The Grand Ladies of the Delaware River Promenade

A self-guided tour of Delanco's historic riverfront



Zurbrugg-Schwinn Mansion 531 Delaware between Union & Willow



Written by Peter Fritz and produced by the Delanco History Board. Funding has been made possible in part by the NJ Historical Commission Department of State, Burlington County Board of County Commissioners, Department of Resource Conservation, Division of Parks.

The Grand Ladies

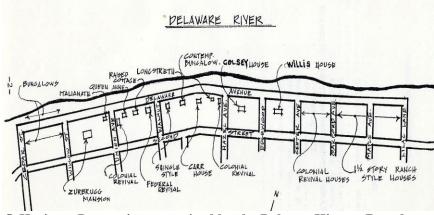
of the Delaware River Promenade A self-guided tour of Delanco's historic riverfront

Delanco Land Company

The company was formed by a group of Philadelphia industrialists. On December 10,1848, the company purchased the Heaton farm tract along the Delaware River from Abraham Perkins. Roads were built and 32 lots were sold. Summer houses were built. Most of them became permanent residences that now comprise an historic area in Delanco from Cedar to Hazel on Delaware Avenue.

Delaware Avenue

According to Richard Wilmerton's original Delaranco Plan of 1852, Delaware Avenue was designed to follow the shoreline of the Delaware River, then follow the Delaware-Rancocas "Thoroughfare" (also known as Dicky's Cut) and connect with Rancocas Avenue following the Rancocas shoreline. The Thoroughfare was closed and filled in with dredge spoils in the 1950s and the connecting road was never built.



@ Heritage Properties recognized by the Delanco History Board.

Our self-guided tour begins and ends at Historic Riverfront Park on the 500 block of Delaware Avenue between Union and Willow in Delanco, New Jersey.

Facing Zurbrugg Mansion, turn right on Delaware and go two blocks west to the corner of Cedar Street.



@ Abraham Perkins Farmhouse "Windswept"

1748

401 Delaware at Cedar

Frequently regarded as the oldest residence in Delanco, the original structure was a 2-story farmhouse built by Delanco pioneer Abraham Perkins in 1748. In this photo, the original farmhouse is the central section of the structure. The property remained in the Perkins family until 1838 when it was purchased by James Wilson Wallace, Esq., a partner in the Delanco Land Co. In 1848, Wallace constructed a major 2-story addition to the western side of the original farmhouse. The house appears on Wilmerton's Delaranco Map of 1852. In 1856 the property was acquired by John H. & Elizabeth S. Diehl and remained in the hands of the Diehl family for the next 140 years. The shoreline feature became known as Diehl's Point on navigational maps of the Delaware. The owners in 1883 were listed as John H. Diehl (probably the son of John listed above). In 1925, John Diehl claimed that the original farmhouse was over 200 years old. Susan M. Diehl (wid. Miller) was listed at the residence known as Windswept in the 1929 Delanco Directory. The Diehls constructed a second 2-story addition, including a 2-car garage, to the east side of the original farmhouse. William & Geraldine Diehl-Wilson were listed in residence in 1976 and 1984. Mr. & Mrs. Philip Brackett were listed as owners in 2003.

Riverfront Cottages

Prior to the late 1840s, our area was largely woodlot, farmland and fishery. Small watermen cottages were scattered along its unpaved roads. A cluster of them remain near the western end of Delaware Avenue. (See below).



400 Delaware at Cedar

Originally built as a small fisherman's cottage on the Delaware River at White Sheet Bay, the residence has been expanded multiple times.

Turn around and return east toward the park on Delaware Avenue. Note the following properties along the way.

Laguerenne House (site)

C. 1855?

415 Delaware

On the 1859 Delanco map, the name B. Laguerenne appears next to the Diehl property. Laguerennes were respected Philadelphia industrialists with large mills located on the Schuylkill River. The matriarch of the family appears to have descended from a well-to-do French family of Haiti. This was perhaps a summer home or vacation retreat for the family. The family later moved to Guerrera Mexico. On 1849 maps, the Laguerenne family name also appears at the east end of Delanco on Burlington Ave at Perkins Lane, possibly the home of their son, Peter.



421 Delaware on the River

Two riverfront cottages that were photographed during a flood on the river; Just part of life along the Delaware.



Fitzpatrick Houseboat Cottage (site)

C. 1916

428 Delaware

This is the site of the former houseboat/cottage of Thomas C. "Tommy" and Kathryn Fitzpatrick, grandparents of township committee member Kate Fitzpatrick. Tommy was a master carver whose award-winning duck decoys now frequently come to auction valued at over \$10,000. He was also a musician who regularly played in Riverside. His houseboat was constructed to be seaworthy, but was set on a stone foundation on this rented property on the Delaware seawall. The Fitzpatrick family was listed here in the 1929 Delanco Directory. After Tommy's death, the structure was sold, launched, and towed away. View from the river:





Cottage "Happy 4"

430 Delaware

The original cottage at this site was demolished in 2014. A new shingle-style cottage on pilings was built on the site in 2016.

Turn right on Willow. Go two blocks to corner of Third Street.



@ Woods-Schaeffer Mansion

C. 1870

229 Willow at Third

This 3-story Victorian Mansard mansion is included on the tour because it was originally built about 1870 on the riverbank at the corner of Delaware and Willow. Early occupants included the George Wood

family and David Van Cleaf, President of the Delaware Navigation Company. In 1908 the property was purchased by Theophilus and Lizette Mueller Zurbrugg, who had the mansion moved to its current location. The purpose was two-fold: The Zurbruggs needed additional space to construct their grand mansion and they planned to preserve the Woods Mansion as a guest house. The move was performed by Hartschorn & Co. of Moorestown using wooden rollers and teams of horses. Theophilus Zurbrugg suffered a second stroke and died in 1912 and the building was occupied by a succession of residents, including Fred & Elizabeth Bohnberger, who added a rear addition and were operating it as a boarding house in 1913. Subsequent owners included Fred & Elizabeth Hunt, who operated Hunt's Super Service; and Dr. Alan M. Schaeffer, an obstetrician who operated a medical clinic on the ground floor and lived upstairs for many years.

Turn around and return to Delaware Avenue by way of Willow Street; Turn right.



(a) Woods Mansion (original site)

501 Delaware S at Willow

C. 1870

This is the approximate address of the Woods Mansion prior to its move in 1908. The original property may have been owned by Caleb Clothier, a partner in the Delanco Land Co. Mr. & Mrs. George Wood were owners in 1886. David Van Cleaf, President of the Delaware Steamboat Company is also reported to have lived here. The Township photo archive contains early postcards showing the mansion in this location prior to its move. For over 130 years a Victorian gazebo sat on the riverbank. It was originally built about 1870 to match the architectural style of the Woods Mansion. Support posts and eave details matched the

porch detail on the Woods Mansion. When the Zurbruggs moved the mansion, they left the gazebo at the riverfront site. The gazebo platform and roof had been rebuilt at least once and the original 24" wooden railings were later replaced by inappropriate wrought iron fencing. The structure became seriously underwashed and was demolished in 2007.



@ Zurbrugg-Schwinn Mansion "Riverbank/Evening Rest" 1911

521 Delaware between Union and Willow

The design for this Georgian revival mansion was commissioned in 1910 by Theophilus Zurbrugg, the founder and President of Keystone Watch Case Co. and Riverside Metals in Riverside. The mansion was the final residential commission of noted Philadelphia architect, Frank Furness of Furness, Evans & Co., and built by Hugh B. Miller Co. of Edgewater Park. The mansion and matching carriage house were completed in 1911; The Zurbrugg family called the estate *Riverbank*. Theophilus Zurbrugg died in 1912 as a result of a second stroke. His wife, Lizette Mueller Zurbrugg lived in the mansion until her death in 1923. The mansion was offered for sale. A copy of the listing is in the Delanco archive. The estate was purchased by E. George & Emma Schwinn, relatives of the Schwinns of bicycle fame. They called their estate Evening Rest. The Schwinns lived there until 1942. In 1949, Rev. Carl McIntyre purchased the mansion and built a two-story addition on the rear of the building. He reopened it as the Bible Presbyterian Home. The home could not keep pace with new fire code regulations. To continue operations, upper floors were partitioned off. This seriously reduced capacity and the home was forced to close in 1976. In 1992 it was acquired by J2 Associates, extensively renovated, and renamed *The Columns*, a senior residential facility. Just prior to opening, it was featured as the Zurbrugg-Rancocas

Hospital Design Show House. A copy of the project program is in the Delanco archive. The mansion once again became a showcase and major employer for a number of years. It closed about 2005 and came close to going to sheriff's sale. Delanco Township purchased *The Columns* in 2006 in order to preserve and control future use of the facility. The township has held many events there, including fashion shows, lawn concerts, and annual Christmas carriage rides. The township sold the property in 2008 to the Zurbrugg Partners who developed 27 low-cost senior housing units and townhouses at the site. The mansion and its carriage house are on both the National and State Registries of Historic Places. The riverfront lawn was retained by the township. The seawall and gazebo were replaced and the land renovated for as a public park.



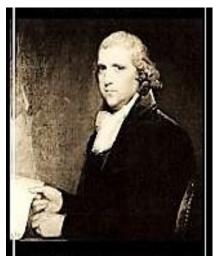
Carruthers-Johnson Mansion (site)

C. 1850

531 Delaware S at Union*

The corner of Delaware and Union Avenue is the site of the former Carruthers-Johnson Mansion. It may have been constructed by Captain Henry Gregg about 1850. The structure appears on maps as early as 1856. The 2-story stucco Italianate mansion was noted for its 3-story observation tower centered above the front entrance. It was owned by Mr. & Mrs. James A. Carruthers in 1859, the Lathrop family in the 1860s, and W.H. Johnson in 1876. It was acquired by Carl McIntyre as part of the *Bible Presbyterian Home* in 1949 and it received special recognition as part of Delanco's Bicentennial in 1976. The property was acquired as part of *the Columns* in 1992. It was temporarily reopened and used as a boutique in 1995 as part of the Zurbrugg-Rancocas Hospital

Designer Show House project. The building was maintained, but not used by the Columns. The structure stood empty and was vandalized over the years until it was demolished about 1998. The site is now occupied by the first of the Riverwalk townhouses.





Judge William Cooper

Author, James Fenimore Cooper

Fenimore-Cooper House (site)

1795

500 block Delaware at Union

A little-known chapter of Delanco history is that, for a brief period, the family of noted author James Fenimore Cooper had a grand riverfront mansion on the Delaware at the foot of Union Avenue. The exact location and footprint is not yet confirmed. According to the Burlington County Historical Society, William Cooper of Byberry, Pennsylvania married Elizabeth Fenimore, daughter of Rancocas Quaker landowner Richard Fenimore in 1774. In the early 1780s the couple established a way stop or tavern and a small community on the Great Road (Route 130) in Wellingborough that came to be known as Cooper's Town. The Cooper's moved to Burlington City, where James Cooper (who legally added the name Fenimore in later years) was born in 1789. Eighteen months later, William Cooper moved his family to Otsego County in upstate New York where he had purchased 29,350 acres and established a second community called Coopertown. Appointed a Judge, William Cooper, a Federalist, was elected to the fourth and sixth US Congress, which met at Philadelphia until 1800. He served from 1795-1797 and 1799-1801. To be near the city, William built a "grand riverfront mansion as befits a congressman" here in 1795, probably on land acquired from his brother-in-law, Richard Heaton. Young James Cooper would have frequently visited here, spending formative years on the

banks of the Delaware in our town. The family sold the mansion about 1801 and all trace of it has since been lost. Research continues on this important site.

Continue east on Delaware to Union.



Parson's Union Avenue Steamboat Wharf (site)

1850

Union at Delaware

Steamboat commerce on the Delaware began with John Fitch about 1788. One of his later steamboats hauled passengers and freight on a daily schedule between Philadelphia and Trenton for approximately six months, predating Clinton's steamboat service on the Hudson River by 18 years. Fitch's venture proved unprofitable and service ceased. Regular steamboat service on the Rancocas Creek began in 1923 with the Philadelphia, Rancocas and Mt. Holly Transportation Co. Other river traffic continued up the Delaware as far as Trenton. By 1850, Delanco determined to capitalize on steamboat commerce on the Delaware River by constructing a crib and rubble wharf at the foot of Union Avenue. It was called Parson's Wharf as it was adjacent to Dr. Parson's nearby boarding house. Steamboat service continued until about 1950 and the remains of the wharf were removed about 1969. The outline of the wharf is still visible in the form of giant logs embedded in the gravel riverbank exposed at low tide. Photos are in the Delanco archive.

120 Union at Delaware

Abraham Perkins built a large 2-story farmhouse at this location at an early date that has yet to be determined. The property was later owned by James Wilson Wallace, Esq., a partner in Delanco Land Company. Dr. Stephen Parsons, a retired dentist, and his wife Sally operated a popular boarding house at this location in the 1850s. The building appears on old maps of the period. The building is significant in that it was one of several buildings in Delanco where the original Delanco Methodist-Episcopal Sunday school met in 1857 before the construction of Delanco ME Church on Union Avenue in 1859. Delanco maps of 1876 indicate the property was owned by Beb. DeHart in that year. The boarding house was demolished and salvageable lumber was reported to have been used to build three Victorian Queen Anne homes: one at 617 Delaware Avenue (see below) and one at 100 Union (See below), both owned by Mrs. Elwell of Philadelphia.



Devinney House

1927

100 Union at Delaware

Originally owned by the Abraham Perkins family, this is the site of the Perkins farmhouse, and later Dr. Stephen Parsons' boarding house in the 1850s (see above). The Parsons boarding house was demolished and the salvageable lumber was used to build three Victorian Queen Anne homes, at least two of which were owned by Mrs. Elwell of Philadelphia. One of them was constructed at this location. In 1927, that Victorian was demolished and a new home rebuilt on the same foundation, emerging as the new 2 1/2 story gambrel-roof Dutch Colonial home you see today. It has been occupied by the Devinney Family since 1977.

Continue East on Delaware Avenue.



@ Elwell Residence "Locust Run Lodge"

C. 1900

617 Delaware

This quaint Victorian Queen-Anne style, half-timbered home was built about 1900. It is believed it was constructed using timber reclaimed from the Parson Boarding House (see above), which was demolished about that time. The original owner reported to be Mrs. Elwell of Philadelphia. Later owners include Mr. & Mrs. Jack Black and Mr. & Mrs. John Eaton. According to the current owners, it operated as an inn or boarding house named *Locust Run Lodge*.



Continue East on Delaware Avenue.



@ Gunn-Templeton-Barrett House

1905?

621 Delaware

This 1½ story riverfront "Tidewater" or raised cottage with Federal detailing was constructed about 1905. The western gazebo was added to the porch sometime later. There has long been a rumor that the property was the site of a rod & gun club, similar to the Schuylkill Fishing Company that is now located on the opposite shore of the Delaware. It possibly also served as the site of the Monte Cristo Canoe Club that existed at or near this site about 1902 (see below). Property owners included Caleb Clothier, a partner in the Delanco Land Company, Philadelphia attorney Levi Taylor Dickson (1864-1903), and the Ridge family. Later owners were reported to be Leonard H. & Ethel Dougan in 1929; Dr. Lewis G. & Inez Gunn, who had a dental practice in Cinnaminson; Mr. & Mrs. William Preston, who were remodeling in 1976; and former Mayor and Mrs. John J. McKelvie. Current owners have reported that the estate formerly had a riverfront gazebo.



Monte Cristo Canoe Club (site)

1890s

600 Block Delaware?

This is another of Delanco's mysteries. We have tangible evidence that an ACA (American Canoe Association) sailing club was located on the Delanco riverfront at the turn of the century. Regional sailing regattas such as the one pictured were held here in early 1900s. The actual location of the club has not yet been established; however, it was probably located on the 600 or 700 blocks of Delaware Avenue. Mr. Omar Shallcross of Philadelphia is known to have served as Purser of the Monte Cristo Canoe Club in 1902. The property is also rumored to be the site of an old rod & gun club (see above). Materials are in the Delanco archive.



@ Phillips-Stadtler-Baiada-Cohen House

1885

This property was believed to be part of the original estate of Dr. & Mrs. Gunn and family. The 2½ story house was constructed about 1885 in the Federal Revival style with broad porches and a semi-circular portico. At one time there was a riverfront gazebo on the seawall. Only a portion of the gazebo's stone foundation remains. The estate originally included the large carriage house behind it on Second Street, which has since been sold off. Later owners included the Phillips family. About 1950 the Larry & Ann Baiada family acquired the property. The Baiada's built a 2-story rear addition. For a time, Larry Baiada operated his insurance business out of a home office with an entrance off Walnut Street. The Baiadas also built an open in-ground structure on the seawall with a track and winch system for launching and retrieving boats. Baiada family initials can be found in the concrete of the seawall.



@ Walsh House

701 Delaware S at Walnut E

This riverfront home is described as 2 ½ story shingle-style Victorian with a cross-gable roof. It has a broad porch on the front and a large 2-story addition to the rear. This includes an attached garage and second floor apartments off of Walnut Street. The property runs from Delaware Avenue through to Second Street. The front yard is enclosed by a white picket fence. Ed & Margaret Walsh raised a large family there. Walsh family members were well-known sailors. Ed Walsh captured several national titles in the competitive Thistle Class. One of the floors is marked out with a template for measuring sails and a track system ran across the seawall to the water to launch and recover their sailboat.



(a) Clothier-Longstreth House "Point of View"

C.1860

719 Delaware S of Walnut

This is another property associated with Caleb Clothier. It may also have been a part of Captain Henry Gregg's estate at one time. The house is a 2 1/2 story Victorian Carpenter Gothic cross-gable with a glass-enclosed front porch. The structure appeared on the 1860 Delanco map. The estate runs through from Delaware Avenue to Second Street with an entry drive from Second. The estate includes a 2-story carriage house with an upstairs guest apartment. The property was called Longstreth House at one time. Mr. & Mrs. John Turcich were the owners in 1976. Later owners, Mr. & Mrs. R. Schweder, renamed the estate *Point of View*.





@ Gregg-Clothier-Carr House "Darwood"

1859

721 Delaware

This beautifully restored 3-story clapboard Victorian was reportedly built for Mr. & Mrs. Caleb Clothier, a partner in the Delanco Land Company in 1859. There is other information that links ownership to Captain Henry Gregg (who also owned the property at 719 Delaware Avenue) and the Hagstoz family in 1922. Hagstoz was chief engraver for the watch case factory in Riverside. It later became the home of the Frank & Lucy Irene Storey family, then the Albert & Edna Carr family. The estate runs from the river, across Delaware Avenue and across Second Street where you see a restored 2-story carriage house. The Carrs operated an antique business there during their residency. One of the Carr children built a guest house in the garden where her family lived for several years. When Albert died about 1977, the Carrs sold the estate. Later owners were the Trowbridge Family. The mansion was recently purchased and lovingly renovated by Philadelphia architect Michael Singer and his wife, Ruthi Zaphrir, an Israeli sculptor who preferred to do much of her marble sculpture work al fresco. Strollers along the Delaware River promenade often stopped to watch her work on her creations, which are displayed throughout the grounds. Note the addition to the rear of the original house and the covered walkway connecting the house to the garage on Second Street. There is also a picturesque stone ice house on the rear corner of the property on Second Street - the last of its kind in Delanco.

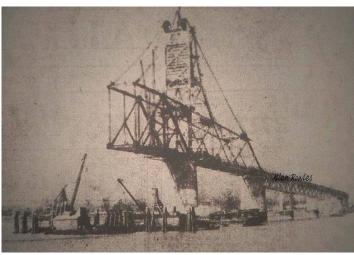


@ Cross-Mader-Suter House

1924

725 Delaware

This 1½ story rustic contemporary arts & crafts bungalow was designed and built by owner and architect, Lloyd Cross, and mainly constructed of smooth river stone. The home appears on 1976 maps. Lloyd Cross was a military hero and engineer who was responsible for designing and building the Burlington Bristol Bridge. Later owners included Mr. & Mrs. Len Candy and Mr. & Mrs. Wegenknight. It is currently owned by Terry Mader and David Suter. The house sits on a slight point in the riverbank and commands excellent views both up and down river.



The Burlington-Bristol Bridge, designed, financed and built by Lloyd Cross of Delanco, is shown here under construction.

Continue East on Delaware Avenue.

Sinex Tract

Beginning 1912

The area of town that lies along the river west of Hazel Avenue was laid out by the Delanco Land Co. about 1848. In those days, Delaware Avenue terminated at the "Gregg Line", just short of where Hazel Avenue lies today. East of this point, the riverbank was farmland, part of the Fenimore-Heaton estate. In 1912 John Sinex established a new housing development known as the Sinex Tract. Hazel Avenue was the first street constructed, and the first house was built at 201 Hazel Avenue for Philip R. Dennis. The 800 and 900 blocks from Delaware Avenue to Second and between Hazel and Center Street were set aside for two grand mansions built by industrialist William Taubel for his married children. (see below)



Dr. Winkelspecht House

C. 1910

101 Hazel

This 2 1/2 story, stone colonial revival was built about 1910. It was later owned by Dr. & Mrs. Charles Winkelspecht, a dentist with offices in Beverly. It was then purchased and extensively renovated, adding an attached 2-car garage and garage apartment. The home has a large enclosed sun porch that overlooks the Delaware riverbank.

Becket Cabin (original site)

1860?

Delaware Riverbank

In 1860, a humble cabin was located on the riverbank in this vicinity. The exact location is not yet known. The 1860 Census indicates the resident family consisted of a 42-year-old former slave by the name of Raymond Becket and his 37-year-old wife Elizabeth. Raymond was born in Virginia and listed himself as a day laborer. Elizabeth was born in Pennsylvania and listed her occupation as a washer woman. In addition, the household included 7-year-old George Becket, 17-year-old Louisa

Williams, and 100-year-old Sarah A. Brown. Sarah was born in North Carolina about 1760, and may have been Elizabeth's grandmother and a former slave. The family reappears in the 1870 census (without Sarah). The cabin did not disappear. It was purchased, moved using rollers to a new site at 215 Holly Street, where it was incorporated into the rear of a larger residential structure where it can still be seen today.



@ Taubel-Ziegler-Colsev House

C. 1915

815 Delaware S at Hazel

This 2 1/2 story stone mansion was one of the magnificent "Twins" built between 1912 and 1915 by industrialist William Taubel. This one for his daughter Elizabeth and her husband Walter R. Ziegler. They were listed at this address in both the 1926 and 1929 Delanco Directories. It was later owned by Mr. & Mrs. Roy Riker. Mr. Riker was president of Riker Automotive, later Auerbach Chevrolet. The Rikers purchased the Burk farm on Route 130 and developed it as Holiday Lake amusement park. They also developed an industrial park in Burlington, Ocean Acres near Manahawkin NJ and other sites. They moved to Miami Beach area in the 1960s. The estate became known as the Colsey House in 1976.





@ Taubel-Willis House

C. 1915

915 Delaware S at Edgewood

This 2 1/2 story stone mansion was one of the magnificent "Twins" built between 1912 and 1915 by industrialist William Taubel. This one was built for his son, Clarence H. Taubel and his wife Julia. Clarence worked for Taubel Mill in Riverside and was listed at this address in the 1929 Delanco Directory. About 1922 the Taubel home became the training site for pugilist Lew Tendler as he prepared for his bout with Leonard in Jersey City. Outdoor exhibition boxing matches were held in an empty lot at Second and Edgewood to benefit the Delanco Athletic and Welfare Associations in 1922. Gen. and Mrs. Clifford Powell lived here in the late 1920s. Clifford Ross Powell (born 1893) served with distinction in WWI. He was an attorney and co-founder of the legal firm of Parker-McCay. Powell served in the NJ Assembly (1922-1927), as Speaker of the Assembly in 1925, NJ Senate (1928-1939), Acting NJ Governor in 1935 and Senate President in 1939, and. His run for governor in 1937 was unsuccessful. In 1941 he was given the rank of Major General in the NJ National Guard. From 1947-1948 he served as chief of staff of the State Department of Defense. Clifford also served as Chairman of the Burlington County Republican Party. He died in 1973. In 1976 the mansion was known as the Willis House, Mr. Willis was President of Willis Volkswagen/Honda.





Taubel "Honeymoon" Cottage

1001 Delaware S at Center

This 1½ story fieldstone ranch-style house of modern construction faces the river. An attached garage opens onto Center Street. It is believed that Taubel families used this home as a honeymoon cottage before moving into one of the "Twins" when construction was completed.



@ Leslie Krusen home

1941

110 Oakford at Delaware

This attractive 2 ½ story center hall colonial-style home dominates the lot which occupies the 100 block from Delaware to Second Street. The house was designed and built by Leslie Krusen adjacent to the Krusen family homes on Delaware and Second, creating an informal family compound. The Pawline family later built a large 2-story addition to the east side of the original house as part of extensive renovations, which include remodeling of a spacious country kitchen, family room with a large fireplace topped by a deck, and a patio overlooking the River.



@ George C. Krusen Homestead

<u> 1912</u>

1117 Delaware

This 2 ½ story colonial revival center-hall riverfront mansion is side-gabled with three dormers facing the river. According to the 1876 map, the property was owned by Samuel G. Rosengarten, approached by a long lane from Burlington Avenue. The family still owned the property in 1909. The home was built on spec by Richard Severns in 1912 and purchased by George C. & Minnie Krusen in 1913. The 1929 Delanco Directory listed the Krusens as residents. The property appears to have a guest house with access off Second Street. (Rear view:)



We hope you enjoyed your tour of Delanco riverfront promenade. The tour ends where you began at Historic Riverfront Park.