

## **Preface**

The arrival of the railroad marks the clear end of one Delaware era and the beginning of another. Prior to 1832, any of its business owners needing to get a sizable quantity of goods to Philadelphia, the closest major market, were forced to ship them via water.

It was impractical to cross the Delmarva north by land to reach Philadelphia or east to access Maryland ports oriented to Baltimore, the next closest market. The overland route was a dense tangle of marshes and undergrowth, roads were narrow and unreliable, and no wagon could compete with a ship for the amount of available cargo space. These realities shaped where towns arose along the Delaware Bay, how well they thrived, and what industries dominated.

The appearance of the New Castle & French Town Railroad in the early 19th century hurled Delaware society towards a complete re-orientation from sea to land travel.

If one looks hard enough, traces of the early Delaware maritime era can be seen all around. Modern development has taken longer to reach the Delmarva peninsula, largely cut off from the mainland until the Chesapeake Bay Bridge was built.

Consequently, Delaware's stock of colonial structures has for the most part remained undisturbed far longer than many other colonial era states. Its key historical sites are more readily accessible today. This book attempts to show the reader as much, with current photographs. They trace Delaware history from 1638-1832. This period encompasses the first Swedish explorers setting foot on this peninsula's shores, to the appearance of the first railroad.

Tucked in around this time line you'll find sidebars explaining various colonial era traditions such as blacksmithing, clock making, and hunting/fishing/trapping, to name a few.

I hope you enjoy taking this journey as much as I enjoyed assembling it for you.