

A General History

"Delanco, from its location, the salubrity of its air and purity of its water, its thorough healthfulness and facilities of access to and from Philadelphia by both railroad and steamboat, is second to no place on the river in point of attractiveness, and in the inducements it offers to those who are in search of pleasant and healthful country homes, where may be combined all the conveniences of a much larger town, such as churches, a library, schools, stores and pleasant society, with enough of the rural element to satisfy the most ardent lover of rustic charms and pursuits."

It is doubtful that the chamber of commerce (if we had one) could have said it better, but the fact is that that encomium flowed forth, unsolicited, from the pens of Everts and Peck in 1883 when they wrote their "History of Burlington and Mercer Counties, New Jersey."

And who are we to argue with two such obviously knowledgeable gentlemen? Clearly, the conditions for such a glowing life-style did exist in Delanco and, although nearly a century has passed, time and change have not seemed to come to Delanco as rapidly as to other communities in this hurrying, scurrying world. Our air and water may not be what they once were (whose is?), but all things considered, we'd rather be in Delanco.

Entering the Bicentennial year, the best estimates were that approximately 4,400 souls resided in Delanco. Principally, they consisted of middle-class and professional people—persons who owned their own homes (and kept them up), paid their taxes, occasionally complained about but supported the high cost of education, and if they didn't have one or two automobiles, cheerfully caught the number 9 bus to work.

If you were a land developer or a speculator in the construction of homes, Delanco is not the place to which you would come. The pace is too slow. The citizenry likes to take a careful unhurried look at things, and there is no rubber-stamping of any offhand project that comes along.

Since prohibition, there have been no liquor stores or taverns in Delanco. Nor are there any night clubs or pinball emporiums, where teenagers mindlessly contribute their coins.

But there are recreation fields and tennis courts and organized team sports for boys and girls. And there are Scouting and school dances and youth programs in the churches. And there is the beautiful Delaware and the Rancocas and happy summers fishing and boating and water-skiing. And most of all, there is the comfortable feeling that this is a safe harbor, a haven, a refuge from that crazy, mixed-up world out there; there is the warm feeling that Delanco is . . . home.

We wouldn't have it any other way. And now, let us consider how it all began.

The land now known as New Jersey was claimed by several European nations. In 1497, John Cabot and his son Sebastian were sent out by Henry VII of England. They sailed along the coast of New Jersey and became the first white men to look upon our shores.

In 1524, the Florentine navigator Giovanni da Verrazano, sailing for the French, explored the land around Sandy Hook and became the first white man to set foot upon New Jersey soil. In 1609, Henry Hudson, an Englishman sailing for the Dutch, explored the Newark Bay area.

The Swedes, who had sent out no explorers at all, now decided they should not be left out of the great race to the New World. Accordingly, they organized their own West India Company

and, in 1638, they established a colony on the Delaware River near where Wilmington, Del., now stands, naming the territory "New Sweden."

The Dutch and the Swedes established trading posts that not only gave them a profitable fur business but also helped to hold the land. The Dutch had a tavern where Burlington, N.J., now stands—10 years before the first immigrants came from England on the *Kent*.

In 1664, the English took over New Netherland, the name of the area that the Dutch claimed. Part of the area that is now New Jersey was given to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret by the Duke of York. They called it Nova Caesarea.

They tried to colonize it but were not too successful. Lord Berkeley became disappointed and decided to dispose of his share and return to England. In 1673, he found two purchasers, John Fenwick and Edward Byllinge, who paid 1000 pounds for this valuable land.

The new owners quarreled, however, and William Penn, a fellow Quaker, was called in to arbitrate. Within the next year, Penn secured title to the property, which bordered the Delaware River, and it passed into the hands of the Quakers, who began to settle it.

In 1677, the settlement of Burlington County began. The *Kent*, the second English emigrant ship to enter the Delaware River, landed with 230 aboard at Salem, a settlement that John Fenwick had started two years before. His emigrants had come in the first English ship, the *Griffin*.

The settlers from the *Kent* moved upriver in smaller boats and began bargaining with the Indians for three tracts of land, from the site where Trenton now stands to Salem. For mutual protection, the settlers agreed to build a town and the present site of Burlington City—first called New Beverly, then Bridlington—was chosen. The settlers lived in rude huts and wigwams until proper shelters were raised. It is a mistaken idea that they lived in log cabins. It was the Swedes who lived in that type of shelter.

In 1678, the *Shield*, first large vessel to come up the river, landed passengers at Burlington. The vessel was moored to the enormous sycamore tree now standing on the lawn of the property occupied by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The Davies tree surgeons who treated this tree a few years ago said that it is nearly 500 years old.

Thus came to the Burlington area the resolute men and women whose descendants still flourish among us.

In 1747-48, there was established a road from Burlington to Cooper's Ferry, Camden. The road crossed the Rancocas by means of a ferry at what is now Bridgeboro. A toll bridge was built in 1793 and replaced by a pier bridge in 1838. Many of our residents remember the old covered bridge, which was replaced by a third bridge in 1928. Charles Stokes, one of the six commissioners selected to construct this second bridge, was considered an authority on this area. In 1847, he laid out the streets and lots of Beverly. In 1852, he surveyed and laid out the town of Delanco—then called Delaranco. Mr. Benjamin Bishop, grandfather of the present Frank Pennington, a farmer, helped Mr. Stokes.

Part of this area was known then as Willingborough, settled between 1681 and 1684 by a group of Friends, who had fled persecution in England. Willingborough extended as far as Mount Holly and, until 1859, included Delanco and Beverly.

The original grant of land that includes Delanco came from King Charles II in 1681. For many years prior to the laying out of the town, the Delanco area was farmland owned by Samuel Newton, who received the deed for the farm in 1767. The farmhouse on this property was moved nearer to the railroad and is now occupied by Alfred Newton, who sold the land to Vulcan Iron Company. This firm now rents out the land for cultivation.

Alfred Newton II and his wife live at 300 Vine St.

There were several farmhouses built very early along the riverbank in Delanco.

In 1693, Jacob Perkins, a planter and a son of Isaac Perkins of Hampton, one of the founders of the Hampton settlement—later the state of New Hampshire—left Hampton and came to New Jersey.

He bought a large piece of land, about 330 acres, above the farm of Richard Fenimore, including 10 acres of marshland at the confluence of the Delaware River and the Rancocas Creek. After his death, the land was divided among his

four children—Jacob, Jr., Mary, Isaac and Benjamin.

Benjamin died in 1744, leaving one son, Jacob III (1731-1792). Benjamin and his wife are buried in St. Mary's Churchyard, Burlington, and so, probably, are his brothers and sisters, according to present day descendants. The lettering on Benjamin's gravestone is still very legible.

The son Jacob married Elizabeth Hewlings (or Heulings) in Old Swedes Church, Philadelphia, on March 7, 1756. He was commissioned a major in the Revolutionary Militia and, after the war, he built a brick house in 1789 on the Riverbank at Osage Lane. There may have been a Perkins homestead on this site prior to this but that has not been documented. The date of construction is set in bricks into the side of the house, as are the initials of Jacob and his wife. The property passed out of the hands of the Perkins family in 1853 and was successively owned by a dozen parties. One of the owners, Charles C. Dunn, is thought to have put on a major addition in the 1860's. From 1875 until 1943 the property was owned by members of the Barnitz family and "Barnitz Grove," as the spacious lawn was called, was the site of many social functions and picnics for the community. The property became vacant for three years and was extensively vandalized. It was purchased in 1967 by Charles A. and Marilyn L. Frush, who renovated it.

One of the stories about the Perkins house is that it may have been a stop on the Underground Railroad before the Civil War. Although actual proof is hard to come by, the curious constantly ask about the "slave tunnel" from the riverbank to one of the buildings on the property. Certainly, because of its remote location, it would have been an ideal place for a fleeing slave to come ashore from a ship on the Delaware and to find refuge for a time.

Major Jacob Perkins is buried in St. Mary's Churchyard in Burlington with a DAR marker on his grave. Many of Major Perkins' descendants still live in the area, including the Rev. F. Elwood Perkins of Merchantville, who has served as unofficial historian for the family.

Richard Fenimore, who sailed with other emigrants in 1677 on the *Kent*, owned a farm in the Beverly-Delanco area below the first Jacob Perkins farm.



THE RIGHT SIDE of this dwelling is the home that was built in 1789 by Jacob Perkins, who held the commission of major in the Revolutionary Militia. It is one of the oldest homes in Delanco. The left side addition was added in the 1860s by Charles C. Dunn. The home is located at the foot of Osage Lane on the Delaware River.

A descendant, Joseph Fenimore, owned a farm of 350 acres, devised by will dated July 12, 1756. This was probably the farm—or part of it—that belonged to Richard Fenimore.

The farm continued in the family through many generations. John W. Fenimore (1797-1867) was prominent in the affairs of Beverly, the county and the state. He had a son, Charles R., who had twin sons, Charles R. II and John W. II. The latter had a son, William, who married Peg Norcross, the present Peg Hunter. Their daughter, Patricia F. Caputo, lives on the grounds at Larchmont Drive where stood her father's, grandfather's and great-grandfather's peach orchard; their son, Mark, now lives on the property that was formerly owned by the Fenimores.

One of the children of Charles R. Fenimore II was Kathryn Fenimore Kenny Hagan, who inherited some of this original farm. Hagan's Garden Mart now stands on part of this land, as does a new development, River's Edge. Part of the Fenimore farm also became Justin Spain's development of the Delview Lane and Larchmont Drive areas.

At some point prior to the historical beginnings of Delanco, Richard F. Wilmerton, a large

landowner, conveyed to Thomas S. Fletcher a large portion of his farm bordering the Rancocas Creek, and this is historically considered to be the first property conveyed by deed under the government of the state of New Jersey. Upon this ground, the first dwelling was erected by Mr. Fletcher. It was later replaced by a fine residence known as the Fletcher Mansion and occupied later by his son, C. E. Fletcher. In later years the house, which stands on Vine Street, was converted to apartments.

Part of this Fletcher tract was eventually sold to the Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association. (See the history of the Delanco Camp Meeting.)

Delanco was originally the hunting grounds of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians and is very rich in Indian lore. Ancocas is the old Indian name for one of its two rivers, but somewhere along the line, the white men prefixed the "R", giving us our present name for this picturesque stream.

When the Sinex Annex was opened up much later, many fine Indian relics were discovered in



THIS IS the Fletcher Mansion as it appears today, having been converted to an apartment house. It is located on Vine Street. The date of construction is not known but may have been in the 1840s or earlier. At that time, it was a huge house.

excavating the cellars for these houses. Among the relics was a perfect grinding stone, both the upper and the nether stones, for milling grain. Under the roots of an old beech tree removed when the second railroad station was built, the skeletons of three Indians were discovered.

Delanco, situated as it is at the junction of the Delaware and Rancocas, derives its name from a combination of these two words and was originally called Del-Ranco or Delaranco, later shortened to Delanco.

The isolated position of the area that later came to be known as Delanco probably saved the residents and their farms from the ravages of the Revolutionary War.

British naval ships did sail up the Delaware early in May 1778 to attack American warships isolated near present-day Fieldsboro, but the patriots burned their ships rather than lose them, and the British withdrew down the river to Philadelphia.

Historian and author Lloyd E. Griscom of Riverton researched the naval movements of May, 1778 and found that about 50 American gunboats fled Philadelphia and the superior firepower of the British naval force by sailing the shallow waters close to the New Jersey shore to avoid British land batteries on the Pennsylvania side. According to Mr. Griscom, the pursuing British fleet dropped anchor on the evening of May 7, 1778, at the entrance of the Rancocas Creek, near the area we now know as Sand Island or Hawk Island.

There is no record of any landing parties being sent ashore nor of any shots fired from either ship or shore.

The next day, May 8, the British fleet proceeded up the Delaware again, intending to attack the Continental gunboats at White Hill (now Fieldsboro) but the American crews destroyed their own ships before the British arrived. The British had to content themselves with bombarding Bordentown and Burlington on their voyage back to Philadelphia. Soon, a superior French naval and land force appeared off the Delaware Capes and the British had to abandon Philadelphia or risk military disaster.

During the War of 1812, Stephen Girard, the famed Philadelphia merchant, sent many of his vessels for safekeeping up the Rancocas to a point about where the railroad bridge is now located.

The historical beginning of Delanco dates to 1848. On December 18 of that year, Abraham Perkins of Beverly deeded the Heaton farm tract to the Delanco Land Company. The tract was north of Burlington Avenue, while that to the south was owned by Richard Wilmerton. The land along the Delaware River was known as the Heaton and Fenimore farms, the former containing about 64 acres and the latter about 70 acres. The dividing line between these two farms ran from Coopertown Road to the Methodist Church, and from there to Willow Street.

The Delanco Land Company was comprised of men from Philadelphia—James W. Wallace, Thomas N. Smith, B.C. Mitchell, Caleb Clothier and others. The first house on this tract was built by Mr. Wallace in 1848 on the riverfront at the corner of Cedar Street, and later, in 1883, it became the property of the John H. Diehl family. There is reason to believe that there was a farmhouse here many years before the Wallace home was built. Mrs. Geraldine Diehl Wilson still resides in this home.

The second house to be built on this tract was the residence of Caleb Clothier. On the map of 1859, this house is shown located on the riverbank east of Walnut Street. In a history written by Philip R. Dennis, Jr. in 1922 for a school project, he says this house was part of the Gregg estate. The structure is believed to be the home now owned by John Turcich.

Mr. Clothier also owned a property on the riverbank between Willow and Cedar Streets, although no house is shown on the map.

Sometime later, a large, three-story white house was built on the east corner of Willow Street at the riverbank. In later years, it was known as the Wood's property. David Van Cleaf, president of the Delaware Navigation Company, lived in it for a while.

Around 1910, Theophilus Zurbrugg, one of the owners of the Keystone Watch Case Company, Riverside, bought the residence and the entire block on which it stood, between Union Avenue and Willow Street.

The Wood's home was moved from the riverbank up Willow Street to Third Street and it stands there today, an excellent example of the durability and sturdiness of the carpentry and construction work done in those days. It is said that when the house was moved there was a clock on the mantle and it never lost a minute. All the fences along the street had to be taken

down to accommodate the passage of the house. The moving of such a large house was the talk of the townspeople for many years. The house is now the office and home of Dr. and Mrs. Alan M. Schaeffer, M.D.

Zurbrugg built a large brick and stone mansion on the riverfront property and it was the showplace of Delanco until the homes of Walter Ziegler and Clarence Taubel were erected in the Sinex Annex section. The Zurbrugg mansion is now the property of the Bible Presbyterian Home.

Prior to 1832, the only way to reach Riverside was to cross the Rancocas in a rowboat or to drive to Bridgeboro and cross over the toll bridge. After the railroad bridge was opened that year, many people used it as a pedestrian thoroughfare to Riverside.

In 1832, the Camden and Amboy Railroad was built. Charles Stokes acted as an agent for the company, surveying the route of the road from the Rancocas to the city of Burlington and purchasing the land for the right of way through Delanco from Martha Newton, the owner at the time of the Newton farm. The railroad station was erected in 1849 and was originally known by the name of Rancocas Bridge until changed to Delanco, the official name adopted for the town when the new post office was established in 1855. The railroad station was located at the end of Rancocas Avenue and had a platform on the bridge that extended to the draw in the center of the creek.

The first train that ran through the town, on Nov. 28, 1832, was named "John Bull." The engines used wood for fuel, which was kept in piles along the tracks. One pile was at the Fairview Street crossing in Riverside. The crew would load the wood on a flat car behind the engine and feed it into the boiler from there. This car also held the water barrel.

The Delanco railroad station was later moved further up the track and became the first freight station. A new frame passenger station was erected and later a brick building was constructed. In its heyday, there were as many as forty-eight trains daily passing through this station. Now there is no station at all and there are fewer than five freight trains daily.

In 1850, a wharf was erected at the foot of Union Avenue for the receiving of goods and



THIS THREE-STORY white frame home, long known as the Wood's property, was built around the 1870s on the riverbank near Willow Street. It was later moved to the corner of Third and Willow Streets, where it now stands. It is the home of Dr. Alan Schaeffer.

passengers. The master wharf builder in charge of the construction was Henry Kriner. Three other Kriners—Jacob, John and Henry, Jr., all presumably his sons—were employed on the project. (The names and occupations appear with the spelling "Kriner" in the 1860 census and on the early maps. However, the name appears as "Kreiner" later and could well have been the same family. Some of our forefathers were not too fussy about spelling.)

In connection with this, a boarding house on

the riverbank, originally a farmhouse owned by Abraham Perkins, was enlarged and operated by one Dr. Parsons, a retired physician. The boarding house, located at the east side of Union Avenue, was torn down sometime after 1859 and the lumber from it used to erect two homes with the same architectural style on adjacent lots on Delaware Avenue. These homes were owned by a Mrs. Elwell of Philadelphia at one time.

The first of these was later torn down and in its place a modern home, still standing, was erected.

THIS SITE on Delaware Avenue is where the Wood's home, to the right of the road, was originally situated. It was moved about 1910 to make room for the construction of the Zurbrugg Mansion. The gazebo shown is still standing.





MANY A PLEASANT summer evening must have been spent by the Wood and Zurbrugg families in this gazebo, which is located on the river side of Delaware

Avenue between Union and Willow Streets. The wharf at the right fell into disrepair but vestiges of it remained until the remaining pilings were dismantled in 1969.

ted by George Chambers, who lived there in the early 1900s. The William Preston family lives in the home now. The other house, formerly owned by Jack Black, is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. John Eaton, who are remodeling it.

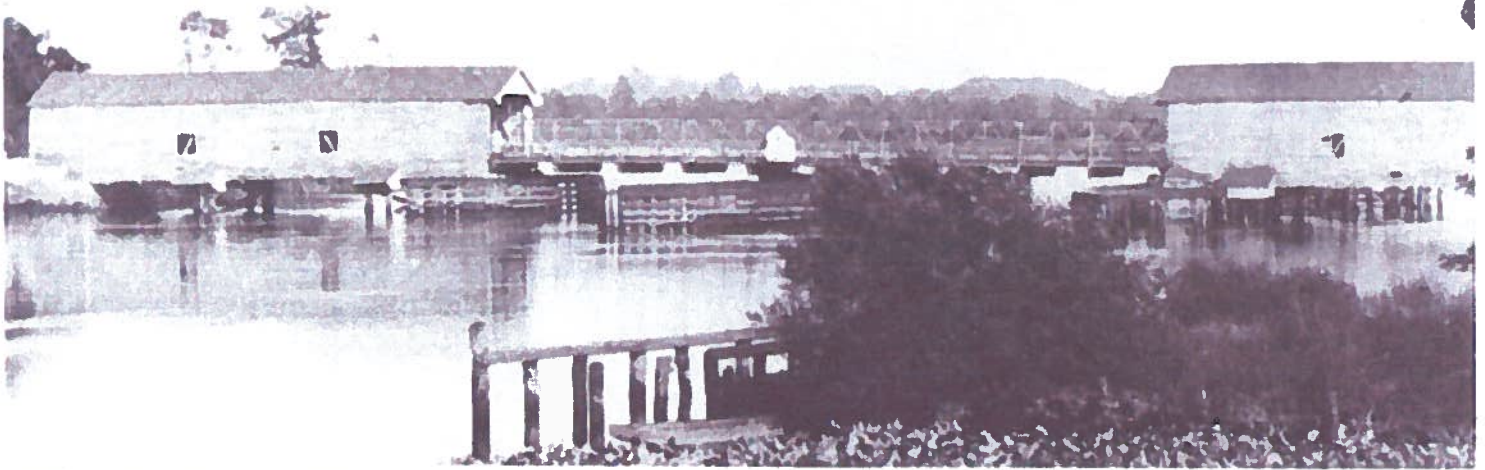
The town made little progress until 1852, after which growth was rapid. Richard Wilmerton laid out the remaining portion of his farm in "Wilmerton's Delaranco Lots"—consisting of that part of the town between Pennsylvania Avenue, the Rancocas Creek and Walnut Alley. He set aside the ground on Union Avenue from Hickory Street to Chestnut Street and extending to Walnut Alley as a public square (there was no school there at that time) for a town hall.

In the early 1880s, the people of the town felt the need for a place to hold meetings, so a number of public-spirited men got together and subscribed sufficient stock to erect the town hall

at the corner of Union Avenue and Hickory Street in 1883. The older residents have many pleasant memories of good times and social activities there, for it was the scene of church suppers, meetings, organization plays, basketball games and—not the least remembered—the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas directed by John H. Briggs and Frank H. Story, the father of George and Frank Story. The building was demolished around 1952.

In 1853, an effort was made to have a bridge built across the Rancocas at Delanco. This plan was abandoned, and it was not until 1870 that the first wagon and passenger bridge was built. It was erected at a cost of \$50,000, making a direct connection with the town of Riverside. A new bridge for trolleys and other vehicles and pedestrians was built in 1901 and strengthened in 1923 for the larger and heavier trolleys that had been added to the line. In 1934 a new bridge was constructed with a concrete deck.

On March 1, 1859, the New Jersey legisla-



UNTIL 1870, this covered bridge at Bridgeboro (where Route 130 now spans the Rancocas Creek) was the

only way that residents of Delanco could get their horses and carriage across the creek to Riverside.



THIS IS the original railroad bridge over the Rancocas between Delanco and Riverside. It shows that the passenger loading platform extends onto the bridge itself.

Barely visible at right are the timbers being assembled in the construction of the new bridge, which is the one still standing. The first train ran through in 1832.

ture approved the division of Willingborough Township, from which was formed Beverly Township. Delanco, in turn, was at that time a part of Beverly Township. In 1866, by an act of the legislature, Delanco was designated as a road district, with power to elect three commissioners, who were empowered to appropriate money for street maintenance. Delanco remained a part of Beverly Township until June 1924, when the state legislature passed an act creating Delanco Township as a separate political entity with the right to wholly govern itself. The same legislative act also carved out of Beverly Township another new township—Edgewater Park.

The post office in Delanco was established on Oct. 5, 1857, with Micajah Dobbins appointed as first postmaster. On April 9, 1860, Isaac W.

Buck, an innkeeper, was appointed postmaster, but the service was discontinued on Aug. 29, 1860. It was reestablished on Dec. 14, 1860, with Samuel C. Deacon as postmaster. There followed such postmasters as Andress Ridgway, appointed April 3, 1871; Fanny R. Johnson, April 2, 1883; Samuel G. Deacon, Oct. 3, 1887; Joseph B. Carter, May 9, 1889; and Mrs. Parmelia Hunt, June 20, 1893.

Joseph B. Carter was reappointed postmaster on Aug. 7, 1897, and the post office was installed in his general store at the corner of Poplar and Vine Streets. Mrs. Francis Shaw became the postmistress at Ash and Franklin Streets on May 18, 1914, followed by John Jenkins on March 18, 1919.

The next change was to Poplar and Franklin Streets, with the appointment of George Coleman on May 10, 1920. The post office was



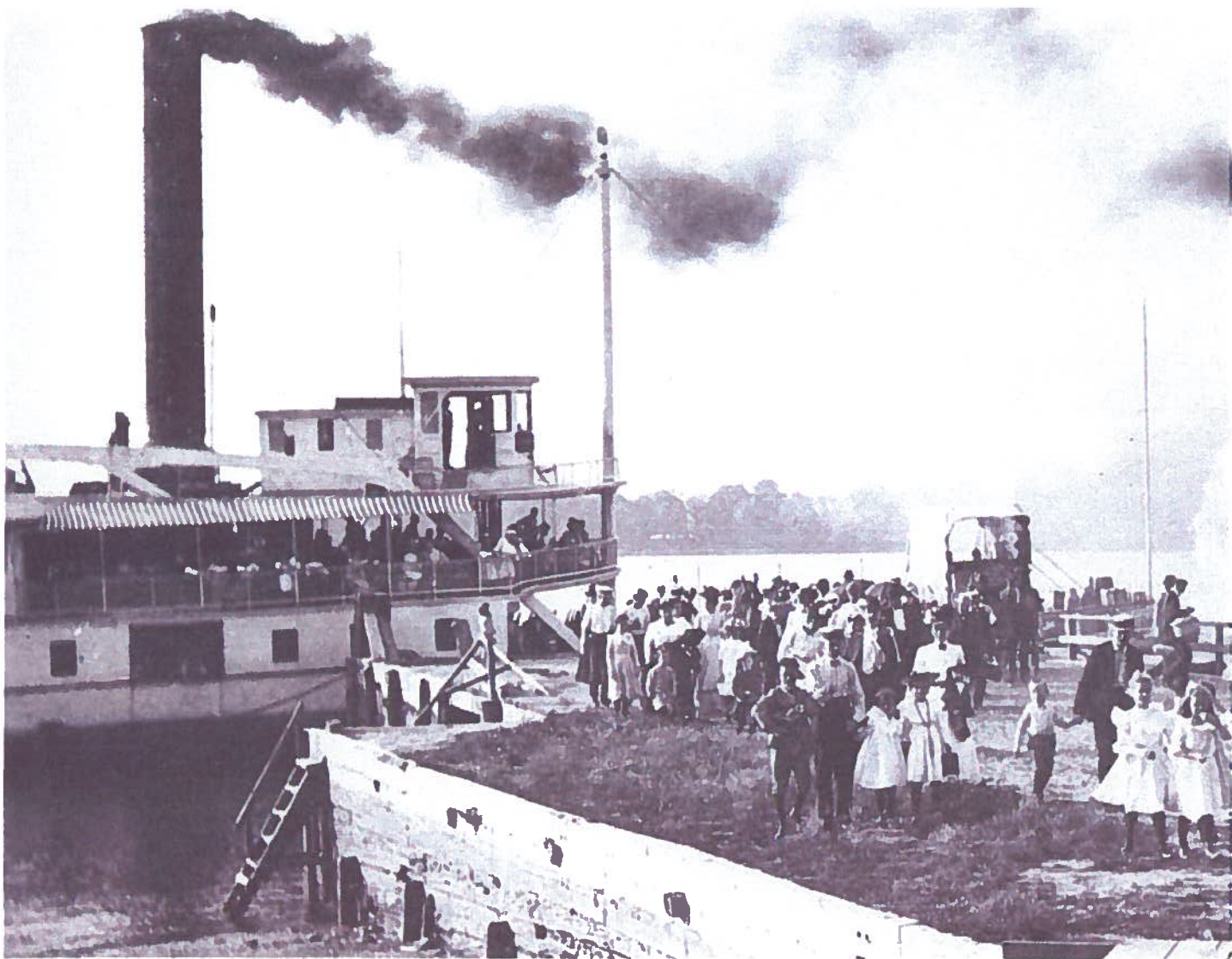
THE FIRST TRAIN crosses the new swing bridge over the Rancocas Creek between Delanco and Riverside in 1906. In the foreground, loose timbers lie on the barge, which was used to transport the center span,

considered at the time one of the largest ever built. In those days, the bridge was left open except when trains came.



THE SECOND MAJOR development in Delanco was "Wilmerton's Delanco Lots" (the segment in the lower portion of the photograph), laid out in 1856 according to the date on the map. Although not visible in the reproduction shown here, the original map shows 13 black squares where

the first homes were constructed. The upper part of the map shows earlier streets laid out between Burlington Avenue and the Delaware River. The first major developer in town was the Delanco Land Co. It was made up of Philadelphia investors.



AN EXCURSION BOAT docks at the Delanco wharf and unloads a group of passengers. During the week, many Philadelphia businessmen with summer homes in

Delanco took the boats to Philadelphia and their places of business. On weekends, the boats plied the river with crowds of pleasure-seekers.

then moved successively to Harold Hunt's gasoline station, then to Myers Store across from the present Delanco Savings and Loan, on Burlington Avenue. Postmasters Robert C. Gamble, Arthur C. McCullough, Mabel R. Hunter and S. Russell Hunt each served short terms of office between 1936 and 1939.

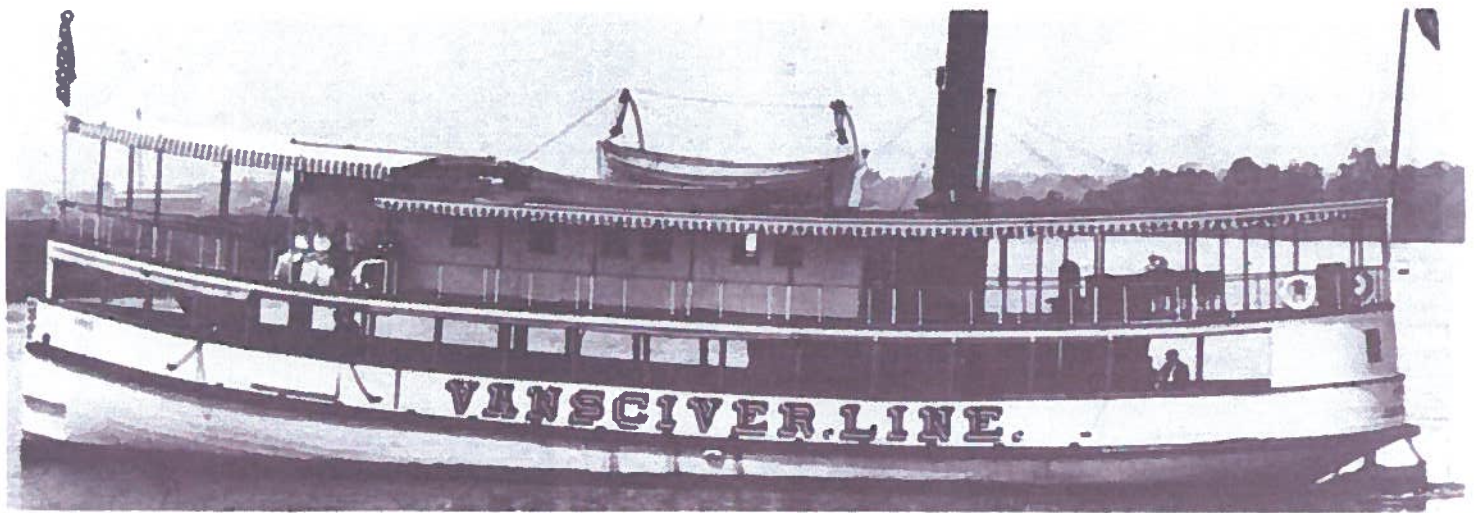
In 1944, Ella R. Rickards assumed charge for a month, Kathryn C. Gamble for three months and Mary Cunningham and Ada M. Sterling for about one year each. By this time, the post office was housed in the Colonial Building at Holly Street and Burlington Avenue.

Charles I. Winkelspecht assumed charge in 1946 and was appointed officially in 1947. He served until May 31, 1954, when the U.S. Postal Service reduced Delanco from a regular to a

branch office and placed it under the Riverside Post Office. In 1974, the Delanco substation was moved from Burlington and Holly to the new Camp Meeting Ground shopping center at Burlington Avenue and Coopertown Road.

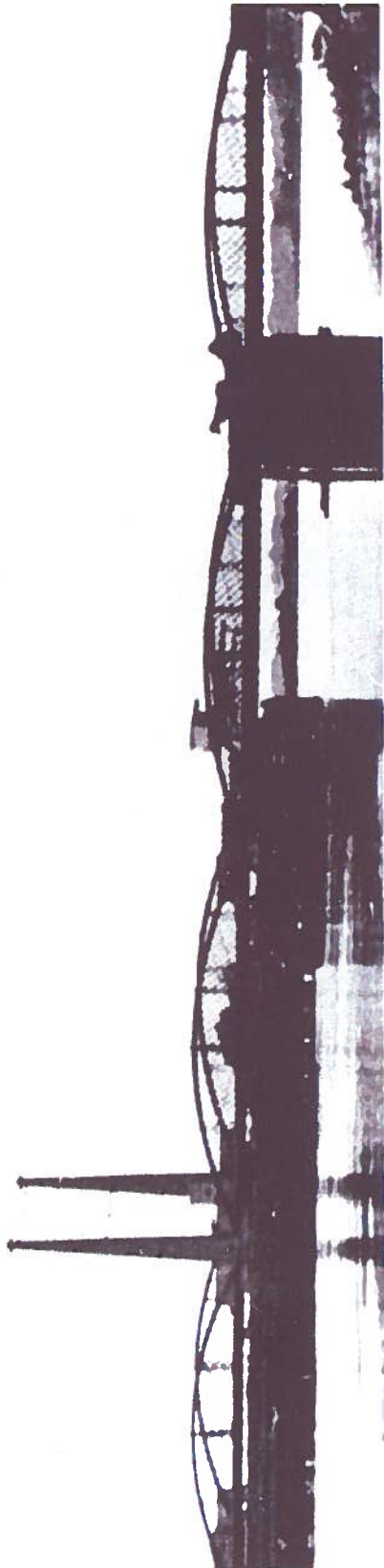
By 1856, Delanco had a sawmill, a one-room school building, a tavern or hotel, and five stores.

Steamboats ran down the Rancocas from Mount Holly to Philadelphia—the earliest, the *Norristown*, in 1823 with Captain John Gardiner in charge. The VanSciver Freight Line, which operated between Mount Holly and Philadelphia, owned a fleet of boats that made daily trips carrying all kinds of merchandise and large quantities of fruits and vegetables to the Philadelphia



DAILY TRIPS were made between Mount Holly and Philadelphia by ships of the Van Sciver Freight Line such as the Admiral, top, which is shown docking at the Delanco wharf at the foot of Poplar Street. The Anne, center photograph, was used as an excursion boat. The photograph at the right shows the Annie L. Van Sciver, first used as a freighter and an excursion boat. It later was used as an icebreaker on the Rancocas Creek and Delaware River and then sold to another firm and used as an icebreaker on the St. Lawrence River.





THE FIRST PEDESTRIAN and wagon bridge over the Rancocas connecting Delanco and Riverside was completed in 1870 at a cost of \$50,000. Until then, one crossed the Rancocas by boat or, if you had a horse and

carriage, you crossed via the bridge at Bridgeboro (which was a toll bridge). Note the horse and carriage and the horse and wagon crossing the span.

markets for the farmers. The fishermen also shipped sturgeon, shad and other fish to market.

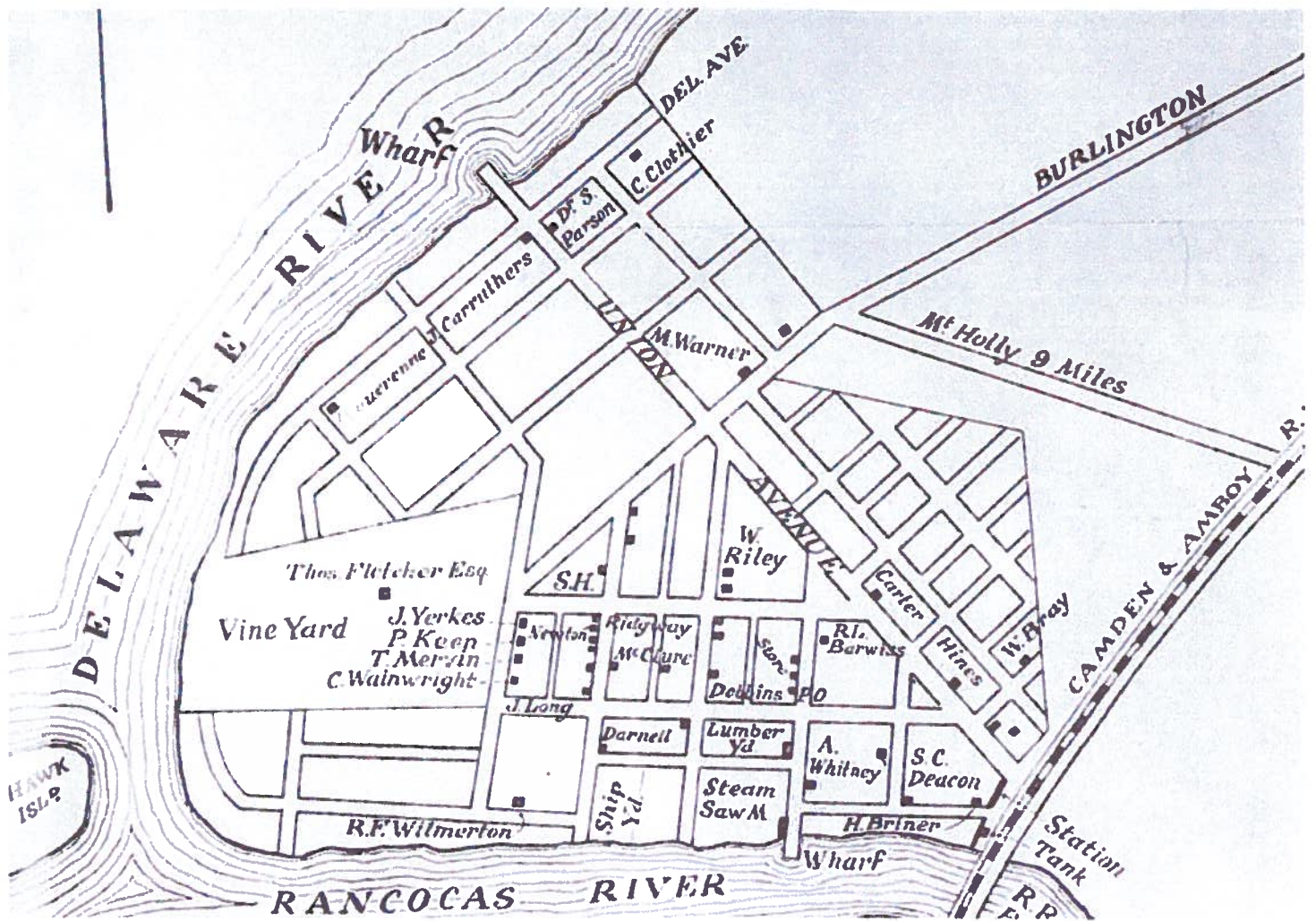
For many years, the Delaware River Navigation Company operated a line of passenger and freight steamboats up the Delaware from Philadelphia to Trenton, stopping en route at the Delanco wharf at the foot of Union Avenue. The boats included the *John A. Warner*, the *Twilight*, and the *Columbia*. Many people commuted daily to Philadelphia (25 cents, 40 cents round trip), especially during the summer, when Philadelphia lawyers and businessmen came to Delanco to enjoy the peace and quiet of the village. Many of them stayed at the boarding house that stood on the riverbank east of Union Avenue. The boarding house operation was conducted for many years by the previously mentioned Dr. Parsons, and most of the guests formed the habit of going to church every Sunday for it was there that the Methodist Sunday school met for a time. Also, for many years, these pleasure boats that plied the Delaware would pick up a group of Sunday school children and transport them to their annual picnic at the Burlington Island Amusement Park.

In 1859, a Methodist Episcopal Church was built in Delanco, and in 1873, a Presbyterian Church was erected. (See the history of these churches.) The town also boasted a civil engineer's office, a blacksmith shop, sundry builders, stonemasons, plasterers and, according to the 1860 census, a doctor from Louisiana named John Sterling.

By the 1880s, there were 100 homes in the town and a prospering population of 450 persons. Most of the homes were between Union and Burlington Avenues and the Rancocas Creek and still stand today.

Electric lights came to Delanco in the late 1890's, and one of the first trolleys ran through the town in 1901, travelling from Edgewater Park to Riverton with "Gov" Richmond as motorman and Clarence Heaviland as conductor. The early trolleys were quaint little cars, built somewhat like a barrel. In summer, the sides were laid atop the car, thus making the cars open. By 1923, the trolleys became larger and heavier and the bridge had to be strengthened.

Ed Hunter, later to become a physician, was a motorman on one of these trolleys. The bridge over the Assiscunk Creek near Burlington had not been reinforced to bear the weight of the new



DELANCO LOOKED like this in 1859, the year the township was separated from Willingborough Township. This map shows blocks and some individual house sites but not lots. Note the location of the ship-

yard and the sawmill on the Rancocas. The Kreiner Hotel is misspelled as Briner. Also shown is the Dobbins Store and the vineyard where the Fletcher Mansion stood.

trolleys and as he drove over the bridge, it collapsed.

Some other Delanco motormen and conductors were Sam DeNight, Jr., Andy Austin, Jesse Smith, Bill Jacoby, Howard Bacon, George Morrison, and Mark Rodman.

Delanco was blessed with several musical organizations besides the church choirs.

In the early 1900s, John H. Briggs directed operettas given by the Delanco Choral Society. Members of this singing group included, from Delanco, Reba (the accompanist) and Fred Fisher, Minnie and Andrew Treffs, Gertrude and George Chambers, Bill Briggs, Mae and Henry Richmond, Edith Maul, Lenora Altofer, Gertrude Jones

Neely, Frank Jones, Mary Deacon, Helen and Jonas Edwards, and Howard Story.

This was a very large group, with members from Philadelphia, Palmyra and Burlington. Its specialty was Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Sometime during the pastorate of the Rev. H.L. Burkett at the Methodist Church from 1910-14, he organized the Mitchell Concert Orchestra, which played in Sunday school and at church functions and gave concerts. This orchestra disbanded and, in 1921, was reorganized with all property transferred from the old to the new one. The director was Harry Mitchell, with Rebecca Harbach Lord the pianist, followed by Agnes Bohnberger Perkins.

Some of the players were Knole Deacon, John Horn, Stanley Ridgway, George Shipp, Sr.



NEW PEDESTRIAN and automobile bridge over the Rancocas is shown being constructed in 1901 inside the old one. The new bridge shown at left is a Warren Truss Bridge replacing the old rounded Bow Truss

Bridge on the former bridge piers. The span was strengthened in 1923 and an entirely new bridge with a concrete deck was constructed in 1934.

and George Shipps, Jr., Austin Barnes, Harry Cook, George Story, Frank Lord, Hammell Shipps, Wendell Burkett, Robert Phillips, Ernie Barnitz, Sheldon Risley, Norman Hunt, Howard Shipps, Robert Anderson, Wesley Perkins, and John and Fred Fenimore.

The Delanco Male Chorus was an outgrowth of two quartets—one a mixed quartet consisting of Hammell Shipps, Wesley Perkins, Agnes Bohnerberger and Anna Quigg, and the other a male quartet consisting of Hammell Shipps, Sheldon Risley, and Wesley and Elwood Perkins.

Concerts were given by the Male Chorus from 1935 up to 1951 and perhaps beyond. George W. Story, Dr. Hammell P. Shipps and G. Wesley Perkins rotated as directors, with Agnes Perkins as accompanist. Concerts were given in the Patriotic Order Sons of America (POSA) Hall and the Walnut Street School.

The group made a recording for one of the radio stations in Philadelphia, sang in Convention Hall in Atlantic City, and performed spring and fall concerts with attractions such as Eudice Shapiro, violinist from Curtis Institute, and Sara Ellen Parker, well-known reader from Palmyra.

The complete list of members of the Delanco Male Chorus included Howard Wolverton, Sr., George Bacon, Henry Bradway, Matthew Bradway, Albert Parker, Henry Thaidigsman, Earl Horner, Arthur Given, Harry Mitchell, Ira Tolson,

Harold Shaw, Joseph Phile, Sr., Joseph Phile, Jr., Herb Greenwood, Curtis Kimble, Russell Horn, William Wolverton, Howard Wolverton, Myron Wolverton, Donald Denning, Arthur VanAlstyne, Leroy VanAlstyne, Earle Bowen, Dane Phile, John Horn, George Anderson, Knole Deacon, Lewis C. Osmond, Jr., J. Clayton Lime, Lester Toy, Harry Miller, Linwood Reifsnnyder and Roy Williams.

Between 1924 and 1938, the Beta Tau Fraternity was performing Broadway plays and running carnivals to raise money to support the baseball team of the Athletic Association of Delanco. At one of the carnivals, they drew a crowd with Charles Schwartz, a horn player in Sousa's band.

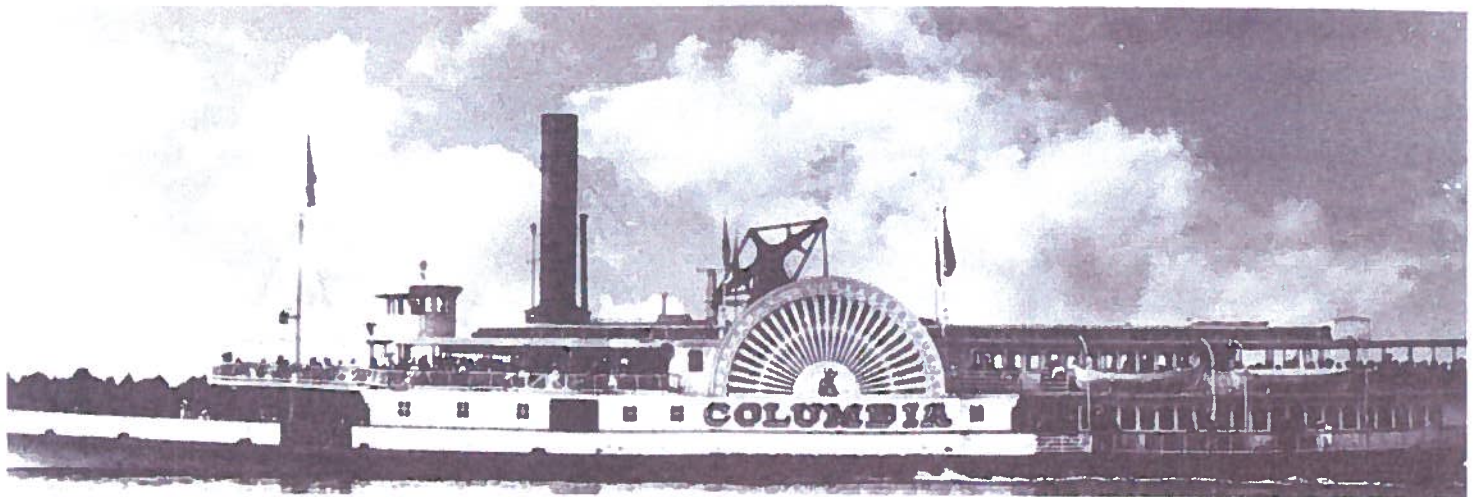
The development of housing in the twentieth century in Delanco can be dated from 1910, when John H. Sinex purchased a tract of land with 1700 feet of frontage on the Delaware River and extending to Burlington Avenue. The tract, which had been farmed for many years by George Russ, was opened up into building lots by Sinex. The development of the property was directed by H. J. Dennis, a Delanco realtor. It included the area from Hazel Avenue to Maple Avenue, five streets running north and south from the riverbank to Burlington Avenue.

One of the first lots sold in this addition was purchased by Dennis' son, Philip Roy Dennis,



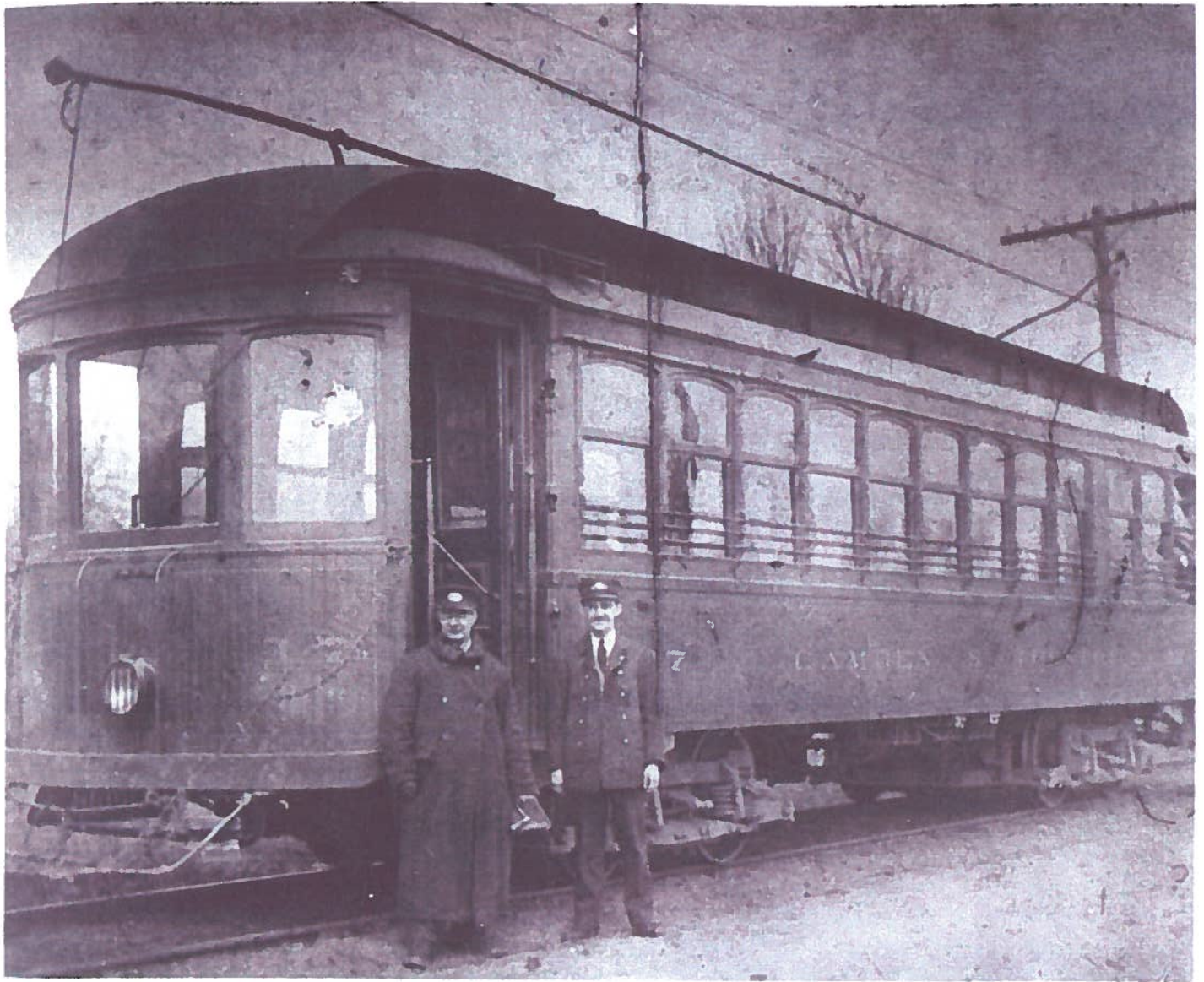
ANOTHER EXCURSION boat, the John E. Warner, owned by the Delaware Navigation Company, discharges a load of passengers at the wharf on the Dela-

ware River at the foot of Union Avenue in the early 1900s. The firm had two other ships, the Twilight and the Columbia. The line carried passengers and freight.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH, taken from a glass plate made in 1906, shows the Columbia, possibly the most famous steamboat to ply the Delaware. It was operated by the

Delaware Navigation Company. Children of Delanco who bathed in the Delaware were overjoyed when the gigantic Columbia sailed past, sending huge waves.



TROLLEY CARS such as this one began running through Delanco in 1901, traveling from Camden to Riverton and through Delanco to Edgewater Park.

Motorman "Gov" Richmond is on the left and conductor Clarence Heaviland on the right. The line was later extended to Trenton.

who broke ground for the first home and moved into it in September 1911. Mr. Randall Faunce now lives there. The second plot of ground broken was by a Mr. Clinton, who moved into his new home a few days ahead of Dennis. Clinton's house later became the home of John A. Smith and is now the residence of Harry I. Buch, the superintendent of schools in Delanco.

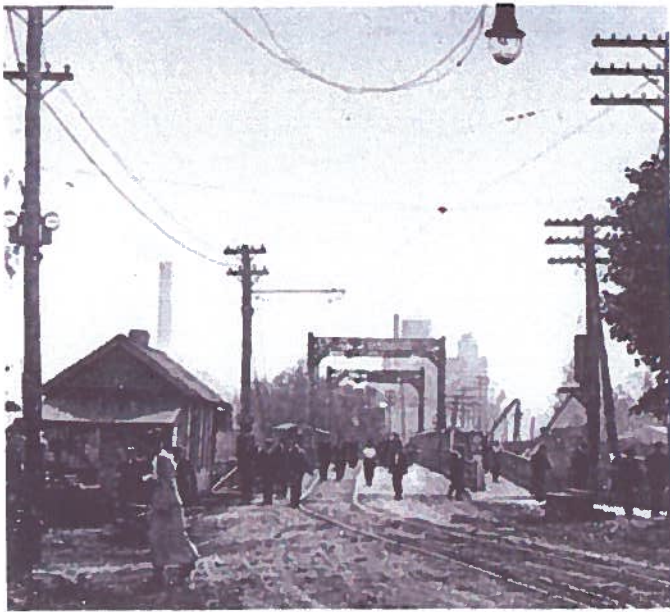
The fourth family to arrive was Richard and Gertrude Severns, who moved into a home on Hazel Avenue. Mrs. Severns and her late husband then moved to a home on Edgewood Avenue in 1916 and she has lived there ever since. On July 6, 1976, "Auntie" Severns as she is known, marked her 88th birthday.

The third house in the Sinex Annex was built for Frank Story II and the fifth for Albert Pancoast, the president of Riverside Trust Company.

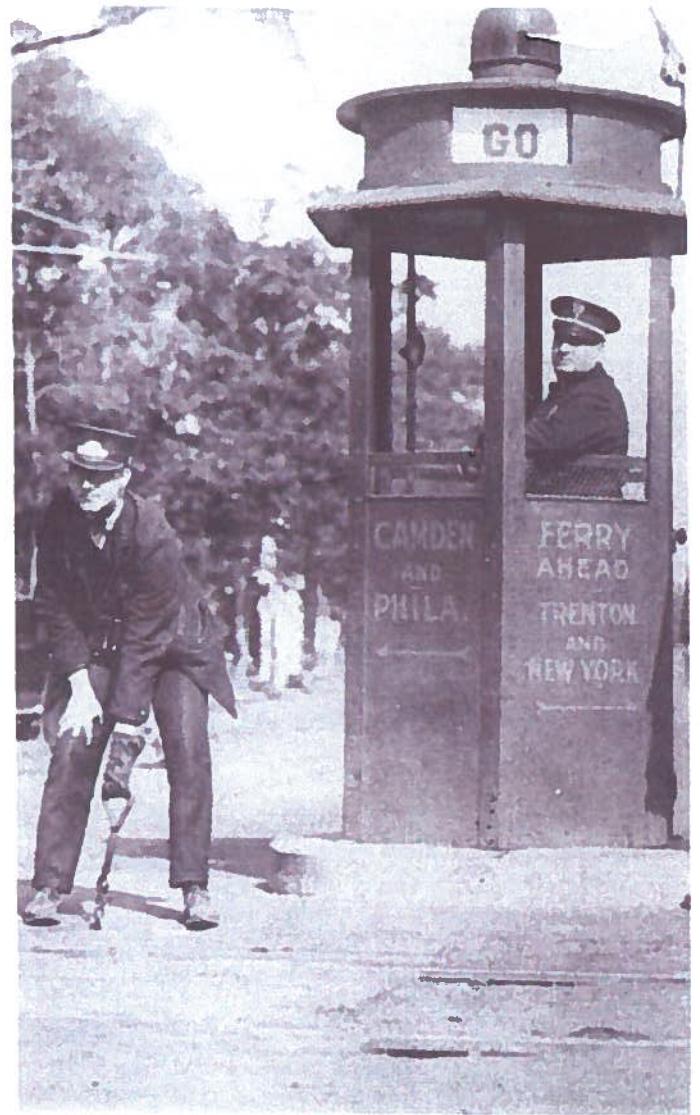
William F. Taubel purchased two blocks of riverfront land on which two beautiful stone homes were erected, one for his son, Clarence Taubel, and the other for his daughter, Mrs. Walter Zeigler.

By 1922, there were about 400 houses and 2,000 inhabitants in Delanco.

Sewers were installed in 1947 and a contract was signed with Beverly City for 40 years sewerage treatment at its plant. A municipal hall was built in 1963 on the site of the first school building, which was later used by the Athletic Asso-



WITH THE ADVENT of larger, heavier trolleys, the passenger bridge over the Rancocas had to be reinforced in 1923. Note the dirt roadway when this photograph was taken, probably early in the 1900s. The pedestrians are probably workers coming home from the Watch Case Company in Riverside.

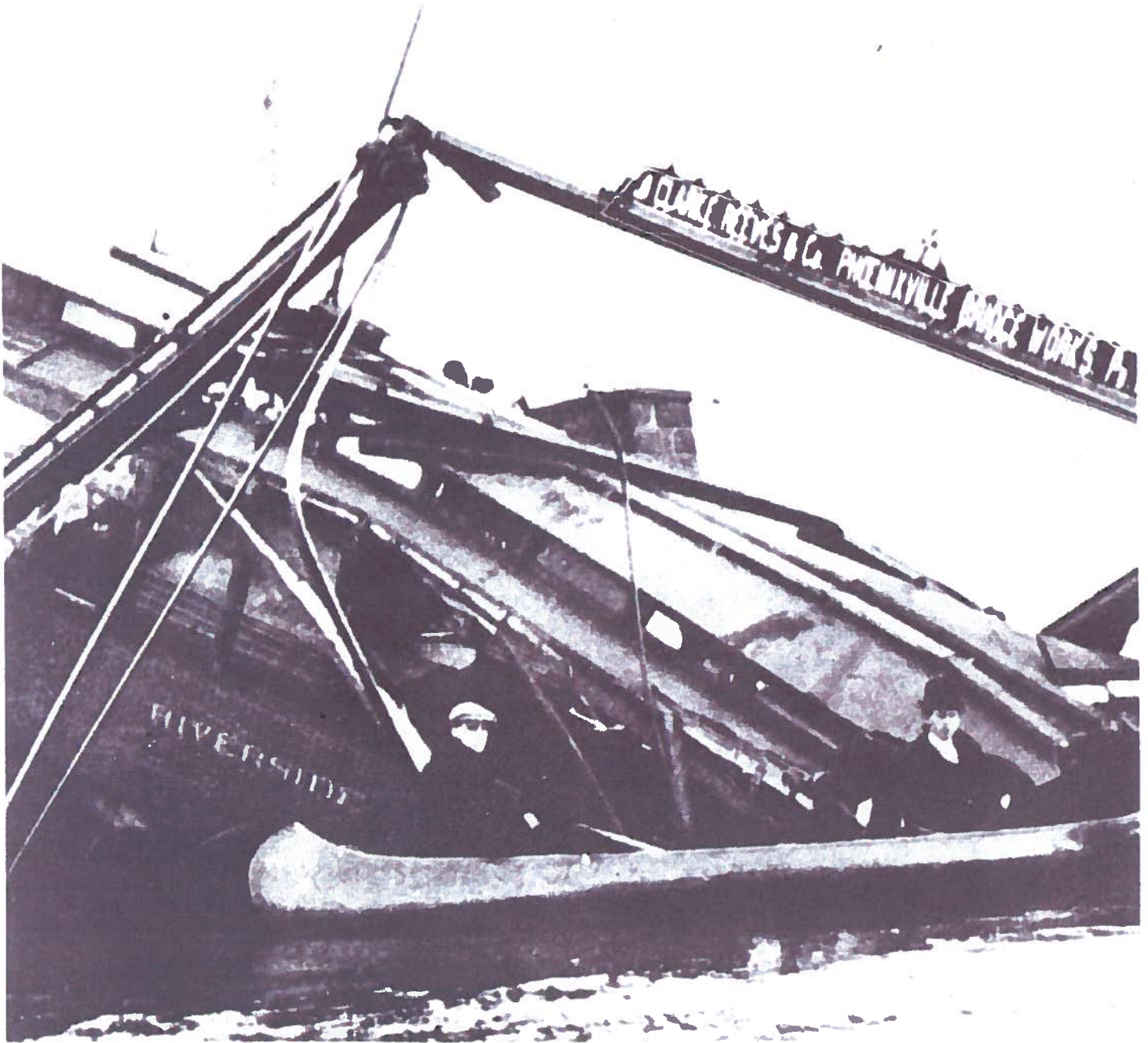


TO CROSS the railroad track at Broad and High in Burlington, trolley conductor George H. Morrison of Delanco had to pull a switch. The policeman in the traffic box is Oscar Morley. There was a double track for a short distance in Delanco where trolleys could pass.



THE DELANCO CHORAL Society poses for its pictures in town hall in the early 1900s. Identifiable in the photograph are, front row, third, fourth and fifth from the left, Dr. Jonas Edwards, his wife Helen and renowned bass baritone Howard Story; ninth from left, John H. Briggs, the director; and 10th from left, Mae Richmond Stockton. In the second row: eighth from left, Minnie Treffs; 10th from left, Reba Fisher, the

daughter of Briggs and his accompanist; 12th from left, Gertrude Jones Neely; 15th from left, Lenore Altopher; and extreme right, Edith Maul. In the third row: fifth from left, George Chambers; sixth, Mary Deacon; seventh, Fred Fisher; eighth, Gertrude Chambers; ninth, Frank Jones; 12th, William Briggs; and 14th, Henry Richmond. Behind Frank Jones is Andrew Treffs.



DISASTER overtook one of the local trolleys when it plunged through the bridge over the Assiscunk Creek

in Burlington. The date is believed to be about the early 1920s. Note the two men in the canoe.

ciation and then by a veterans group.

Municipal Hall presently quarters the township clerk, the tax collector, the sewer authority, the court and the court clerk, the police department and the library. The files for the planning board and the shade tree commission are also kept there.

The municipal garage was built in 1972 on the Delanco-Coopertown Road. It houses the township equipment for roads and for the sanitation department, employee lockers, etc.

As of Jan. 1, 1976, the township covered 2.16 square miles.

Greatest population growth occurred in the 1950s after World War II. In 1975, the population was estimated at 4,400. There were about 1,300 homes at the end of 1975.

Township officials on Dec. 31, 1975 were Michael J. Conda, William J. Ryan and Kenneth N. Walton, township committee; Bertha Wankel, township clerk and registrar of vital statistics; Jane E. Queenan, tax collector; A.



*WILLIAM J. RYAN
Mayor of Delanco, 1976*



*KENNETH J. WALTON
Township committeeman, 1976*



*LEWIS C. OSMOND JR.
Township Committeeman, 1976*



THOSE WHO participated in the Liberty Tree Planting Ceremony (some of them in colonial garb) are shown in front of Municipal Hall on April 17, 1976. Mayor William Ryan is standing in the center, halfway up the

steps. There were 25 trees planted around the township to commemorate the Bicentennial. Two of the red oak "Liberty Trees" were planted on the Municipal Hall grounds.

Rowen Bright, assessor; Alfred Parker, treasurer; James Atkinson, secretary-treasurer of the Sewerage Authority; Harry J. Supple, judge of municipal court; Cora Decollewaert, court clerk and violations clerk; Clarence Oakerson, building inspector; Owen Brennan, zoning officer; Mildred Krivulka, director of welfare; and

Donald E. Neidich, road supervisor.

There were but two changes in the official township family as the Bicentennial year began: Michael J. Conda was elected to the post of county freeholder and Lewis C. (Bub) Osmond, Jr., was elected to Conda's seat on the township committee.



AS ONE APPROACHED Delanco from Riverside, he viewed this scene at the turn of the century. The bridge tender's house and part of the bridge were at the right.

The house on the left was occupied by the family of George Russ and later became his ice cream parlor with an entrance on Burlington Avenue.

Doing Business — through the Years . . .

The editors of this journal searched through records, perused old newspapers, conducted extensive interviews and collected personal recollections to put together this record of commerce in Delanco through the decades.

The narrative of necessity skips around at times because the source material did not always lend itself to logical progression. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of information herein, a modicum of humor, and certainly some familiar names, all handled in a manner that we trust you will find businesslike.

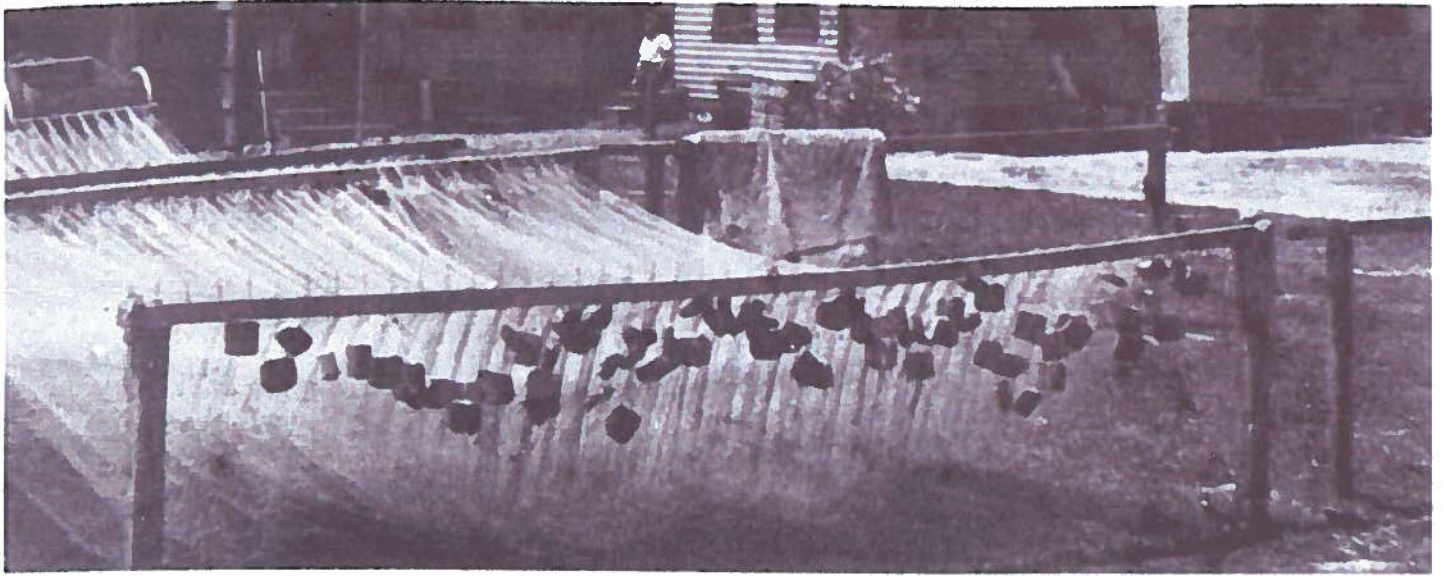
In 1852, Richard Wilmerton erected a sawmill on the Rancocas Creek between the present Burlington Avenue bridge and the railroad bridge. (This is the same Wilmerton who laid out his farm in building lots; see map of 1859.)

The sawmill was very convenient since logs could be floated down the Rancocas and converted into lumber here. The town's early carpenters could boast that the homes they built were often of oak or other costly woods, since



MENDING NETS that were used to catch shad on the Delaware are, from left, Jack Casey, Buck Armstrong and Dick Gilbert. Shad fishing here peaked in the late

1800s and early 1900s. A great many Delanco residents were involved in the industry. Shad eggs were considered a great delicacy.



FISHING NETS of Danny Borden, a Delanco resident, are strung out to dry in front of Ridgway shoe factory (1906?).

the craftsmen used whatever was available at the sawmill.

Edward Hamlin was the town's first and perhaps most notable carpenter, followed by his sons Edward, Jr., Sam, Dan, Ben and Harry. Other early carpenters included Samuel C. Deacon, John W. Fenimore and Edward Phillip.

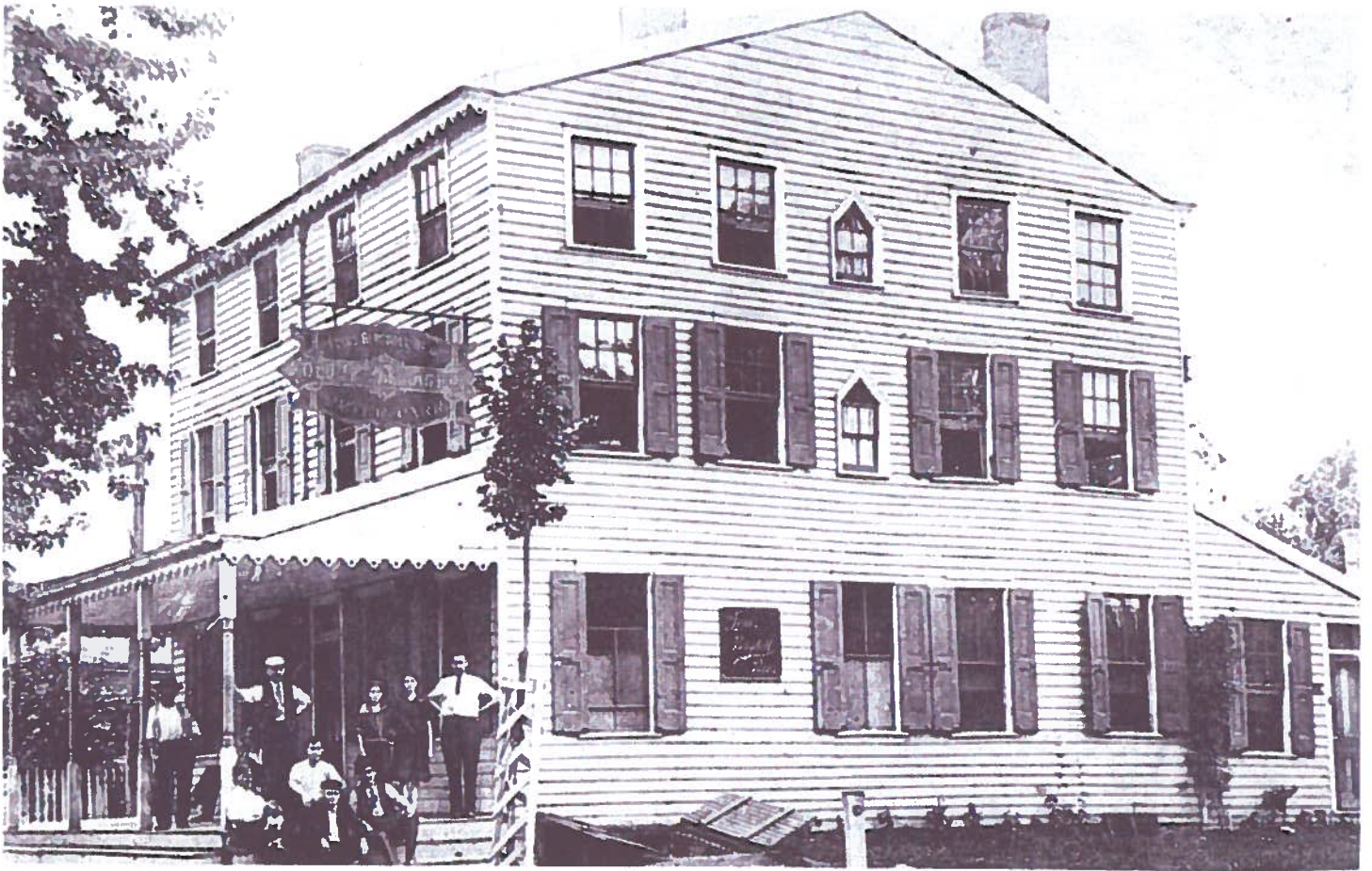
By 1883, the sawmill was no longer being

used for that purpose and later still it was converted into a pickle factory. Eventually, it burned down.

In 1854, Nathan S. Crane operated a shipyard along the Rancocas between the two bridges (see map of 1859). George Hartley's boat yard was located at the foot of Buttonwood Street and Sam Borel had a boat yard there in the



STURGEON came in a lot of lengths, some of them as king-size as the monster shown here that was boated by Beany Demerest (left) and George Hansbury. (About 1918.)



THE FIRST TAVERN (hotel) in Delanco may have been established by Henry Kreiner. By 1907, when this picture was taken, the Delanco hotel was being operated by Peter Parr, standing on the porch with his hand on his hip. Also identifiable in the photo are Herb Eber-

ham, in the rocking chair and partly obscured; Bill Le Coney, in hat and leaning on the post; and between him and Parr, the owner's daughters, Kathryn (left) and Ann.

early 1900s, although principally he stored and repaired boats.

Sailing was popular and Hartley's boat yard provided winter storage as well as a place for building small craft to be used for shad fishing and for gunning for reedbird and rail—birds that were plentiful in the meadows in the fall.

In the 1850s, Andrew McClure was a shoemaker in town. And Isaah Quigg, father of Samuel Quigg, who became the schoolmaster, was listed in the 1860 census as a maker of boots and shoes.

Fishing was a very profitable undertaking in those days, particularly shad fishing. By the year 1880, the principal occupation of a great number of Delanco's laboring populace was that of fisherman. Large quantities of fish were caught and taken to the thriving seaport of Philadelphia. They were shipped from the wharves on both the

creek and the river. In the spring of the year, the river would be aglow in the darkness with a myriad of lights bobbing on the shad nets.

Sturgeon was also a plentiful fish—and big. If a fisherman were caught with a sturgeon under four feet in length, he was fined \$50, according to a story in the *Burlington County Herald*.

The shad ran from February to April. About 10 or 12 men would go out together and a catch of 75 fish was considered a good day's work. One day, a crew was fishing on the Pennsylvania side of the river near Tacony when the men felt a strong pull on the nets—so strong, in fact, they feared the boat might capsize. When they got the nets hauled in, they found a good-sized seal had been caught in the net.

Gotlieb Shaffer, one of the fishermen, was known as "108." The origin of his nickname is laid to the fact that one day, there was an unusually good catch. When they counted the haul, there were 108 shad. Shaffer ran all through

town shouting out the total. Ever after, he was called "one-oh-eight."

In a *Riverside Press* article in 1922, the newspaper reported that "shad fishing is now almost obsolete, not more than one or two nets going out from here of an evening." Shad, which had been taken by the hundreds, were by then down to catches of two or three. The reason: the dumping of oil into the river and pollution from other sources.

Some of the early fishermen were Sam DeNight, John DeNight, John Demerest, Fred Demerest, Luke Demerest, Christian Faunce, William Faunce, Andrew Himes, Joseph Smith, Sam Borel, John Armstrong, Tommy Fitzpatrick, Joseph Shipp, Charles Shipp, George Shipp, Alec Horn, Danny Borden, Sam Phillips, Van Buren Hansbury, George Hansbury and Al Quigg.

Tommy Fitzpatrick was also noted for his small boat-building skills and for his duck decoys. He lived at the foot of Willow Street in a boat house. His widow resided in Riverside as the Bicentennial year opened.

Van Buren Hansbury ran an oyster and fish market at Burlington and Franklin Streets behind his home. His son, John, carried on the business in a store on Ash Street, near Bacon's Central Store.

The pioneer tavern was the one established by Henry Kreiner near the railroad station and subsequently taken over by John McLardy. It was a convenient spot to wait on a cold night for the smoky passenger train, a spot where you could get a nip of port. In 1891, it was known as the Russ Hotel, operated by Charles E. Russ, who also served on the township committee. That body met in the hotel to conduct its business. Subsequent operators of the tavern were Peter Parr in 1907, then George Russ, and finally the Donovans. The tavern was later torn down.

One account has it that the first hotel was built by a Mr. Himes at Union and Railroad Avenues. It burned down and was later rebuilt, reportedly by Samuel Deacon. According to a tax notice for 1869, the tax collector, Abraham Merritt, received taxes in Kreiner's Hotel.

Of major importance in the 1850s was the general store kept by Micajah Dobbins, the pioneer merchant. The store was located at the corner of Poplar and Franklin Streets. Dobbins was succeeded by H.A. Johnson, who was followed by George W. Perkins and Joseph B. Carter, Sr. It was also later operated by Charles



THE FINAL OWNER of what began as the Kreiner tavern was Tim Donovan (far right), who was put out of business by the Volstead Act (prohibition). Donovan passes the time of day with township residents (from left) Pop Richmond, T. Voshell, Pop Ellis and Gov Richmond.

Ashton, Jr., who was one of the organizers of the Delanco Building and Loan Association (now Delanco Savings and Loan).

The next owners of the general store were two sisters, Had Bye and Mary Willis, of whom is told the following story:

One day a customer was in the store when the sisters' cat got into the mincemeat, which in those days was kept in a wooden tub similar to a lard tub (for those of you not old enough to remember).

Had Bye yelled, "Get out of there!" at the cat, then turned to the customer and said, "That's the third time I told that cat to get out of there tonight!"

Mischievous boys of the neighborhood would often plague the sisters by tying the outside doorknobs of the store together with strong rope, at which the ladies would scream vociferously to get out.

The building later became the post office, with George Coleman as postmaster. Now it is a private home.

The second grocery store to be opened was that of William H. DeNight (father of Samuel DeNight) at Franklin and Ash Streets, according to the 1860 census. It was still in business in 1883. He also ran an ice skating rink near what is now the Halfway House on Burlington Avenue and it was quite a profitable enterprise at the time.

Amos Singly had the third oldest store—on Ash above Franklin. This was followed by J.B.