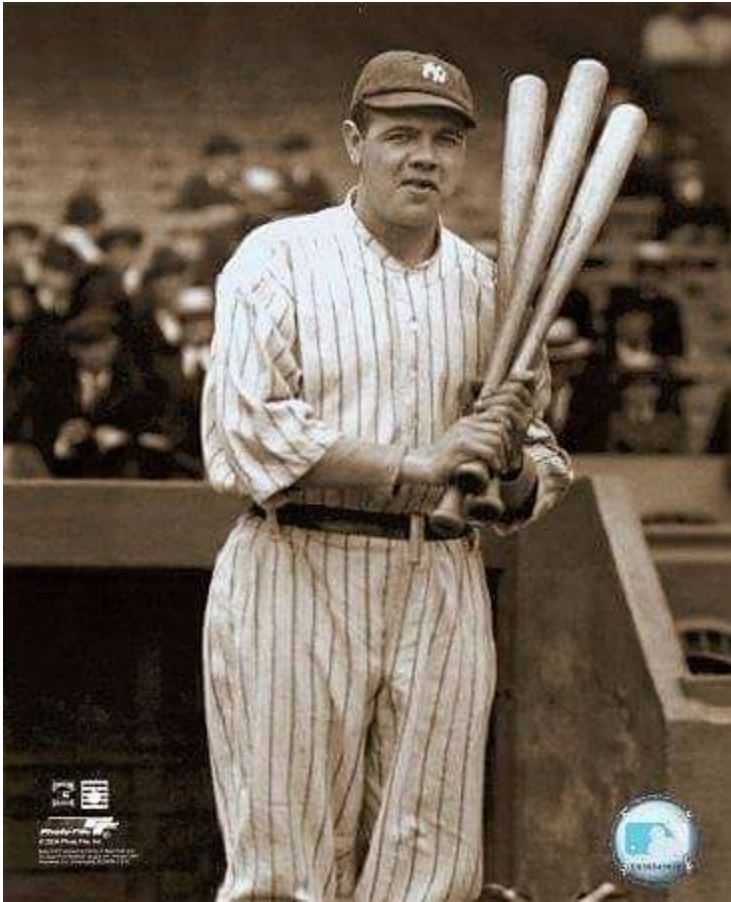
PENNINGTON FAMILY RENUNION PORTRAIN FROM 1965.

Residents in Delanco remember doing seasonal work on the Pennington and Russ farms in their younger years. Jobs were available for pickers and sorters, mostly for corn and peaches. They kept track of their labor with a system of tokens. The one above is for the George W. Russ farm.



Both Howard and Stanley Russ were active in local and Burlington County politics. Howard served on the Board of Freeholders for 25 years and his son, Stanley, served from 1942 to 1955.

SQUARE 16. BABE RUTH EXHIBITION GAME



BABE RUTH EXHIBITION GAME – JULY 1, 1924

On this date, the great George Herman “Babe” Ruth came to Delanco to participate in an exhibition game between a team of Delanco All-Stars and Burlington County All-Stars. Newspaper accounts of the game report that 5,000 people attended the game, many coming from outside the area by special train. The Babe stepped in to play first base for the Delanco All-Stars, helping them win the game with a home run.

The field on Cooper Street has been in use as a baseball park since 1922. It was renamed in his honor. Delanco recognizes Babe Ruth Day as an annual local holiday, often celebrated by special community events. We encourage you to visit the field and see the bronze plaque.

16.

JOSE MATERA, DELANCO'S FAVORITE SON



JOSE MATERA

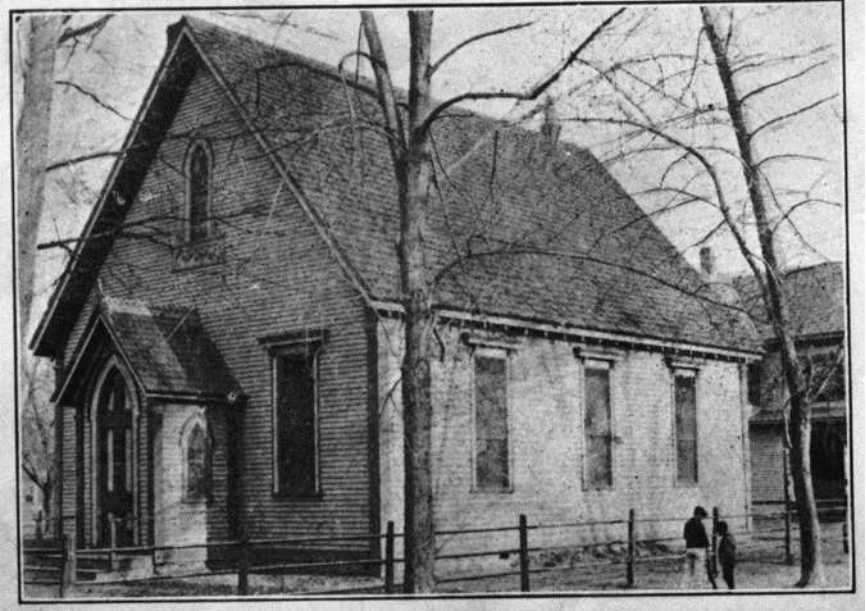
Jose Matera has brought much joy and energy to Delanco since he was adopted by Susan Matera, November 22, 2013. Residents have watched him grow to an impressive young man. Along the way, Jose has proven to be a good citizen and an excellent leader.

He rose to the rank of Eagle Scout by designing, building, furnishing and maintaining two "little libraries" in town. He excelled in school and was named to the National Honor Society Riverside High School in 2018. Jose is now a college Freshman at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

In this photo, Jose is mastering yet another skill, quilting the square for Babe Ruth Day for the Delanco Community Quilt.

SQUARE 17.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ON UNION AVENUE - 1873

First Presbyterian Church was built on Union Avenue, just across from Delanco Village Green in 1873. Since then, there have been two major expansions to the church. Including the addition of a two-story Sunday School building as shown below..



This photo was taken just after 1976 when the Liberty Tree was planted.

17.

DOROTHY ROBBINS-TALavera



DOROTHY ROBBINS-TALavera

Dorothy Robbins Talavera (right) is the daughter of Dr. Morris Robbins, the renowned surgeon of Delanco. She asked to do the quilt square that commemorates First Presbyterian Church, because her family was active in the congregation for many years. Dorothy was a teacher at Moorestown Friend School, but is now retired and living in Delanco. She is shown here with former resident Arlene Eckhardt.

Dorothy currently lives in the old Robbins family home on the Delaware River. She is noted for her exceptional quilts, a family legacy going back generations. Dorothy served on the Delanco History Board for several years.

SQUARE 18. RANCOCAS CROSSING TURNTABLE BRIDGE



RANCOCAS CROSSING TURNTABLE BRIDGE IN 1906

In 1906 the swing bridge that carried the rail line across the Rancocas Creek was replaced by a turntable bridge. The span was first used on the D&R Canal, but was later removed and barged down the canal, the Delaware River, and up the Rancocas Creek.

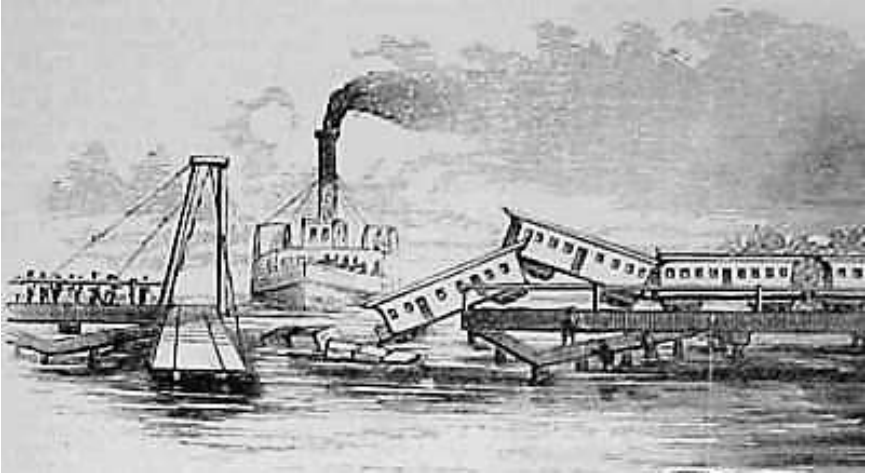
This photo appears to show the first train of the Pennsylvania Railroad to cross the span. Note the perpendicular rails, the equipment and the workers standing on the caisson in the middle of the creek.

The swing span served until the rail-line was completely replaced in 2000, at which point it was removed and barged back down the Rancocas.

The new railbed, which was designed to carry the New Jersey Transit Riverline Lightrail traffic as well as overnight freight service, was installed as was a permanent suspension bridge with generous clearance for river traffic. Installation of the new bridge did not go smoothly... but that is a tangled tale for another time.

18.

TROUBLE ON THE RANCOCAS - 1853



This sketch documents the day in 1853 when the northbound train from Camden missed a signal and plunged into the Rancocas Creek. The swing bridge opened for the Mt. Holly steamboat coming downstream.



This photo shows a southbound Pennsylvania Railroad train crossing the Rancocas Creek. The structure under construction on the right is a higher-level trestle. By the date of this photo, the switch tower had been removed. The railroad station is shown (left).

SQUARE 19.

DELANCO'S BOAT HOUSE ROW



BOAT HOUSE ROW ON DICKY'S CUT

At one time there was a watery thoroughfare, also called Dicky's Cut, that separated Hawk Island from Delanco proper. Boat traffic coming down the Rancocas and up the Delaware could use it as a shortcut. Hawk Island was a true island, cut off from most human activity and most predators.

Along the cut, several summer homes were built that became known as Delanco's Boat House Row. We recently learned they had names such as FIDELITY, BELMONT, RADNOR, and 9 O'Clock Sal, but were also referred to as #1, #2, #3 and #4 (right to left in this photo).

Former resident Charles Maarten of Colorado has provided a narrative of life in these four cottages. Life was relatively primitive, with limited heating, indoor hand-operated water pumps and outdoor toilets. The residents raised vegetables and fishing was good.

In the mid-1950s during the Eisenhower years, the thoroughfare was filled with dredge spoils from the river, leaving the boat houses high and dry. Three of the cottages remain west of Orchard Avenue overlooking Hawk Island, just north of Hawk Island Marina.

19. DELANCO BOAT CLUBS ON THE THOROUGHFARE



In this colorized post card photo, a steam-powered tug heads north through the Thoroughfare between the Rancocas and the Delaware. Four of Delanco's many boat clubs are shown at the water's edge.



This remarkable aerial photo was likely taken from a balloon tethered above the Cooper Street ball field facing west in 1922. It shows Hawk Island at the confluence of the Rancocas Creek (left) and Delaware River (top). At this time, the Thoroughfare, also known as Dickie's Cut, had not yet been filled. The PRR right-of-way slices the lower left corner.

Find the 1883 town hall, 1902 Hickory Street School, and 1914 firehouse on Union Ave. Walnut Street School wasn't built until 1924.

SQUARE 20.

MR. DIGGS OF DELANCO



MR. DIGGS OF DELANCO

In 1905, in an era marked by racial intolerance, a young man arrived in Delanco who was to help dispel stereotypes. He was a kind and gentle soul, a hard-working entrepreneur, and a role-model for children.

Edward Diggs was born May 28, 1882 in Virginia. His mother was widowed, remarried, and the family moved to Willingboro Township. Several moves later, Ed moved to Delanco in 1905 and became driver for Dr. Henry Weiler for 17 years, and the Krusan family for nine years.

He registered for the draft for WWI, but a childhood injury kept him from serving overseas. He bought a house on Buttonwood in 1928. He worked for the WPA during the depression and the B&O Railroad at Fort Dix during WWII. He worked for Keystone Watch Case Company for five years. Ed and his wife, Bettina nee Burrell married in 1949. He was 67.

Alma Jordan has written a monograph, Mr. Diggs of Delanco, available in the atrium of the township municipal complex. In 2010, the Delanco History Board presented a one-man play, Mr. Diggs of Delanco for the community. The talented Kyle A. Riley portrayed Mr. Diggs.

20.

ALMA JORDAN



ALMA JORDAN

Alma Jordan, a retired school teacher, came to live in Delanco later in life. She has long had a love of history and brought her curiosity with her. She has helped hundreds of people come to appreciate local history by serving as a volunteer docent for Burlington County Historical Society in Burlington City. Alma joined the Delanco History Preservation Board, bringing her energy with her. For several of our projects, she served as a costumed reenactor, portraying local residents.

Alma became fascinated by the life and times of Delanco Resident Edward Diggs and dug into the research needed to bring him to life. She was able to acquire numerous documents belonging to Mr. Diggs and curated a display that we mounted commemorating his life. She also authored our publication, Mr. Diggs of Delanco.

SQUARE 21. DELANCO BICENTENNIAL - 1976



DELANCO BICENTENNIAL EMBLEM

It is a pleasant coincidence that the nation's bicentennial and Delanco's semicentennial occurred in the same year, 1976. In the lead-up to the joint celebration, Delanco formed a committee to coordinate the celebration and the events spread across the town calendar that year.

They secured a grant to produce and publish The Delanco Story: Its Past and Present. (1976). They coordinated a town-wide planting of 25 Red Oak Liberty Trees by 25 key organizations. They organized a spectacular parade that was held on July 4, 1976.

To pull the activities together, an emblem was devised and used in many ways, including cover of the bicentennial book and a bicentennial flag with a field of gold. Curiously, the name of the emblem designer remains a mystery; Yet another tangled tale.

After the event, the flag was entrusted to Delanco's Boy Scout Troop for preservation. It was later presented to Delanco's History Board. The flag is now on display in the atrium of Town Hall.

21.

BICENTENNIAL PHOTOS – 1976



The group photo of township organizations that participated in the Liberty Tree planting, an important Bicentennial Event - April 17, 1976.



Members of the Delanco Bicentennial Committee ride in style in the town's Bicentennial Parade - July 4, 1976.

NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED – ZURBRUGG MANSION - 1910



A colorized postcard of the 1910 Zurbrugg riverfront mansion AT 531 Delaware Avenue. Designed by Frank Furness. Home to the Zurbrugg family from 1911, the Schwinn Family from 1924, and the Bible Presbyterian Home from 1949. It is now a vibrant senior community.



A recent photograph of the music room which overlooks the Delaware. This historic property is Delanco's crown jewel on the Delaware. The mansion and the carriage house are on both the Federal and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places.