

# **Chapter Two**

## Historical Overview and Resources

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TWO

## Introduction

This chapter explores the history and resources of coastal Delaware with a focus on the themes of early European settlement and Delaware's role as the first state of the nation. The historical period examined is from the time of early Dutch and Swedish settlement in the 1620s up through the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution in the late 18th century.

This historical overview is not intended to be a detailed analysis of historic places, people or events. Rather, it provides the basis for later discussions on the national significance and suitability criteria in chapter three of this report. Virtually all of the resources that will be discussed have been designated National Historic Landmarks and have been reviewed previously by historians for their national significance and their capacity to illustrate important elements of the American story. This analysis will explain and connect the events associated with those important stories.

## Pre-European Contact

The earliest inhabitants of the Delaware Valley region lived during the Paleo-Indian Period (12,000-6500 B.C.). Believed to be descendants of the first Asians to enter North America during the Ice Age, these nomadic hunters and gatherers arrived in Delaware at least 11,500 years ago. An archaeological site near Hockessin in northern Delaware indicates habitation circa 9,500 B.C.

A number of Paleo-Indian sites have also been discovered in the west central portion of the state on the drainage divide between the Delaware Bay and the Chesapeake Bay. It is believed that small groups of Paleo-Indians traveled between the hunting sites in the central and southern parts of the state to locations in northern Delaware where stone materials could be found for the manufacture of tools. These groups were highly mobile

and did not establish permanent settlements.

Little is known about human habitation in the state during the Archaic Period (6500 - 3000 B.C.). There are no well-preserved and excavated sites in the state, although projectile points typical of this period have been discovered in plowed fields.

During the Woodland I Period (3000 B.C. - A.D. 1000), evidence indicates that riverine and coastal areas became preferred living locations while interior areas provided hunting and gathering locations. Base camps of the period provide the first evidence of prehistoric dwellings. These circular "wigwam" structures exhibit signs of interior fireplaces and semi-subterranean living floors. At one site on the Leipsic River, a large sheet of bark was discovered suggesting that the exteriors were covered with bark with a wood post framework. Significant numbers of these houses were excavated during the construction of State Route 1 in Kent County.

While the numbers of dwellings are relatively frequent, there is no evidence that large communities were present. The largest Woodland I Period community excavated, a group of six houses, was near the State Route 1 bridge over the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Pottery and ceramics have also been discovered.

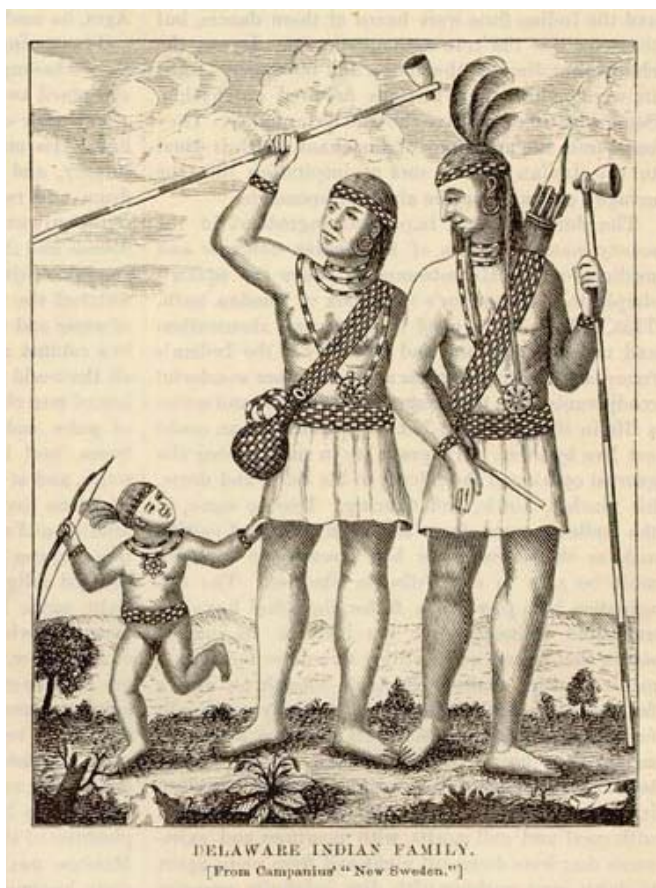
While the Woodland II Period (A.D. 1000 - 1600) is characterized in other locations by the advent of agricultural villages, almost no evidence has been found of similar places in Delaware. Woodland II sites in Delaware are, instead, comparable to those of the Woodland I Period.

The Contact Period (A.D. 1600 - 1750) was marked by the arrival of Europeans. This period is best characterized by the virtual extinction of the native population through conflict and disease except for a few remnant groups.

Few Native American sites of this period have been investigated. For the few that have been, some European trade goods have been discovered.

## European Contact

When the Europeans first came up the Delaware River they would have seen few people on the land that now comprises the state of Delaware. The Indians who lived there called themselves the Lenni Lenape. They eventually became known by the English as the Delaware, as their descendants are known today. The Lenni Lenape were a peaceful group who had settled the lands along both sides of the Delaware River, and proceeded to engage in farming and hunting. Unlike other more aggressive tribes, the Delaware built stable communities,



The Delaware Indians as depicted by Campanius in the seventeenth century. In the public domain.

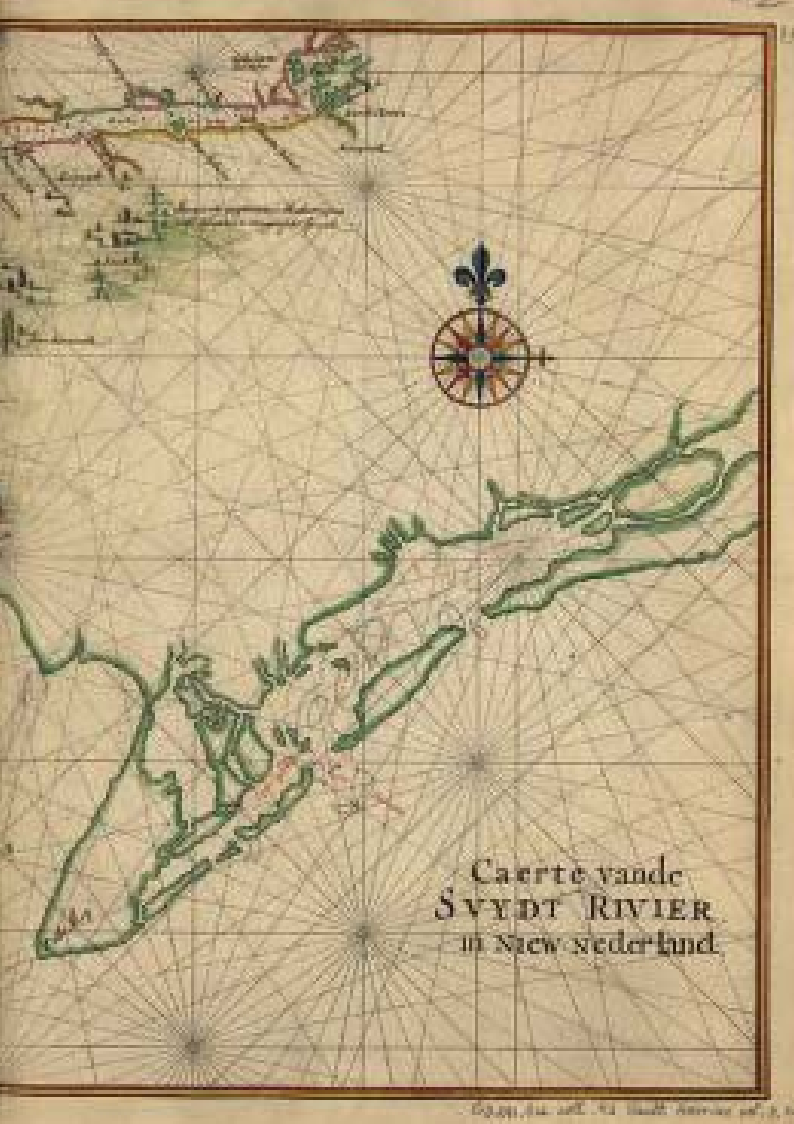


Early Dutch map of the South River in New Netherland, *Caert vande Svydt Rivier in Nieuw Nederland Vinckeboons*,

and were not interested in expanding their territory or attacking other tribes to take over their lands.

This is not to say they did not have to defend themselves. Their most persistent adversary at the time was the Minquas Indians, a tribe related to the Iroquois, who lived along the Susquehanna River north and west of Lenape territory. This tribe was continuously warring on the Lenape, and disrupted their lives up until the time in the 18th century when all the tribes were forced to move gradually westward because of the emerging European settlements.

The first record of a European discoverer entering the Delaware Bay was Henry Hudson in 1609. Hudson was an Englishman commissioned by the Dutch East



Joan. Created/Published 1639.

India Company to discover a water passage to the east. Hudson decided instead to seek a passage by sailing west across the Atlantic. He apparently entered the bay briefly in his ship the Half Moon, turned around, and then sailed north where he then explored New York Bay, visited earlier by Giovanni da Verrazzano, and what later came to be known as the Hudson River and the island of Manhattan.

A year later in 1610, Samuel Argall, an English adventurer and officer who first discovered the shorter northern route across the Atlantic between England and the Virginia Colony, sailed north from the Jamestown settlement which had been established by the English in 1607. He entered Delaware Bay and traveled a distance

up river. There are no records that indicate the length of his stay, but it is assumed he had contact with native populations, and learned enough about the area to determine that the lands along the river would provide an abundance of animal pelts, a much needed commodity in Europe. It was Argall who was responsible for naming the Delaware River after his friend the Governor of the Virginia Colony - Thomas West, Lord De La Warr. It is not clear when people first commonly used "Delaware" as the name for the river. For a long time, the Dutch called it "South River".

Six years passed before Cornelius Hendricksen, an explorer sailing for the Dutch West India Company, traveled up the Delaware River as far as the Schuylkill ("hidden river" in Dutch) in present day Philadelphia. The account of his discoveries is brief including his rescue of three Europeans being held by the "Minques:"

*"He hath discovered for his aforesaid Masters and Directors certain lands, a bay and three rivers, situate between 38 and 40 degrees. And did there trade with the inhabitants; said trade consisting of Sables, Furs, Robes and other Skins. He hath found the said country full of trees, to-wit: oaks, hickory, and pines, which trees were in some places covered with vines. He hath seen in the said country bucks and does, turkeys and partridges. He hath found the climate of the said country very temperate, judging it to be as temperate as that of this country, Holland. He also traded for and bought from the inhabitants, the Minques, three persons, being people belonging to this Company, which three persons were employed in the service of the Mohawks and Machicans, giving for them kettles, beads, and merchandise."*<sup>1</sup>

## The European Context

It is impossible to understand the development of the lands that came to be known as the United States without reviewing the state of affairs in Europe during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Countries that were world powers in the 17th century, such as the Netherlands, England, and Spain had extensive navies and played a critical role in exploring North and South America in search of natural resources, and goods to trade.

The Thirty Years War in Europe, which pitted the Dutch against the Spanish, lasted from 1618 to 1648. Because the English were allied with the Dutch explorers, those two countries generally did not compete for lands in North America. Likewise, Sweden was a world power because of its superior armies and the battles they had won in Northern Europe. The Dutch and Swedes were allies of a sort, and therefore in the early time of their settlements both tended to maintain a peaceful separation so as not to disrupt the alliance that had been established at home.

European conquests into North America were varied based on the economies, politics and religious freedom of individual countries. For countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden their main incentive was commerce, but the English were motivated by a need to establish colonies where people could create new lives.

## The Dutch West India Company

In the 1600s the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands was a collection of lands with its government located in the city of Amsterdam. It was a confederation of seven provinces, and because it had little natural resources to draw upon, its economy was built on shipping, imports and trade.

In 1602 the Dutch established the Dutch East India Company in their pursuit to dominate the spice, tea and pottery trade from India, Indonesia and other Asian countries. This effort was enhanced in 1621 when the Dutch West India Company was established by Dutch merchants and granted a charter for trade monopoly in the Caribbean (then called the West Indies). This also gave the Dutch jurisdiction over slave trading in West Africa, and resource exploitation in the Americas.

At its peak, the Dutch West India Company had a navy of more than 100 well-built, armed ships, many wealthy investors, and close to 9,000 employees. The Company financed expeditions in countries around the world. It imported gold, ivory and slaves from West Africa; sugar from Brazil and Surinam; salt from Venezuela; and tobacco, amber, precious stones and other products from the West Indies. While its venture in North America named “New Netherland,” encompassing a territory from present day Maryland to Rhode Island, was profitable, it did not compare with the riches that were realized in South America and Africa. Another prime objective of the Dutch West India Company was to weaken Spain’s power by capturing Spanish ships and seizing the gold and silver that was being transported to Spain from the New World.

This was the “Golden Age” of the Netherlands, a flourishing of the nation culturally and economically. Part of the wealth of the Dutch came through slavery. In 1619 the Dutch started with the slave trade between Africa and America, and by 1650 it became the pre-eminent slave trading country in Europe, a position overtaken by Britain around 1700. The port city of Amsterdam was the European capital of slavery, helping to manage the slave trade of neighboring nations with up to 10,000 slaving vessels associated with the port.

New Netherland was a Dutch territory in America



that originally included lands in present day southern Connecticut, New York State, New Jersey, parts of eastern Pennsylvania, and all of the state of Delaware. The main business of New Netherland in America was furs, but as stated, New Netherland was only a small part of the Company's commercial enterprises around the world.

Russia had been a large exporter of furs, but supplies were dwindling there. The Company decided that it would establish trading posts where Indians could exchange the pelts for European goods. Additionally, the Company thought it more economical to establish settlements so that the fur traders would not be solely dependent on food from the Netherlands. Some traders were also expected to go to the Indian villages and trade directly with fur trappers in their villages and camps.

Ideally the ships from Europe would be loaded with goods that could be traded with the Indians for animal pelts, and when the ships were emptied those cargo spaces would be filled with the animal skins to be taken back to the Continent. While the cost of the merchandise traded for the furs was much less than the value of the furs, the shipping costs were huge and the company had to bear the additional cost of providing supplies to the traders and settlers in America.

Items in demand by the Indians included: axes, hatchets, adzes, knives, mirrors, combs, jewelry, clay smoking pipes, and the rough "duffel" cloth which the Lenape used for shawls, blankets and other useful items. In the beginning there was a prohibition on trading guns because of the danger of the Indians using them on the settlers, but eventually this law was relaxed because it was hard to enforce, and there was huge demand for such weaponry.

The main incentive for the Company to establish colonies in the new world was to have more of a presence there

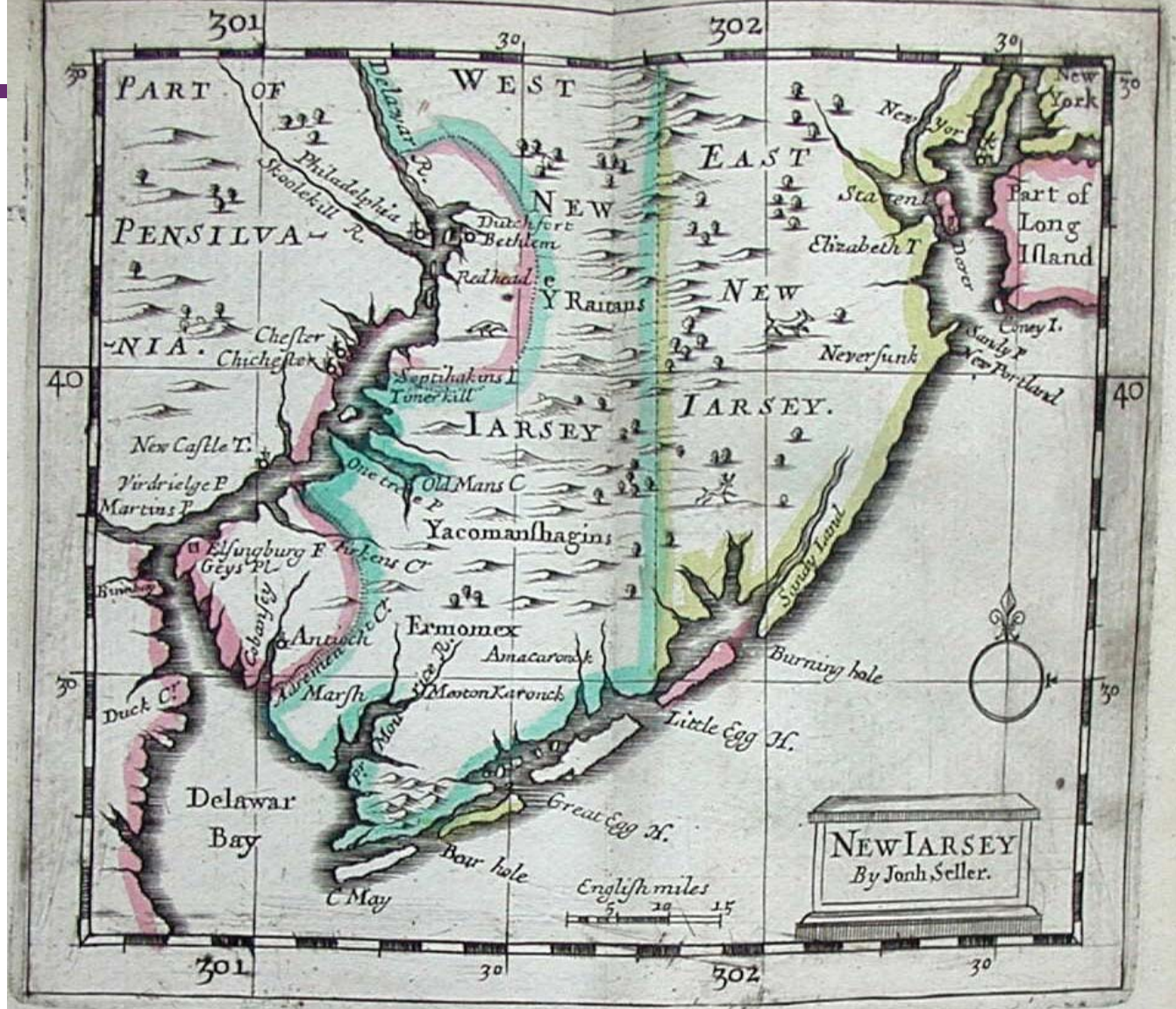
so that other countries, specifically the English, would not try to claim ownership based on earlier discoveries of John Cabot. At this time the English had already settled Jamestown in Virginia and the Puritans were in New England and spreading into Connecticut.

The early attempts to interest Dutch citizens in going to America were mostly met with apathy. Dutch families that lived in the Netherlands generally had a high standard of living and comfortable lives, and the prospect of moving to the wilderness to establish farms did not have great appeal.

The original settlers who went over to America for the West India Company were the Walloons, French-speaking Protestants. Thirty families left in 1624 for New Netherland, not as paid employees of the Company, but promising to stay for six years, and agreeing to sell whatever excess crops they grew to the Company. This first settlement was located in what is now Burlington Island, New Jersey on the Delaware River just north of present day Philadelphia. Others went further north and settled Fort Orange in present day Albany, New York.

The settlement in New Jersey was abandoned by 1626 and the settlers were relocated to New Amsterdam, whose center was present day Manhattan Island. At issue at the time was whether settlements made economic sense for the company. Many in charge in Amsterdam wanted to focus only on profits that could be obtained from the fur trade rather than investing in long term colonies. In 1626 the company established Fort Nassau in what is now Gloucester County, New Jersey. This was used as a trading center and a storage and transfer point for the furs, but was not a permanent settlement. It was under the purview of Peter Minuit who was the provisional director for the company located in New Amsterdam.

The Dutch soon began to realize that Fort Nassau was



Early map showing Delaware Bay and New Jarsey. Seller, John, *Atlas Maritimus, or a Sea Atlas, describing the Sea-Coasts in most of the known parts of the World*, printed by A. Godbid and J. Playford. In the public domain.

not in the prime location for obtaining the largest amount of animal pelts. As the supply of animals in the lower Delaware began to decline, they found that more abundant furs were available in the Susquehanna River Valley. This would require shifting their trading post to the western shore of the Delaware River, the territory of the Minqua Indians who were hostile to the Lenape. Fort Nassau on the eastern shore was inconvenient for the Minquas since they had to canoe across the Delaware River to trade their furs.

## First Delaware Settlement: Swanendael

The first settlement in the state of Delaware occurred in 1631 in present day Lewes. It was established by a Dutch financier, Samuel Godyn and other investors, who were known as patroons, private investors who were willing to finance a settlement in the new world. They were associated with the Dutch West India Company, but were not a part of it, and therefore the patroons were required to pay for all of the expenses associated with the colony they established. This would allow them to take the profit directly from whatever goods were produced by that settlement, not having to pay anything to the Dutch West India Company.



Godyn purchased land from the Sickonese Indians in lower Delaware and the settlement was called Swanendael (also spelled Zwaanendael), translated roughly as “valley of the swans”. The patroons believed that they could make a profit from a settlement focused on whaling (whales had been spotted off the coast and in the bay) with a side business of growing grain and tobacco for export. The settlers, when not engaged in whaling, would be encouraged to farm the land and raise crops - the West India Company did not allow fur trading for fear it would cut into their primary business in the colonies.

The group sponsored by the patroons arrived in the Lewes area and immediately undertook the building of a fort on what the Dutch called the Horenkil, today known as Lewes Creek. Within a year after the settlers arrived they had a misunderstanding with the Indians, and were the victims of a revenge killing by the Sickonese. All in the colony were killed. After this event, patroons were no longer involved in establishing settlements in America.

Ironically, this early Dutch settlement in lower Delaware, even though the colony only existed for a year, was essential in later proving that Lord Baltimore of Maryland did not have rights to this land and prevented lower Delaware from becoming incorporated into Maryland. This first settlement helped ensure the boundaries of the state of Delaware as we know them today.

## New Sweden

During this time, the countries of Sweden and the Netherlands enjoyed a strong alliance. This was manifested in the way people easily crossed back and forth between the two countries; as an example, Dutch soldiers served in the Swedish military, and Swedes often went to Holland to study in Dutch schools. In some Swedish cities both the Dutch and Swedish languages were spoken.

While the two countries maintained a harmonious relationship at home, in America they carried on a rivalry that lasted for decades. The story of early settlers in Delaware becomes a tale of this rivalry, and it is also based on the Dutch and the Swedes’ interests in keeping the English out of their territory, at all costs.

Peter Minuit, who had been Director General of the New Netherland settlement for the Dutch, and maintained an office in New Amsterdam, became a key player in the first Swedish settlement in Delaware. He had served the Dutch West India Company for six years in New Amsterdam, but in 1632 he was asked by the Company



The *Kalmar Nyckel* was one of two ships that brought the Swedes to America. The ship has been reconstructed and sails up and down the eastern seaboard. *Kalmar Nyckel* Foundation photo.

to return to Holland for questioning about a political matter.

When he left New Netherland, the settlement had a population of about 300 people. They were establishing crops, but still were not self-sufficient. The small number of settlers was attributed to the Company's reluctance to focus on anything but the fur trade.

While it is not clear why Minuit left the Dutch West India Company, it is known that he then went to Sweden and helped establish the New Sweden Company. He was placed in charge of the first Swedish expedition to America, and played a pivotal role in outfitting two ships, the *Kalmar Nyckel* and the *Fogel Grip*, and hiring their crews.

The Swedes' main objective was to compete with the Dutch for the fur trade in the Delaware Valley and also raise tobacco and grain for export. The difference between the New Sweden Company and the Dutch West India Company was that the Swedes planned to establish permanent outposts of Swedish civilization, as well as work to convert the Indians to their religion.

Minuit's plan was to settle near the mouth of a river the Dutch called the Minquas Kill. This was a creek that the Minqua Indians used to travel from their territory further west to reach the Delaware and then move upriver to the Dutch trading post at Fort Nassau. By locating there the Swedes would have a competitive advantage over the Dutch when it came to fur trading with the Minquas. This location would also give the Swedes a better vantage point as they watched over river traffic on the Delaware River.

When the Swedes reached America in the spring of 1638 they sailed up the Delaware to the Minquas Kill (which they later named the Christina River)

and then went about two miles up river to a landing they called "the rocks". This had been known to the Lenape as Hopokahacking "place of tobacco pipes", and Pagahacking "land where it is flat". After exploring further up river to assure there were no Europeans in the vicinity they met with the Indians to negotiate a land purchase.

The Lenape did not have the same concept of land ownership that the Europeans did. In the Indian tradition land could not actually be "owned" by someone the same way that air and water could not be owned. It was a resource necessary for everyone's survival. In all likelihood, the Lenape assumed that the Europeans were just paying them so they could make use of the land. This arrangement, according to the Indians, did not prevent them from continuing their own hunting and other uses of the land. That is also why some lands were continually being "resold" as new groups of Europeans occupied the Delaware Valley. The Europeans paid the Indians in a variety of goods that they could not get otherwise, but these payments would have been seen as rent, rather than the sale price. It would take a number of decades before the Indians understood the European concept of land purchase and ownership.

Minuit quickly started work on building a stronghold at the site which he named Fort Christina after the young Queen of Sweden who was only 12 years old at the time. It was meant to be a residence for the 24 men who would live there, and it was a perfect location for trading with both the Lenape and Minquas. The disadvantage was that it was not located on the Delaware, and could not provide good protection from attackers coming up the river.

The Director General of New Amsterdam, Willem Kieft, who was Minuit's successor, sent a threatening message to Minuit when he heard that the Swedish had landed and



Portrait of Queen  
Christina of Sweden.  
[www.about.com](http://www.about.com).

were in the process of building a fort on what, he assumed, was Dutch West India Company property. By the time the message was delivered to Minuit, construction on the fort was nearly complete. Minuit knew from his own experiences with the Dutch West India Company that Director Kieft had no authority to retaliate

against him since Sweden and Holland maintained a strong alliance at home. Minuit thought it unlikely that retaliation would be supported by the Company.

In May 1638 both the *Fogel Grip* and *Kalmar Nyckel* sailed to the Caribbean to determine if supplies could be obtained. While there, Peter Minuit was lost in a hurricane aboard another ship. As a result of this misfortune the *Kalmar Nyckel* returned to Sweden immediately, and the *Fogel Grip* came back to Fort Christina, but it too sailed home to Sweden in April of 1639. The next expedition from the home country did not arrive until the following spring, which meant the inhabitants of Fort Christina had no direct contact with Sweden for two long years.

Even though the New Sweden Company encouraged establishing a settlement, the population of New Sweden remained small. In Sweden, like in Holland, there was little incentive for residents to leave their comfortable lives to strike out in this unknown wilderness. In fact, over fifty percent of the population in the colony consisted of people who originated in Finland, had emigrated to Sweden, only to be forcibly sent to America.

Because of Minuit's untimely death he was replaced by Peter Ridder as Director of New Sweden. Ridder realized

that Fort Christina was not strategically located and appealed to the New Sweden Company for resources to build a new fort. While he waited for an approval he purchased more land from the Indians, in Delaware down to Cape Henlopen and up to the Schuylkill, as well as land on the eastern side of the river in present day New Jersey.

This was in sharp contrast to the actions of the Dutch West India Company which never made any effort to purchase land rights from the Indians in the Delaware River Valley, or sign deeds. Up until that time, the only land purchase on record by the Dutch was for the 32 mile stretch of land purchased as part of Swanendael in 1631.

In 1643 Lieutenant-Colonel Johan Printz was sent from Sweden to replace Ridder as governor. The Swedish government finally had become interested in the success of the new settlement, and decided to cover the cost of his salary. Queen Christina, the namesake of the fort, was 17 at this time.

Printz was also dissatisfied with the location of Fort Christina and decided to build two new forts. One was located on the east side of the river in what is now Salem, New Jersey. The other was on Tinicum Island, across from the present day Philadelphia Airport. The latter became Printz's residence – the “Prinzhof.” The fortress here was named “New Gothenburg” after a famous fortification in Gothenburg, Sweden. Printz also made repairs to Fort Christina. From here, he ruled his often struggling colony with an iron hand.

For a number of years Printz and the Dutch Governor at New Amsterdam, Willem Kieft, maintained a good relationship. They were united in their desire to keep the English away from their settlements. They both traded heavily with the Indians for furs, but overall stayed away from one another's territories, and Sweden and Holland

continued to have amicable relations.

It was not until 1645 that the Dutch began to compete for the fur trade, now controlled by the Swedes, with the Minqua Indians. In that year Director Kieft authorized the construction of Dutch settlements in what is now greater Philadelphia. These were to be inhabited by private settlers, not employees of the Company, and the Dutch for the first time proceeded to purchase lands from the Indians and sign papers for them. This action met with protest from Swedish Director Printz whose settlers had dominated the fur trading business in the region.

In the spring of 1667, Peter Stuyvesant became the Director General for the settlement for the Dutch West India Company in America. He had been in Europe, Brazil and the Caribbean before then, and now would be residing in New Amsterdam. At the time that Stuyvesant took over, the Swedish settlement consisted of less than 200 people. Stuyvesant immediately began to scheme of ways to remove the Swedes from land that he assumed belonged to the Dutch because of the right of first discovery. He ordered that a palisade be built along the Delaware in what is now the Passyunk area of Philadelphia, and gave orders to improve the fortifications at Fort Nassau, which included building houses to support the community there.

Stuyvesant saw to the construction of a trading post on the Schuylkill River to facilitate better trade with the Indians in conjunction with the settlement. The Swedes grew increasingly hostile to the advances of the Dutch, and proceeded to tear down and burn the buildings they had recently assembled. It was a delicate situation because the Dutch and Swedes were still allies in their home countries, and neither side felt at liberty to act with overwhelming aggression. The Dutch had on their side numbers and support. The Swedes had operated with very little resources from Sweden for many years.



Portrait of Peter Stuyvesant c. 1660.  
[www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com).

In June of 1651, Stuyvesant decided to alter the balance of power, and launched a combined ground and water attack on the Swedes. With a combination of a 120-man military force marching down from New Amsterdam, and 11 ships that sailed up the Delaware River, he set out to take over lands that he claimed

were owned by the Dutch. He did this without the consent of the Dutch West India Company. The “attack” was mostly a bluff, and involved shooting off cannons and making noise. Because Printz had an inadequate army to defend the fort and settlement, he gave up without a fight and relinquished the lands to the Dutch.

## Fort Casimir

During or soon after this battle, Stuyvesant discovered the location of what is now New Castle, Delaware, which at the time was known as “Santhoeck.” This roughly translated as “sandy hook”, a name that described the sandy spit of land which made for a natural landing point for boats on the river. The Dutch ultimately renamed the place “New Amstel.” In the European system of “new world” land ownership, it was thought that claims to new land could be acquired in three ways: by discovery; permanent occupation; and, by conquest.

Relying on evidence that the Dutch had “discovered” these lands prior to the Swedes, and that the Swedes had not really been occupying the lands since purchasing them, Stuyvesant proceeded to repurchase the lands there even though the Swedes had previously bought this and other lands all the way down to Cape Henlopen. Stuyvesant thought that he could overcome the Swedes’



claims to these lands by purchasing them for the Dutch directly from the Indians. He convened a group of Lenape chiefs, paid them with coats of duffel, axes, adzes, knives, lead bars, and four guns with powder. They then all signed an agreement for the lands from Minquas Kill south to Bombay Hook. It was not clear if the Lenape chiefs understood the underlying motive for this “sale,” or even if they were the ones who should be undertaking the negotiations.

Soon afterward, much to the dismay of Printz, Stuyvesant ordered a fort to be built at Santhoeck to be named “Fort Casimir.” The Fort was located in an excellent position to prevent supplies from reaching the Swedes at Fort Christina and other settlements along the Delaware. Thus, the Dutch West India Company secured the region by controlling commerce through the collection of tolls and custom duties on all foreign vessels. By 1653, there were 26 Dutch families settled around Fort Casimir.



Map of Delaware Bay, detail of Pieter Goos Map of Nieuw Nederlandt, 1667.

Many Swedes grew impatient with the autocratic rule of Printz. At the same time Stuyvesant was having his own problems in New Amsterdam. Back on the Continent, the Dutch had gone to war with England, and Swedish generals had led victorious armies over much of Europe, proving that their military system was the best on the continent.

Governor Printz was eager to leave New Sweden and return to his home country, but the Queen had ordered him to stay in place and he did so for a total of nine years. When he was preparing to leave, Queen Christina decided to send over ships with 300 new colonists and supplies. This was a surprising development because up until this time she had shown little interest in the New Sweden colony. Printz left for Sweden in 1653.

## Swedish Occupation of Fort Casimir

The Swedish government appointed Johan Rising who was an authority on commerce, trade and agriculture, to be the head of the next expedition to New Sweden. Rising was instructed to encourage the Dutch to vacate Fort Casimir, but he was to avoid hostility. In the event that he could not persuade the Dutch to leave, he was told to establish a new fort just south of Fort Casimir so that the Swedes would then dominate the river traffic on the Delaware. The primary objective was as before; to prevent the English from taking over Swedish settlements in the Delaware Valley.

The Dutch maintained a minimal group of soldiers at Fort Casimir, less than a dozen men, and no gunpowder for their cannons. The Dutch West India Company was struggling to maintain its presence elsewhere, and resources were limited. As a result, when the Swedish ship arrived in the river off of Fort Casimir, the Swedes took over the fort without a fight. They immediately

re-named the town Fort Trinity, and Rising then sailed to Fort Christina to disembark. Fort Christina had only about 70 people in residence; many had deserted due to the tyranny of Governor Printz.

About 300 people arrived on the ship with Rising in the spring of 1654. The Dutch who had been living at Fort Casimir (comprising 60 men, women and children) were told they could stay if they took an oath to Queen Christina of Sweden, which they did. Once again, the Swedes occupied and were in control of the entire coast of Delaware down to Cape Henlopen.

Rising attempted to reunite New Sweden. He ordered the rebuilding of Fort Christina and Fort Trinity, sent surveyors out to map the region, and improved relations with the Lenape and the Minquas. But there were other events that he could not control. A second supply ship from Sweden never arrived. There was also terrible weather during the winter of 1654, and land disputes with Lord Baltimore, who claimed that most of Delaware belonged to Maryland. At the same time, a group of English colonists from Connecticut claimed that property in the Delaware Valley had been previously purchased by the English.

In 1655, the Dutch, who had occupied Fort Trinity and pledged their allegiance to Sweden, all moved to New Amsterdam. The news of peace between England and the Dutch was announced which meant that Governor Peter Stuyvesant could retaliate against the Swedes for taking over Dutch property and Fort Casimir.

## Revenge of the Dutch

Once the directors of the Dutch West India Company found out about the Swedish take-over of Fort Casimir, they directed Stuyvesant to restore the fort to Dutch ownership, and suggested that he drive the Swedes

from the entire Delaware River Valley. Rising learned of Stuyvesant's plans to recapture the fort, but did not suspect that he also planned to remove the Swedes from the region. Stuyvesant assembled a fleet of seven armed ships with a company of about 300 men. In August of 1655 the fleet left New Amsterdam, stopping first at Fort Elfsborg, near Salem, New Jersey, which had been abandoned under Rising's rule. Hearing of the potential attack on Fort Trinity, Rising moved troops from Fort Christina and equipped them to fend off an assault. This left only 30 men at Fort Christina.

Stuyvesant essentially captured Fort Trinity (again renamed Fort Casimir) without a fight. The Commander in charge, Swedish Captain Sven Skute, seeing that he was severely out-numbered, surrendered within hours. The Dutch treated the officers of the fort fairly, and did not imprison them. The settlers living in the town were also treated well. Stuyvesant then moved up river to Fort Christina and forced the Swedes to surrender. Soon after these engagements, Stuyvesant was called back to New Amsterdam because Indian tribes were attacking citizens, and there was no militia in place to protect them.

Because Stuyvesant was needed in New Amsterdam, he offered to return Fort Christina to Rising, but the Swedish Director refused. Instead, the Swedes and Finns continued to live as they had, but pledged allegiance to the Dutch government. Dutch troops were put in place at the more strategically located Fort Casimir, thus leaving Fort Christina mostly abandoned.

In November 1655, Stuyvesant appointed Jean Paul Jacquet as Vice Director of the Delaware with instructions to keep the peace and "look well after the Swedes."<sup>2</sup> Under his administration, a court was located in Fort Casimir and the population at its peak reached about 150 people. Income was derived from growing tobacco, corn, wheat, rye, barley and peas and raising hogs, pigs and goats.

While the Dutch were in charge of the settlement, Swedes and Finns maintained their lifestyle much as they had before. They were allowed to practice their religious beliefs, conduct their own court system, and keep their farms. By this time the Dutch had implemented a free trading policy with the Indians, which meant that everyone was allowed to trade for furs as long as they paid a minimal tax to the Dutch West India Company.

## An American Colony Owned by a European City

In 1656 the Dutch West India Company deeded a part of the New Netherland settlement to the city of Amsterdam. The Company, unable to make the colony sustainable, had been consistently losing money in America. This, along with problems in its other settlements, and investments in Brazil and Africa, caused Company stock to decline in 1654-55, and inspired a rethinking of its worldwide trading strategy.

Because of close connections between the Company and the city, and the continual fear that New Amsterdam might be taken over by the English, which would be an affront to the Netherlands' national pride, the city's burgomeisters agreed to finance a part of the settlement in New Amsterdam. They became the "owners" of Fort Casimir, which was renamed "New Amstel," and were deeded the lands from south of the Christina River down to Bombay Hook. Fort Christina was renamed "Fort Altena."

The advantage to Amsterdam, a city of 200,000, was that a new world colony could supply grain and lumber which would lessen its dependence on similar markets in Europe and the Baltic. Amsterdam had become a successful major metropolis and an important center for trade for all of Europe.

The arrangement was that Amsterdam would have a partnership agreement with the Dutch West India Company. Amsterdam would fund and manage these properties and provide a Director, Jacob Alrichs. They also agreed to pay a tariff to the Company for both imported and exported goods. Peter Stuyvesant remained in charge of the lands belonging to the Dutch West India Company, which he administered from New Amsterdam.

Under the purview of the city, colonists were encouraged to settle in New Amstel and other parts of the colony. They were free to farm, trade with the Indians, and make a direct profit from their hard work. The city paid for the settlers' passage to the colony and helped them to get established there, agreeing to take just a small percentage of their income.

This was a significant change from how the Dutch West India Company had been managing the settlement. When Alrichs took over New Amstel in April 1657 he found only about 20 families living there – mostly Swedes and Finns. He also discovered that the fort was in terrible shape and much of the other facilities and structures had rotted or been damaged by storms.

There were about three to four hundred settlers who came over on the first ship sponsored by the city of Amsterdam. Alrichs quickly encouraged people to build, plant crops, and get ready for the following winter. New Amstel began to thrive under the new Director's leadership and with the infusion of funds from their Dutch landlord.

By 1659 New Amstel had increased to 110 houses, but over the years the settlers were still unable to sustain themselves with products they grew. Part of the problem was that those who had immigrated were artisans, clerks and craftsmen rather than traditional farmers. Added to this were some seasons of poor weather in which rain ruined the crops. Many of those who had pledged to

remain for four years abandoned their contracts and moved to New Amsterdam. Amsterdam, which had entered this venture expecting to make money on grain and the fur trade from America, was finding that it was incurring greater and greater financial losses.

The city had to continually invest more money to keep the colony going. What had seemed like a modest investment to start grew to 150,000 guilders, a few million dollars in today's economy. Additionally, relations between the colony and the Company had begun to deteriorate. The Company complained that it was not being paid the proper amount of tariffs for goods that were brought in, nor did it receive payment for those that were sold in Amsterdam. Ships would try to sneak into port to avoid these expenses, and were accused of smuggling.

In this same period, Peter Stuyvesant visited the settlements along the Delaware and decided that the Swedes in Fort Christina would be better off governing themselves. He permitted them to have their own magistrates and militia. This action was met with great opposition in Amsterdam. Stuyvesant was instructed not to give the Swedes more autonomy, and encouraged to scatter the families.

Also at this time, Stuyvesant and his council decided to put a Company employee in place in New Amstel, Willem Beeckman, who would double as both a customs inspector and an administrator of the Company's economic and political affairs. Beeckman was instructed to proceed with purchasing the lands south of Bombay Hook down to Cape Henlopen from the Indians. This land was purchased in 1659 and then deeded to Amsterdam. This was part of the continuing effort to prevent the English from trying to take over Dutch settlements and claim them as their own.

The Governor of Maryland was making an attempt to grab what he determined was the land belonging to Lord Baltimore under the terms of the Maryland Charter. It was his interpretation that the territory that the Dutch claimed as Delaware had been part of the grant that James I made to the Calverts. This would include the city's colony at New Amstel, the fort at the Horekil, and the Company's Fort Christina. The Governor sent Colonel Utie to New Amstel to demand that the Dutch turn over the land or prepare for battle with the English.

Alrichs delayed the conference with Utie, believing it was the responsibility of the Dutch West India Company to protect the colonies of the city of Amsterdam from European conquests. Stuyvesant refused to meet with the British, stating they had no right to make such demands. At this point things were falling apart in the management of the settlement and the arrangement between the city and the Dutch West India Company. In December 1659, Alrichs died from an unexplained disease which had taken the lives of many others in the settlement.

The next governor of New Amstel was a young lieutenant named Alexander D'Hinoyossa who developed a free trading system with the English in Maryland. The Dutch began trading for tobacco from the English and in return provided strong Dutch beer brewed in New Amstel and slaves from Africa for labor on the tobacco plantations.

D'Hinoyossa sailed back to Holland and recommended that all of the lands in Delaware be transferred to the city of Amsterdam. Stuyvesant supported this decision. For a brief period, everything was going well with the colony. Goods were being sent to Amsterdam and the size of the colony increased. A trading post was established in present day Odessa as a commercial point between the Delaware River and the Chesapeake Bay. Ships traveled up the Appoquinimink River where the goods would make a short land crossing and then be loaded on ships



that sailed down the Bohemian River to the Chesapeake Bay.

At the end of 1663, the population of the settlement had increased to 1,000, and it appeared as if the city's investment in America was going to pay off.

## The British Gain Control of Delaware Bay

Warships from England approached New Amstel in October 1664. The English had just peacefully taken New Amsterdam from the Dutch; and Peter Stuyvesant surrendered without a fight. Now a part of England's army, consisting of over 100 men and two armed ships, was preparing to do battle in the Delaware River Valley. The fort at New Amstel was not in fighting shape after years of neglect and peaceful times.

The captain of one of the English ships, Sir Robert Carr, met with D'Hinoyossa and other Dutch settlers and told them he had come to take possession of the country for the King of England, either by force or agreement. D'Hinoyossa and a contingent of his men attempted to put up a fight, but the English soldiers had no difficulty taking the fort.

Once the English took over, conditions did not change for the people who had been living in the colony. As long as the inhabitants, Swedes, Finns and Dutch, took an oath of allegiance to the King of England, they were as free as Englishmen to live peacefully in the colony of the Duke of York. At first the English renamed New Amstel "Dellawarr Fort," but by April of the following year the name "New Castle" appeared in correspondence. Under English rule, Delaware was first governed as a part of the colony of New York. In 1664, King Charles II of England endowed his brother, the Duke of York, with a vast tract of land in America. This endowment included

New York, previously known as New Amsterdam, as well as parts of Connecticut and New Jersey. In 1672 the English determined that Delaware should be run more under the English system of government since it had continued to function in the model of Dutch government, with Dutch being the primary language in the colony.

The Dutch regained control of Delaware for a brief period between 1673 and 1674, but the colony reverted back to the English when a peace treaty terminated the Third Dutch- Anglo War and provided for a restitution of conquests. New Netherland was returned to the English in exchange for Surinam (Dutch Guiana).

The English ruled Delaware under the Duke of York, governing it as part of the New York colony. New Castle grew in importance during these years as a secondary capital to New York. Courts were established further south in Lewes, and to the north in present day Chester, Pennsylvania.

## In the Times of William Penn

King Charles II, the brother of the Duke of York, determined the northern boundary of the state of Delaware in 1681 when he created a province called "Penn's Woods" (Pennsylvania) and deeded it to William Penn, son of Sir Admiral William Penn. Admiral Penn had been instrumental in restoring King Charles to power in 1660, and the King felt obligated to him. The King, not wanting to disturb the land owned by his brother, the Duke of York, determined that the southern boundary of Pennsylvania would be 12 miles from New Castle.

William Penn was a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and interested in setting up a colony where others of his faith could settle and gain refuge from persecution they had been subjected to in England.



William Penn etching. Library of Congress.

When Penn realized he would not have direct access to the ocean in his colony of Penn's Woods, he appealed to the Duke of York to give him the land along the Delaware River down to the Atlantic Ocean. The Duke agreed to this and conveyed the Delaware counties in separate documents which divided the land into the 12 miles around New Castle, and the land beyond that boundary down to Cape Henlopen.

Penn arrived in America, landing in New Castle in October 1682 from the ship *Welcome*, and took possession of the city; shortly after claiming the lower counties in the town of Cantwell's Bridge (Odessa). Penn renamed the three counties Kent, Sussex, and New Castle, and from then on they were known as the "Lower Counties of Pennsylvania." He called on the three Delaware Counties to elect representatives to meet in assembly in Chester. When the elected delegates met in 1682, it marked the beginning of a representative

government for Pennsylvania and Delaware. The delegates adopted a written constitution as well as a series of bylaws establishing a humane tolerant government that would represent the people who lived there.

Penn decided to allow the Assembly of the Three Lower Counties to meet separately from the Assembly for Pennsylvania in 1704. Penn's approval enabled Delaware's colonial assembly to establish and regulate courts in the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex. This decision to create Delaware's General Assembly led to the eventual development of Delaware as a separate state.

## Delaware and Independence

### The Lower Three Counties

Of the British colonies in America, Delaware, known as the “Lower Three Counties,” probably enjoyed the greatest degree of autonomy. The period between 1700 and 1750 was marked by a series of disagreements between Delaware’s General Assembly and that of the Quaker dominated assembly in Philadelphia. This continued after William Penn sailed to England in the fall of 1701, never to return to America.

More and more, Delaware favored the Proprietary over direct royal government. A major reason was Delaware’s shared interest with the Proprietary for the military defense of the Delaware River, an interest not shared by the Quakers in Philadelphia. Delaware was subjected to attacks by pirates and French and Spanish ships.

In 1732 an agreement was reached with Lord Baltimore on surveying the southern boundary of Delaware. The western boundary was surveyed by Mason and Dixon who had been brought from England for this purpose. After much disagreement, royal approval of the boundaries was received in 1769.

By 1720, Delaware experienced an influx of Scots-Irish dissatisfied with conditions in Ireland. Many of these settlers came as indentured servants. They added to the diversity of New Castle which already had populations of Dutch and Swedes. The largest minority group, however, was African, most enslaved. Many of these people came with settlers moving from Maryland into Delaware. Among the latter was Samuel Dickinson, who gave up his lands in Talbot County, Maryland to purchase land at Jones Neck, southeast of present day Dover.

In 1731, Thomas Willing, an English merchant, recognized the commercial value of locating a city on

the Christina River near the site of the older Swedish village. He sold lots and the city grew to ultimately surpass New Castle in size and commercial importance. Originally named “Wilmington,” the city was renamed “Wilmington” after the Earl of Wilmington.

### 1760 to 1776—Leading up to the Revolution

The French and Indian War (also known as the “Seven Year War”) began in North America as a conflict over land rights and ended there in 1760. It continued on until 1763 in Europe. Once the war was over, Great Britain had large debts, and in an effort to replenish the country’s supply of money decided to levy taxes on its American colonists.

Taxation began with the Sugar Act of 1764 which strengthened parliamentary control over colonial commerce. It was followed the next year by the Stamp Act passed by the British Parliament in 1765 which required that stamps be purchased in the colonies for use on legal documents, licenses and newspapers. The new tax was met with an immediate outcry from the colonists.

Soon after, the colonists organized a Stamp Act Congress which assembled in New York City in October 1765. Each state was encouraged to send representatives, nine out of the 13 colonies did so. Caesar Rodney and Thomas McKean represented Delaware, and both played an active role in framing protests to the British government in opposition to the Act. The assertion was that the British government did not have the right to tax the colonies without the colonist’s consent (and without representation in parliament). The proceedings of the Stamp Act Congress were conducted in secret. Nothing about the debates or opinions was recorded, nor any set of minutes of the proceedings produced.

On October 19, 1765 the delegates adopted a



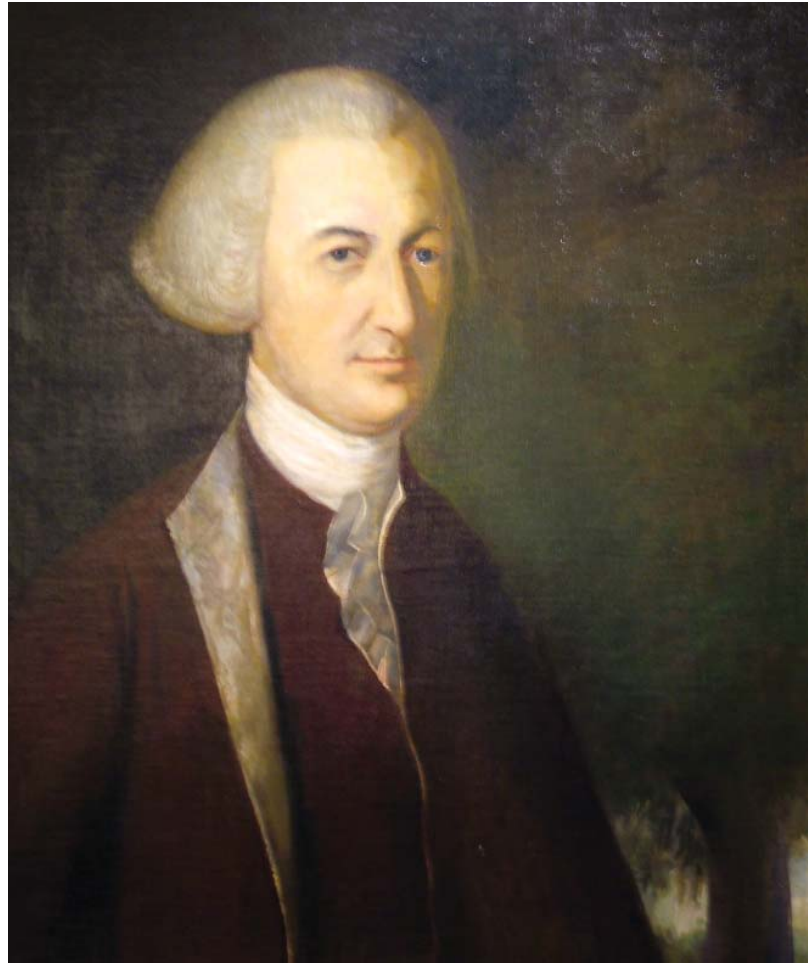
Declaration of Rights and Grievances. The delegates could not be convinced to affix their names to the document and only one signature appeared, the clerk of the Congress. During the next few days, the resolutions were redrafted into three petitions to the King, the Lords, and the Commons. Only six of the colonies agreed to adopt these petitions. McKean and Rodney reported back to the Delaware Assembly from the Congress in May 1766. In the meantime the Stamp Act was repealed, but the Delaware Assembly sent its resolutions to the King expressing its concern with the nature of the taxes.

In 1767 the British Parliament again tried to tax the colonies by creating the Townshend Acts. These laws placed a tax on common products imported into the American Colonies, such as lead, paper, paint, glass and tea. Once again, the Delaware Assembly drafted a protest and forwarded it to England. Delawareans decided to join with the other colonies in supporting a boycott, and stopped purchasing British goods.

### **John Dickinson's *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania***

John Dickinson, son of Samuel Dickinson, had moved from Delaware to Pennsylvania, and wrote a series of 12 essays entitled "*Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*" which helped raise support to repeal the Revenue Acts. Dickinson still maintained his property in Kent County, Poplar Hall, but only lived there for extended periods during 1776 and 1777, and 1781 and 1782, although he kept up a keen interest in the property and often visited.

Until his death in 1808, John Dickinson split his time between this country plantation that he inherited from his father, and his city homes in Philadelphia and later, Wilmington. Throughout that time, he played a key role in the birth of a new nation, the United States of America.



Portrait of John Dickinson. Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.

Dickinson, who began practicing law in Philadelphia in 1757, was active in the Pennsylvania Assembly, and later attended the Stamp Act Congress where his suggested resolutions were adopted with few changes. His *Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, written in 1767, eloquently argued the cause of American liberty and brought him fame. As a result, Dickinson was called upon for advice and inspiration in the years before the First Continental Congress. Although refusing to vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 as a member of the Second Continental Congress, believing that the colonies should secure a foreign alliance first, he supported the establishment of the new government during the American Revolution. He was a delegate



to the U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787, and subsequently elected President of Delaware, and President of Pennsylvania by their respective assemblies. The term was equivalent to that of governor. Among the wealthiest men in the American colonies, he became known as the “Penman of the Revolution.”

## Before the Revolution

The Townshend Acts were repealed in 1770 except for a continuing tax on imported tea. Smugglers, such as John Hancock of Boston, had profited by importing tea from Holland and avoiding the tax. But in 1773 the British Parliament removed the tea tax for the British East India Company so that it could undersell the smugglers and sell off the large stock of tea that had been building up in warehouses. The colonists saw this as a way to squash their freedom. In 1773 a ship loaded with tea traveled up the Delaware River to Chester, but when the captain witnessed the large demonstration of protestors, he turned around and returned to Britain without unloading.

In Boston the reaction to an incoming tea ship was more extreme. In December 1773 an assembly led by Samuel Adams gathered to rebel against a shipment of tea that was going to be unloaded at the harbor. A few people from the group dressed as Indians, attacked the tea ship and threw the cargo into the bay. This “Boston Tea Party” was one of the first rebellious acts that influenced the onset of the American Revolution.

Britain reacted by passing retaliatory acts, and demanded that the tea be paid for. These were labeled “Intolerable Acts” by the colonists, and in Delaware were eventually debated in the legislature. At the meetings, resolutions were passed condemning the “Intolerable Acts”, although many Delawareans continued to express loyalty to Great Britain.

The First Continental Congress was formed to coordinate the American response to the “Intolerable Acts” and met from September to October 1774. The Delaware Assembly which was meeting in New Castle chose George Read, Thomas McKean and Caesar Rodney to represent the Three Lower Counties at the Congress. The Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress, also known as the “Declaration of Colonial Rights” outlined colonial objections to the Intolerable Acts, listed a colonial bill of rights, and provided a detailed list of grievances.

The Declaration concluded with an outline of Congress’s future plans: *to enter into a boycott of British trade until their grievances were redressed, to publish addresses to the people of Great Britain and British America, and to send a petition to the King.* Vigilance committees were formed to enforce the boycott on trade with England. These “Committees of Inspection and Observation” were created in each of the three counties in Delaware.

When the Second Continental Congress was called in Philadelphia in March 1775, Read, McKean and Rodney were again appointed delegates. Fighting between the colonists and the British had already begun at Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts.

*The Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms* was a document prepared by the Second Continental Congress to explain to the world why the colonies took up arms against Great Britain. It was a combination of the work of Thomas Jefferson and John Dickinson. Jefferson completed the first draft, but it was perceived by the Continental Congress as too harsh and militant; Dickinson prepared the second. The final document combined the work of both men.

Frowned upon by many leaders, the Declaration described the actions of the British government that

angered the colonists, and justified the need to resist with arms. It did not proclaim a desire to break with the mother country, instead expressing the need to conserve old liberties and the old order *“in defence of the freedom that is our birth right and which we ever enjoyed until the late violation of it.”*

On June 14, 1775, Congress voted to create the Continental Army out of the militia units around Boston and quickly appointed George Washington of Virginia over John Hancock of Massachusetts as commanding general of the Continental Army. On July 6, 1775 Congress approved *“A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North America, now met in Congress at Philadelphia, setting forth the causes and necessity of their taking up Arms.”*

On July 8, Congress extended the “Olive Branch Petition,” a letter to the Royal Crown appealing to King George III to redress colonial grievances and prevent future bloodshed. John Dickinson rewrote an original draft by Thomas Jefferson. It was his hope, as a Quaker having a moral obligation to peaceful negotiations, that the colonies would reconcile their differences and the King would be inspired to negotiate with the colonists. The King rejected the petition, instead inspiring John Adams to rally his fellow radicals and push for independence.

Although it had no explicit legal authority to govern, the Continental Congress assumed all the functions of a national government, appointing ambassadors, signing treaties, raising armies, appointing generals, obtaining loans from Europe, issuing paper money (called “Continental”), and disbursing funds. The Congress had no authority to levy taxes, and was required to request money, supplies, and troops from the colonies to support the war effort.

In spring of 1776 British boats appeared in the Delaware Bay and began to harass other ships coming to and from the colonies. Two war ships, *Roebuck* and *Liverpool*, both heavily armed, sailed to the mouth of the Christina River. The Pennsylvania Committee of Safety assembled ships and a floating battery, and companies of the New Castle County militia gathered on shore. There was brief fighting, but the British ships withdrew without sailing to Philadelphia.

In Philadelphia, the Continental Congress voted on May 10 to recommend the formation of a new government in the colonies. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, a Virginia delegate, introduced a resolution for independence in the Continental Congress. On June 11, the Congress elected five men to write the declaration. Other delegates were encouraged to go home and consult with their respective legislatures.

In Delaware, the Committee of Inspection and Observation met at Dover on June 8, 1776. The Committee approved the recommendation by Congress to form a new state government, but rejected the proposal to put it into effect immediately.

The Delaware Assembly met on June 15 in New Castle and voted to sever ties with the crown. Until a new government was formed it was suggested that business could be directed by all three county representatives rather than in the name of the king. This made June 15th the official birth date of “Delaware State” or “separation day.” Also at that meeting the three lower counties recommended that the delegates to the Continental Congress should no longer work toward reconciliation with Britain. They were committed to gaining independence for the American people and the colonies. The following day, June 16 became the official day that Delaware separated from the state of Pennsylvania.

## Independence

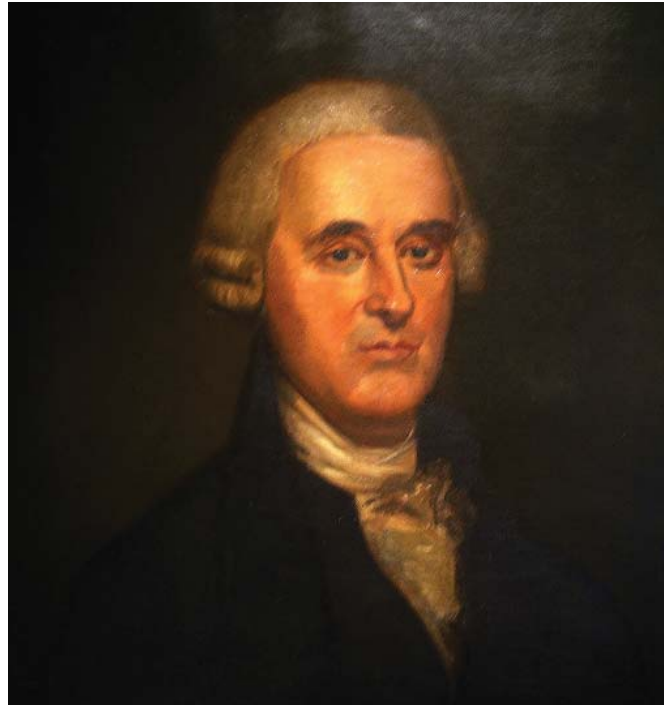
On July 1, 1776 the Continental Congress reconvened to discuss and sign the Declaration of Independence. Attending from Delaware were representatives Thomas McKean and George Read.

McKean who embraced the idea of independence, and was more radical in his philosophy, was ready to sign the document. Read, who was a conservative and had been influenced by his good friend John Dickinson (at that point a delegate from Pennsylvania), was not ready to commit to what he knew might be a long war. Thomas McKean sensed that the only way to get a majority delegation vote for independence was to send for Caesar Rodney in Dover. Rodney, a brigadier general of the Delaware militia, was in the midst of an expedition to Sussex where loyalists had gathered under arms. Rodney was able to convince them to disband.

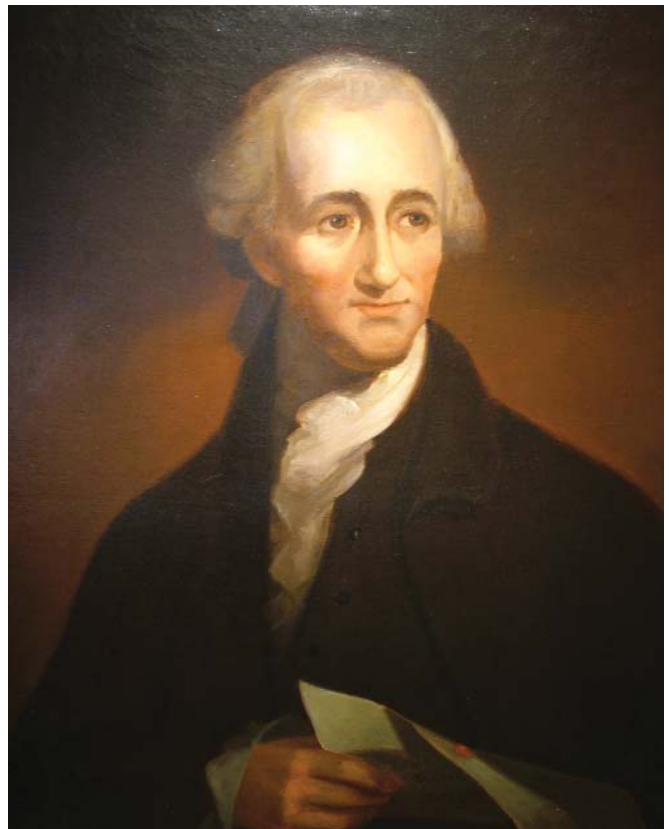
On the night of July 1st Rodney rode through the night and arrived in Philadelphia on the morning of July 2nd so that Delaware could have a majority to support and sign the Declaration of Independence. This legendary night time ride has become part of the annals of American history. The Declaration would have passed without Delaware's vote, but it would not have been unanimous.

Two more days were taken to approve the wording of the document, and the official approval took place on July 4th. The first celebration of independence in Delaware was in New Castle. That day, after the militia removed all of the insignias and "baubles of Royalty" and made a pile of them, they were burned in front of the Court House.

The Declaration of Independence was read to a crowd on July 24 in New Castle followed by the burning of a portrait of King George III. The state Constitutional Convention was scheduled for later that year in New Castle. Caesar Rodney, Speaker of the Assembly, urged



Portrait of Thomas McKean. Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.



Portrait of George Read. Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs.



Caesar Rodney by Ole Erikson, Engraver, c. 1876. Library of Congress.

each county to appoint ten delegates to attend.

That August at the New Castle Courthouse the Assembly met, and George Read was chosen as President. A committee prepared a Bill of Rights based on similar bills written in Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Constitution was written quickly and the convention deliberated over it for less than a month. The Delaware State Constitution was approved and adopted on September 20th. From that point onward September 20 has been celebrated as “Constitution Day” in the state.

The committee created a bicameral body with an upper house of nine members, the Legislative Council, and a lower house of 21 members, the House of Assembly. The two houses chose a president. This position was preferred over Governor because it was determined that a leader

would be *presiding* rather than *governing*, and would have no veto power. The president shared his power with a four-man privy council.

Additionally, there was a provision urging the banning of the importation of slaves from other countries. A bill of rights guaranteed freedom of the press and of religion, although only Christians were promised the right to participate in government. There was nothing said about freedom of speech.

### **The Revolutionary War in Delaware— Battle of Cooch’s Bridge**

The only revolutionary battle that occurred in the state of Delaware was fought on September 3, 1777 near Newark. General William Howe’s forces were on their way to Philadelphia and met a small band of rebels at Cooch’s Bridge. After this skirmish Howe’s troops fought and won the battle at Brandywine in Pennsylvania, and eventually went on to occupy Wilmington and then Philadelphia.

Earlier in the year General Howe had been repulsed by General George Washington at Trenton and Princeton in an effort to take Philadelphia. In the summer of 1777 he moved 15,000 men on 260 ships to Cecil County, Maryland. His plan was to approach Philadelphia by way of the Chesapeake since it was not as well protected as the Delaware. His troops disembarked on Elk Neck peninsula, then broke into two divisions and met up at present day Glasgow, Delaware.

The militia, which had 720 troops in the region led by William Maxwell, was instructed by General Washington “*to give them as much trouble as you possibly can.*”

The engagement began August 30th, two miles south of the bridge. The militia used guerrilla tactics learned from





The Cooch house. NPS photo.



Delaware State sign commemorating the famous battle of Cooch's Bridge. NPS photo.

the Indians. However, the Colonials, greatly outmanned and outgunned, were driven back by the advancing British. Howe's troops moved up the Newark/Glasgow road when "*pretty smart skirmishing*" occurred with the Americans. British and Hessian armies progressed until their lines extended from Aiken's Tavern (Glasgow) to Iron Hill and across the Christina River. They remained there for five days, and met the American troops at Cooch's Bridge on September 3rd.

It was there that a handpicked regiment of 100 marksmen under General William Maxwell laid an ambush in the

surrounding cover. During the ensuing battle, several British and Hessian charges were repelled, but the Americans soon depleted their ammunition and called a retreat.

Other sites where severe fighting occurred included Cooch's Mill (since demolished) which stood on the west side of Christina Creek, and served as a post. Howe's troops stayed in the area until September 6th and then moved northward. Property was taken by the British and several buildings were burned. General Cornwallis used the Cooch house, adjacent to the bridge and still standing today, as his headquarters for the next week as the British regrouped. There were approximately thirty American casualties.

Shortly after General Howe moved his troops out on September 11th, he defeated the Colonials in the Battle of Brandywine and then marched into Wilmington and occupied the city from mid-September until October 16, 1777. Meanwhile the British fleet sailed up the Delaware and reached Philadelphia, the rebel capital, in mid-November. The British occupied Philadelphia until June 1778. Even after they evacuated the city, a British ship remained off the coast of Cape Henlopen for many months.

The 1st Delaware Regiment was raised in 1775 for service with the continental army under the command of Colonel John Haslet. The regiment would see action in battles in New York, Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine and Germantown. The Delaware Regiment developed the name the "*Blue Hens' Chickens*," after the gamecocks known for their persistent fighting qualities.

## The Articles of Confederation

Two committees were established in May of 1776; one to write the Articles of Confederation, and the other to write the Declaration of Independence. John

Dickinson, as chairman of the committee for the articles of confederation drafted the first version, and afterward Congress decided to revise it. It was not distributed to the states until 1777.

The final draft of the Articles was written in the summer of 1777 and adopted by the Second Continental Congress on November 15, 1777 in York, Pennsylvania after a year of debate. In practice it served as the de facto system of government used by the Congress (*“the United States in Congress assembled”*) until it became law by final ratification on March 1, 1781. At that point Congress became the Congress of the Confederation. The Articles set the rules for operations of the *“United States”* confederation. The government was empowered to make war, negotiate diplomatic agreements, and resolve issues regarding the western territories; it could mint coins and borrow money inside and outside the United States.

The document would not become official until it was ratified by all thirteen colonies. The first state to ratify was Virginia on December 16, 1777. The ratification process dragged on for several years, stalled by the refusal of some states to rescind their claims to land in the West. The main concern with the Articles was that landless states (ones without extensive western claims) would have less influence in the new government. Because of the land claim issues, New Jersey and Delaware did not sign the articles of Confederation until 1779. Almost another three years passed before Maryland’s ratification on March 1, 1781. Confederation did not provide the government with the power to raise money by taxation or to control commerce.

In Delaware, the state assembly moved from New Castle in the spring of 1777 to Dover. Beginning in 1779 they moved around to different sites for two years until permanently locating in Dover, which in 1781 became the state capital.

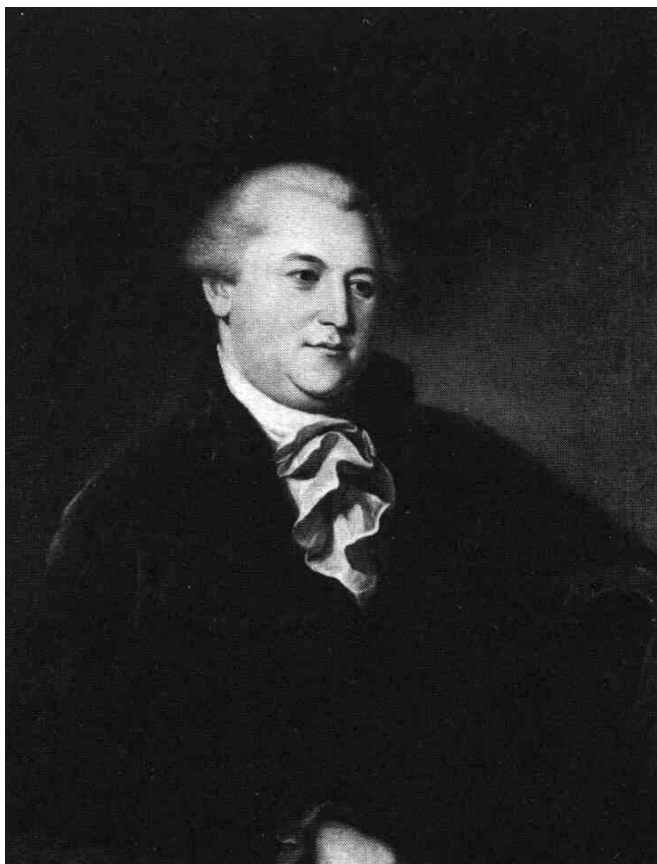
## The Constitution

The Philadelphia Convention of 1787, commonly known as the *“Constitutional Convention,”* took place from May 25 to September 17. It was intended as a meeting to revise the Articles of Confederation, but the objective of many of the Convention’s proponents, chief among them James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, was to create a new government rather than “fix” the existing one. The delegates elected George Washington to preside over the sessions.

Five delegates were chosen from Delaware, including John Dickinson, who was probably the most famous of the group and who had already been instrumental in drafting many important documents; George Read, who had served as the chairman of the Delaware Assembly and was the most insistent on equal representation; Richard Bassett, a wealthy landowner and lawyer; Gunning Bedford Jr., a graduate of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) and Delaware’s Attorney General; and Jacob Broom, a young manufacturer from Wilmington.

The central controversy at the Convention was how states would be represented in Congress. Virginia, the state with the largest land mass and population, was pushing for proportional representation. Delaware and other small states resisted this vehemently.

Gunning Bedford, Jr. was among the most vocal proponents of the need to provide equal representation to the states, and in limiting the authority of the government. He strongly supported the New Jersey Plan, authored by that state’s governor William Paterson, which provided for equal representation. Bedford threatened other delegates by stating that small states may have to seek foreign alliances for their own protection. As the conflict over representation continued, however, Bedford realized that his position threatened the potential for a union. He agreed to participate on the committee that



Gunning Bedford Jr. NPS photo.

ultimately drafted the Great Compromise whereby the House of Representatives would represent each state's population, the Senate would represent states equally, and a strong executive role would be given to the President.

Bedford resigned his Attorney General's position in 1789, but remained active in work for educational improvements in Delaware and served as President of Wilmington College. He was also the first Grand Master of the Delaware Masonic Lodge.

George Read, on the other hand, argued for a new national government and led the fight for a strong central government, even advocating the abolition of the states. He proclaimed, "Let no one fear the states, the people are with us." Lacking support for his position, Read joined those advocating for the protection of small states.

He threatened to lead the Delaware delegation from the convention if the rights of small states were not included. Once the Great Compromise was agreed to, Read became the leader of the ratification movement in Delaware. He served as one of Delaware's first United States senators.

As a Senator, Read continued to support the notion of a strong central government concurring with assumption of state debts, establishment of a national bank, and the assessing of excise taxes. He resigned his Senate seat to become Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court and served in that office until his death in New Castle on September 21, 1798.

Jacob Broom, who had not been previously involved in government, like Read was a proponent of a strong central government. In 1783, he advised George Washington, who was visiting Wilmington, to "contribute your advice and influence to promote that harmony and union of our infant governments which are so essential to the permanent establishment of our freedom, happiness and prosperity." During the convention, Broom supported actions that would create an effective central government. He advocated a nine-year term for members of the Senate with equal representation from each state, and a life term of office for the President.

On September 17, 1787 the Constitution was completed in Philadelphia. Article VII of the Constitution and resolutions adopted by the convention detailed a four-stage ratification process:

- 1) submission of the Constitution to the Confederation Congress,
- 2) transmission of the Constitution by that Congress to the state legislatures,
- 3) election of delegates to conventions in each state to consider the Constitution, and
- 4) ratification by the conventions of at least nine of the thirteen states.



On September 28, 1787, after three days of bitter debate, the Confederation Congress sent the Constitution to the states with neither an endorsement nor a condemnation. After the convention John Dickinson wrote a series of nine essays promoting the ratification of the Constitution under the pen name, Fabius. The states nearest to Philadelphia obviously had the advantage of deliberating the new Constitution sooner than those who needed to travel a lengthy distance.

The Golden Fleece Tavern in Dover, Delaware, built in 1730 on Dover Green, was a center for community and government activities. It was a place of great importance during the American Revolution. Also known as Battell's Tavern, it hosted the meetings of the Committee of Inspection and Observation charged with enforcing the English trade boycott, and was a vital point for the exchange of wartime communications.

With the transfer of state government from New Castle to Dover in 1777, the Golden Fleece became the meeting place of the Assembly's Upper House, the Legislative Council. It was the home of that body until the Delaware State House was completed in 1791. In September 1787, when the constitution was sent to the

states for consideration, thirty delegates were elected in Delaware to meet and review the document. The meeting was convened on December 3. Approval was unanimous, and on December 7, 1787, Delaware became the first state in the new nation to ratify the Federal Constitution. Pennsylvania was the second state to ratify, and New Jersey the third.

The new national government was inaugurated in 1789, and the Delaware Assembly called for the election of a convention to rewrite its own state constitution. When it was completed in 1792 the name changed from the Delaware State to the state of Delaware. The two houses became the Senate and the House of Representatives, the former title of "President" became "Governor."

## Early Settlement and Statehood Resources

Delaware is fortunate to have a number of nationally significant and important resources associated with its period of European settlement and its role as the first state of the nation. Together, these resources have the potential for providing increased public understanding and appreciation of Delaware's contributions to the history of the United States.

### The New Castle National Historic Landmark District <sup>3</sup>

New Castle on the Delaware, six miles south of Wilmington, is the oldest town in the Delaware River Valley. Once possessing a fine natural harbor for large vessels, the town was situated in a commanding position with a sweeping view of the Delaware River. Founded in 1651 by Peter Stuyvesant as the seat of the New Netherland government on the Delaware River, it received its present name in 1664 when it was seized by the British. The street patterns from the original Dutch layout can be found today. Potentially within the District



Site of the Golden Fleece Tavern on the Dover Green. NPS photo.





Aerial view of current day New Castle. NPS photo.

are the archeological remains of Fort Casimir.<sup>4</sup> William Penn received the colony in 1682 and it was here that he first arrived in America. New Castle was the colonial capital until 1776, and very briefly, in 1776-77, the state capital of Delaware. The many historic buildings illustrate a broad range of architectural history, extending from Colonial through the Federal era. A large number of well-preserved original buildings survive, set in a historic scene that has almost no modern intrusions. The streets and the broad green preserve the work of seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth-century builders, maintaining the atmosphere and character of a mid-eighteenth century town.

New Castle contains a large number of surviving historic houses in a geographically confined space. Nearly all of the structures are well preserved and being used for purposes in keeping with their historical character as residences and small shops. The Green, bounded by Delaware, Market, Harmony, and 3rd Streets, was originally the Public Square laid out during the Dutch period. Beyond the dense nucleus of historic buildings bounded by The Strand, Harmony Street, Third Street and Delaware Street, there are a number of buildings typical of the early and mid-19th centuries which continue the historic and residential character of the district.

*The Colonial State House and Courthouse* still dominates the Green and the old town. Built of brick in various stages during two centuries, the building has recently undergone restoration (see description below.)

The arcaded octagonal cupola of this building formed the center of the twelve mile circle which determined the arc of the northern boundary of the colony and state of Delaware.



Commemorative Plaque at site of William Penn's landing site, New Castle. NPS photo.

*The George Read House*, Number 30 the Strand, erected in 1797-1801, is an outstanding example of late Georgian-early Federal dwelling. Read was the son of George Read, Sr., who participated in the Constitutional Convention. The monumental entrance doorway with its great fanlight above and glazed panels at the sides, and the Palladian window above the entrance doorway create an imposing brick edifice of great distinction. A curved balcony of delicate ironwork and the fine carving on much of the exterior woodwork add refinement of detail which gives special elegance to this building. The secondary and tertiary facades are equally impressive. At the time of its



The New Castle Green. NPS photo.



The Arsenal Building in New Castle. NPS photo.



The Amstel House, New Castle. NPS photo.



The George Read House, New Castle.  
NPS photo.



Old Dutch House, New Castle. NPS photo.

construction, the 22 room, 14,000 square-foot mansion was the largest house in Delaware. It is considered one of the most superb examples of its type to be found in the Middle Colonies.

*The Amstel House*, erected in two steps between 1706 and 1738 and made of local brick laid in Flemish bond with a belt course and water table, is a well-preserved example of a typical early Georgian mansion. It contains original woodwork and fine architectural details. The mansion served as the home of Delaware Governor Nicholas

Van Dyke in the 1780s. It was frequented by visitors including signers of the Declaration of Independence and General George Washington. The Amstel House interprets 18th and 19th century life in New Castle, and exhibits many artifacts and antiques associated with the town's early history.

*The Old Dutch House*, constructed sometime between 1698 and 1704, is a fine example of a restored Dutch Colonial with low pent eaves and an overlarge central chimney. Probably built by Powell Barends, the walls on





New Castle Court House. NPS photo.

the ground floor are brick, while the upper floor is of timber construction.

There are many fine structures which line The Strand, some of which were inns at the time when it was a busy waterfront street. The street was lowered in 1803 and the additions of steps and porches can be seen on several of the houses. Opening off The Strand is Packet Alley. A wharf once existed there to service packet boats that would dock when New Castle was a link between Washington, D.C. and points north.

Other notable period structures within the district include:

- Van Leuvenigh House, built in 1765 in the Georgian style, altered about 1840 to include Greek Revival features.
- Booth House, a brick and frame house built in three stages between 1720 and 1795, with many early Georgian characteristics.
- “William Penn” House, a three-story structure built circa 1682 and altered in the 18th century.
- Colby or Rosemont House, a small two-story with attic brick residence built circa 1675.
- Gunning Bedford house, built by Dutch settler Jon Van Gezel circa 1730, was home to

Delaware’s 11th governor, Gunning Bedford, cousin of Gunning Bedford, Jr.

- McIntire or Williams House, a small two-story brick house built circa 1690.
- Presbyterian Church built in 1707.
- Immanuel Church, built between 1703-10 with tower and spire added in 1820-22.

*New Castle Court House*,<sup>5</sup> located in the heart of the New Castle Historic District, is one of the oldest surviving court houses in the United States and a National Historic Landmark. The original, central section of the building was constructed in 1732 over the remains of Delaware’s first court house (first constructed in 1689). In that same year, the building’s cupola was designated as the center of a 12-mile radial circular boundary, creating Delaware’s unique curved northern border. Additions and modifications were made to the building throughout the 18th and 19th centuries including the addition of the left and right wings.

From 1704 until May 1777, the first and second courthouses served as the seat of government of the Lower Three Counties of Delaware. In the court house’s Assembly Room, legislators passed a resolution on June 15, 1776 separating from Great Britain and Pennsylvania, creating the Delaware State. Two months later on September 20, 1776, the first Constitution for the “Delaware State” was adopted. The building continued to serve as the state capitol until 1777 when governmental functions were transferred to Dover as a precaution against attack from British warships in the Delaware River.

Located on the southeast corner of the New Castle Common, facing Delaware Street, the New Castle Court House is a two and one half story, early Georgian style brick building. The building is composed of three sections built between circa 1730 and 1845. The oldest

section of the building is the central, five bay block which was built between 1730 and 1731. The four bay wide east wing section was built in two stages, 1765 and 1802. The west wing was constructed in 1845. The building has been modified for several different uses since the State and Federal Court system left the building in 1881. It currently is open for visitation and has been recently restored.



Restored court room in the New Castle Court House. NPS photo.

The deck-on-gable roof is surmounted by an eight-sided frame cupola detailed with a dome that is supported by an open arcade of round arches with keystones and springers. The roof deck has a wood balustrade across the full width that terminates in brick piers. A tall thin metal spire with an orb and arrow weathervane caps the cupola.

Facing southwest, the facade of the court house is composed of three sections. The central projecting five bay section is the earliest portion of the building. The brickwork of the central section is laid in Flemish bond. The openings are symmetrically arranged with a central entry flanked by two 16/16 wood windows on either

side on the first floor. The windows on the first floor display radiating jack arch lintels while the second floor window lintels are a simple row lock. Three marble steps provide access to the entrance frontispiece. The surround consists of half-round Doric pilasters supporting a full entablature and pediment. The paneled double leaf door is surmounted by a ten pane transom. On the second floor, a Juliette balcony in the central bay has a balustrade similarly detailed to the one at the roof line. It is accessed by a single-leaf paneled door and is flanked by two 12/12 wood windows on either side. An unusual decorative corbeled belt course occurs between the floor levels. This single course runs horizontally at the upper level of the lintels on the first floor windows.

Until the removal of the courts to Wilmington in 1881 as a result of the changing of the county seat, all jurisdictions of Delaware's courts, including the Federal Court, had met in the New Castle Court House.

### Fort Christina, Wilmington<sup>6</sup>

The wharf of rocks which was the site of the first landing and the heart of the first Swedish settlement in North America is preserved in the two acres comprising Fort Christina State Park. The ledge of rocks is still partially visible although much of the natural formation is covered by a plaza surrounding the monument commemorating the first Swedish settlement.

The monument, of black Swedish granite, consists of a shaft designed by the late Swedish sculptor Carl Milles, and is surmounted by a stylized representation of the *Kalmar Nyckel*, one of the two ships that first brought the Swedes to Delaware. The treatment of the park is formal, with high brick walls on two sides, an iron fence and an ornamental iron gateway on the third, and with the Christina River forming the boundary of the fourth side. There is also a re-created log cabin located within the park representing the Swedish settlement. Archeological





The "landing site" at Fort Christina State Park, Wilmington. NPS photo.

investigations have not been undertaken at this point to determine the actual location of the fort and other structures related to the New Sweden complex.

Historically and geographically, Fort Christina was the heart of New Sweden, and its site is the most important physical link with the time more than three centuries ago when Swedes settled on the "South River". Although not situated directly on the Delaware, Fort Christina remained a principal center of Swedish settlement, even during the 10-year period when Governor Printz ruled from his headquarters on Tinicum Island, some 15 miles north on the Delaware River. When New Sweden fell to the Dutch in the bloodless conquest of 1655 a few of New Netherland's soldiers were posted at Fort Christina, called by then "Fort Altena" by the Dutch.

### **Holy Trinity (Old Swedes') Church, Wilmington<sup>7</sup>**

Although largely English in architectural design, Holy Trinity Church, erected 1698-99, is the oldest surviving church built by and for a Swedish congregation in the Delaware Valley, and the oldest church building standing as originally built in the United States. No other structure is so closely related historically and geographically to the pioneer Swedish settlement on the Christina River, and none has retained its architectural integrity to such a degree. Although its construction postdates by many years the fall of New Sweden in 1655, the church was built while Swedish heritage was still a dominant influence in Delaware.

The cornerstone of the present church was laid on May 28, 1698. John Yard, assisted by his sons, Joseph, William and John, contracted to do the masonry; the carpenter was John Smart and the joiner, John Harrison, all from Philadelphia. On June 4, 1699, the Reverend Eric Bjork, a Swedish Lutheran missionary, consecrated the completed building.



The monument designed by Carl Milles at Fort Christina State Park. NPS photo.



Old Swedes Church, Wilmington. NPS photo.

The church, measuring 66 by 36 feet, was originally a rectangular structure with hooded gable ends. Built of native graystone and plain on the exterior, the walls were 3 feet thick and 20 feet high. The doors were located at the middle of each side and the walls were also pierced by one large and four smaller arched windows, which were glazed by a Hollander named Lenard Osterson. All four exterior walls were adorned by inscriptions, in unusual Latin abbreviations, set in iron letters made by Matthias de Foss. The steep-gabled roof was concealed inside by a hung ceiling of low segmental shape, with lath nailed to the arch of the roof. A smooth coat of plaster covered both the interior walls and vault. Both pews and a red brick floor, herringboned to form a central aisle, complete this simple interior. The site contains a burial ground used since the Swedes landed in the area in 1638. Portions of the original burial ground lie beneath the church structure.

### John Dickinson House, Dover<sup>8</sup>

The John Dickinson House, generally known as *Poplar Hall*, is located on the John Dickinson Plantation and was built on a 13,000 acre farm in 1739 to 1740 by Judge Samuel Dickinson, the father of John Dickinson. It is an excellent restored example of an Early Georgian residence, and eventually became the dwelling of the adult John Dickinson, the “Penman of the Revolution.” The house faced a nearby bend of the St. Jones River which disappeared later when the river was straightened. This house illustrates what may be called the “telescope” type of planning, in which a series of smaller wings are added to the main house at later dates. This mansion is a five-bay two-story structure and is built of Flemish bond with black glazed headers. There is a wide central hall with a large parlor to the east and two smaller rooms each with an angle fireplace to the left or west. The cellar of the main house, which is almost ground level and well lighted, originally contained a large storage room to the east, a wine cellar under the front door, and scullery and kitchen at the west end. To the west the lower wings step down from the main house on the same axis. The first of these wings was added in 1752 and contained a dining room with a bedroom above. The smallest and westernmost wing was added in 1754. With whitewashed walls and a brick-columned arcade, this



John Dickinson House. NPS photo.





John Dickinson Plantation. NPS photo.

section contained a kitchen and quarters for an enslaved household servant above it.

The mansion faces directly south and though well lighted, has only three windows on the north side. This arrangement was planned to conserve heat in the winter. The main house, as Judge Dickinson built it, was three stories in height over a high basement, and had a hipped roof. The first floor windows, which are unusually tall, still reflect the original design that was proper for such a Georgian three-story house.

In 1804 a disastrous fire occurred, which partially destroyed the fine original interior woodwork and paneling. When John Dickinson repaired the damage, he reduced the main house to its present two stories and covered it with a gabled roof. The original interior woodwork was also replaced in 1806 by substantial, but plain, material that was in keeping with its intended use as a tenant house.

### **Stonum (George Read House), New Castle<sup>9</sup>**

George Read, born in Maryland and educated in Philadelphia, became one of two or three of the most significant figures in Delaware political affairs from



Stonum-George Read House. NPS photo.

the late 1760s until the 1790s. He served Delaware in a variety of ways during the Revolutionary period. He attended the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Following the establishment of the new national government, Read served four years in the United States Senate, then returned to Delaware to become the state's Chief Justice. A resident of the New Castle vicinity for almost 45 years, Read's only extant home is Stonum which served as his country retreat in the 1750s and 60s.

The structure has been subdivided into apartments since the NHL nomination was completed and the study team was unable to gain access to verify if all interior elements of the nomination remain current. The present owners of the house have indicated that the structural improvements for apartment units have not impacted the integrity of the interior and are fully removable. They are soon to restore the house as a single family dwelling.

The 1973 nomination described the resource as follows: the oldest portion of Stonum, the part to the right-rear which is now occupied by the kitchen, dates from around 1730. There is a nine-foot door connecting with the main wing in front, probably the original entrance. It is situated in a direct line with the present front door. The front portion of the house was built sometime

prior to 1769 when George Read sold his country property, though whether during or prior to his period of ownership is not certain.

The country place commanded a fine view of the Delaware (a view long since screened out by development along the river). A two and one-half story house with a four-bay facade, the plan was basically L-shaped, though with a rather unconventional floor plan. There is no staircase in the axial hall, perhaps because it is uncommonly narrow. Instead, the stairs run on the inner wall of the east corner room, the foot being to the right of the original front door. These stairs have an open stringer, molded handrail and balusters and paneled wainscoting.

In 1850, a room was added in the northwest corner, in the crook of the L. The wall abutting on the main wing has an unusual “bite” taken out of it, in order to avoid blocking the corner rear window of the main wing. Besides the 1850 addition, there are other obvious impositions on the integrity. Most of the original brick superstructure was stuccoed and painted, the roofs are of sheet metal, and there is a large cinder-block front porch which was added in the 1920s. Yet in many ways Stonum is remarkably unchanged.

Noteworthy original features of the main wing are the corner fireplaces, the detailed woodwork and elegant mantles, the 1-1/2-inch red pine flooring, the wooden cornice with its modillion course, and the exceptionally high 9 over 9 windows of the façade. Only one significant structural change has been made inside, the removal of the wall between the hall and the right-hand room on the first floor of the main wing.

Since the foremost house associated with Read (the house on The Strand in New Castle) was destroyed 150 years ago, Stonum stands as the most significant structure commemorating his life.

### **Lombardy Hall (Gunning Bedford, Jr. House), Wilmington<sup>10</sup>**

In 1785, Gunning Bedford, Jr. purchased a 250-acre farm named “Pizgah” from Charles Robinson, a great-grandson of the grantee of William Penn’s “Manor of Rocklands.” A small stone house stood on the farm dating from 1750 or shortly before. It consisted of four rooms, two on each floor, with a right-side entrance and a hallway connecting the front and rear doors. Behind a wall cupboard in a rear room on the ground floor there remains the lintel of an old doorway, which suggests that the interior originally lacked paneling. As for the severely plain exterior, Eherlein and Hubbard have noted that *“the absence of outside architectural amenities on a presumably Georgian body is suggestive of a prevalent Quaker influence.”*<sup>11</sup>

Bedford occupied the house in 1793, renaming it Lombardy Hall. Although he kept his town house at 606 Market Street in Wilmington he resided at Lombardy periodically for the remainder of his life. He effected one major change, the southern addition consisting of a ballroom downstairs and two bedrooms above, thereby creating a symmetrical five-bay facade. The Brandywine gabbro stone in the “Bedford section” was skillfully matched to the older portion, although the location of



Lombardy Hall, House of Gunning Bedford, Jr. Lombardy Hall Foundation photo.



the original south wall is evident from the vertical line of mortar in both the facade and in the fieldstone north wall. The exterior dimensions of the house are 30 by 46 feet, and the entire tract now comprises about one and one half acres.

Since 1968 Lombardy Hall has been owned by the Lombardy Hall Foundation, an affiliate of the Wilmington Masonic Order, whose interest in Bedford stems from his having been the first Grand Master of the Delaware Masons. The exterior has been restored to much the way it looked in Bedford's time (except for a lodge meeting hall addition to the south side attached to the ballroom). Chimneys have been repaired and seven new flues installed. The slate roof has been replaced, as have the front door, most of the 3 over 9 windows, and the shutters. The modillions have been restored, and two non-original windows of the north wall filled in. The original chair rails, cornice moldings, stairs, banisters, and much of the paneling are in good condition. In the ballroom there is a mantel that is delicately carved and shelved at each end. The only significant interior alteration is the addition of a bathroom off one of the second floor rooms. The basement has been rehabilitated for meeting and social occasion space.

The Foundation restored the structure in 1986, and continues to restore sections as funds are available. The structure is open to the public by appointment and serves as a museum of Delaware Masonic history, as well as Bedford memorabilia.

### **Jacob Broom House, Montchanin<sup>12</sup>**

Jacob Broom was one of Delaware's leading entrepreneurs of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, being especially active in real estate, construction, and commerce. He was also a pioneer industrialist in the Wilmington area, establishing the first mill on the Brandywine in 1795. In addition, Broom participated in local and state politics,



Jacob Broom House at Hagley. NPS photo.

and as a member of the five-man Delaware contingent which attended the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 and signed the Federal Constitution.

The house Jacob Broom built in 1795 about a quarter-mile west of the Brandywine River still comprises part of the mansion called "Hagley" in the community of Montchanin. It is the last extant structure significantly associated with Broom. In 1802, Broom sold his Brandywine property, including this house, to E.I. du Pont, founder of the du Pont chemical empire in the state of Delaware, and it has been in the du Pont family ever since. The Broom section, four bays and two-and-one-half stories, now comprises the left-hand portion of the house including, the main entrance.

During the 19th century, a large wing was added on the north side, and photographs taken towards the end of that century show the house with ornate decorations and gaudy embellishments on the dormers of the Broom section. Though the latter could still be easily identified, it was virtually submerged in these adaptations to contemporary taste. Subsequently, the adornments and the entire left-hand wing were removed, and a substantial wing added on the south side. This was clearly designed to harmonize with the original structure, and, while the

overall aspect of the house is unmistakably elegant, the style remains the plain vernacular of Jacob Broom's initial concept. The home is maintained as a private residence.

## Dover Green, Dover

In 1697, a court house was built at the site of the current day Dover Green, but it was not until 1717 that Dover was plotted around this central space. It was laid out in accordance with William Penn's 1683 orders. Craftsmen and artisans such as cabinet makers, shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, and hatters shared the green with government officials and residents, as well as several inns and taverns. An Act of Assembly in 1742 provided for the establishment of a market square.

In 1777, Dover became the capital of Delaware, largely because it was deemed safer from attack than the old capital, New Castle. Ten years later, in the Golden Fleece Tavern on the Green, a Delaware convention ratified the Federal Constitution. Because it was the first to ratify, Delaware became known as "the First State." Also on the Green, Delaware mustered a Continental Regiment during the Revolution, and celebrated the reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The Dover Green Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The Dover Green. NPS photo.

## Endnotes

- 1 Jenkins, Howard M. (Ed.), *Pennsylvania: Colonial and Federal: A History 1608-1903*, Pennsylvania Historical Publishing Association, Philadelphia 1903.
- 2 Johnson, Amandus, *The Swedes on the Delaware, 1638-1664*. Lenape Press, 1915. Original from Harvard University.
- 3 Discussions on resources are primarily drawn from the *National Historic Landmark Statement of Significance, 1967* with modifications or additions.
- 4 Heite, Edward F. and Louise B., *Report of Phase 1 Archeological and Historical Investigations at the Site of Fort Casimir, New Castle, Delaware*, Prepared for the Trustees of the New Castle Commons, September 1986
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- 11 Eberlein, H.D., and C.V.D. Hubbard, *Historic Houses and Buildings of Delaware, Dover*, 1963.
- 12 Discussions on resources are primarily drawn from the *National Historic Landmark Statement of Significance, 1974*, with modifications or additions.