

# Industry in Historic New Castle??

YES. New Castle industries have come and gone since 1833

They brought people and jobs. As with Wilmington (think Bancroft Mills, Astra Zeneca and Du Pont divisions), when the jobs left, so did many of the people.

New Castle had factories for making:

railroad engines

iron pipe

anchors

gloves, shirts, umbrellas

rayon fabric

hardened steel for railroad switches and brakes

bulk polypropylene for bottles etc

flour

cotton and woolen fibers

illuminating gas

artillery shells

vulcanized fiber

In 1870 a fiber mill was the major employer in town (outside of domestic work).

In 1920 the major employers were steel mills.

# Industry in Historic New Castle??

YES. New Castle industries have come and gone since 1833

AND, between ~1850 and ~1980 industrial jobs were the major sources of income to townspeople.

REPLACING the state and local court and legal jobs which had moved to Dover and Wilmington.

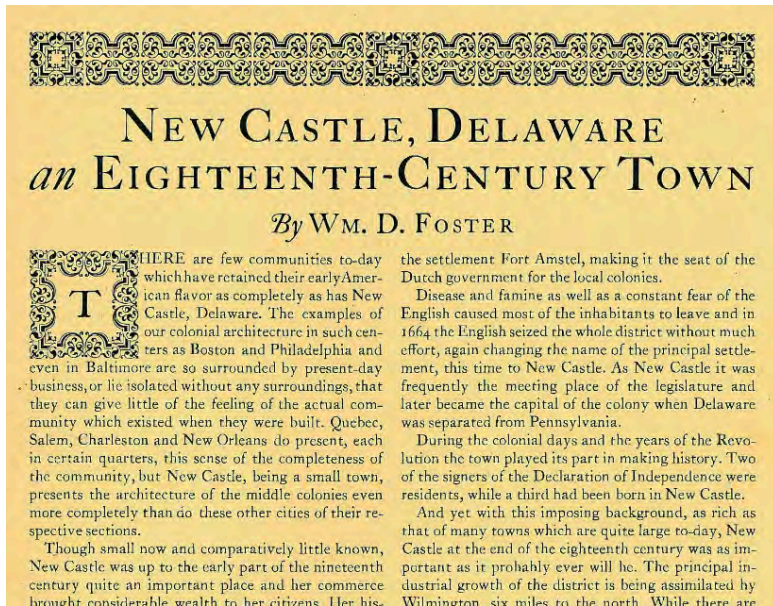
New Castle became known for its historic core after the 1920's, but history never replaced the industrial jobs that continued to disappear into the '80s, never to reappear.

# Industry in Historic New Castle??

It was somehow invisible -- in a 1926 view (and now??)

New Castle, Delaware, an Eighteenth-Century Town

Wm. D. FOSTER White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs



THERE are few communities to-day which have retained their early American flavor as completely as has New Castle, Delaware...

While there are some factories with their resultant nondescript housing, they are all grouped near the branch-line railroad which comes in to the west of the town proper. The compact older portion is still complete and removed from too much "progress."

# Industrial sites in New Castle before 1900

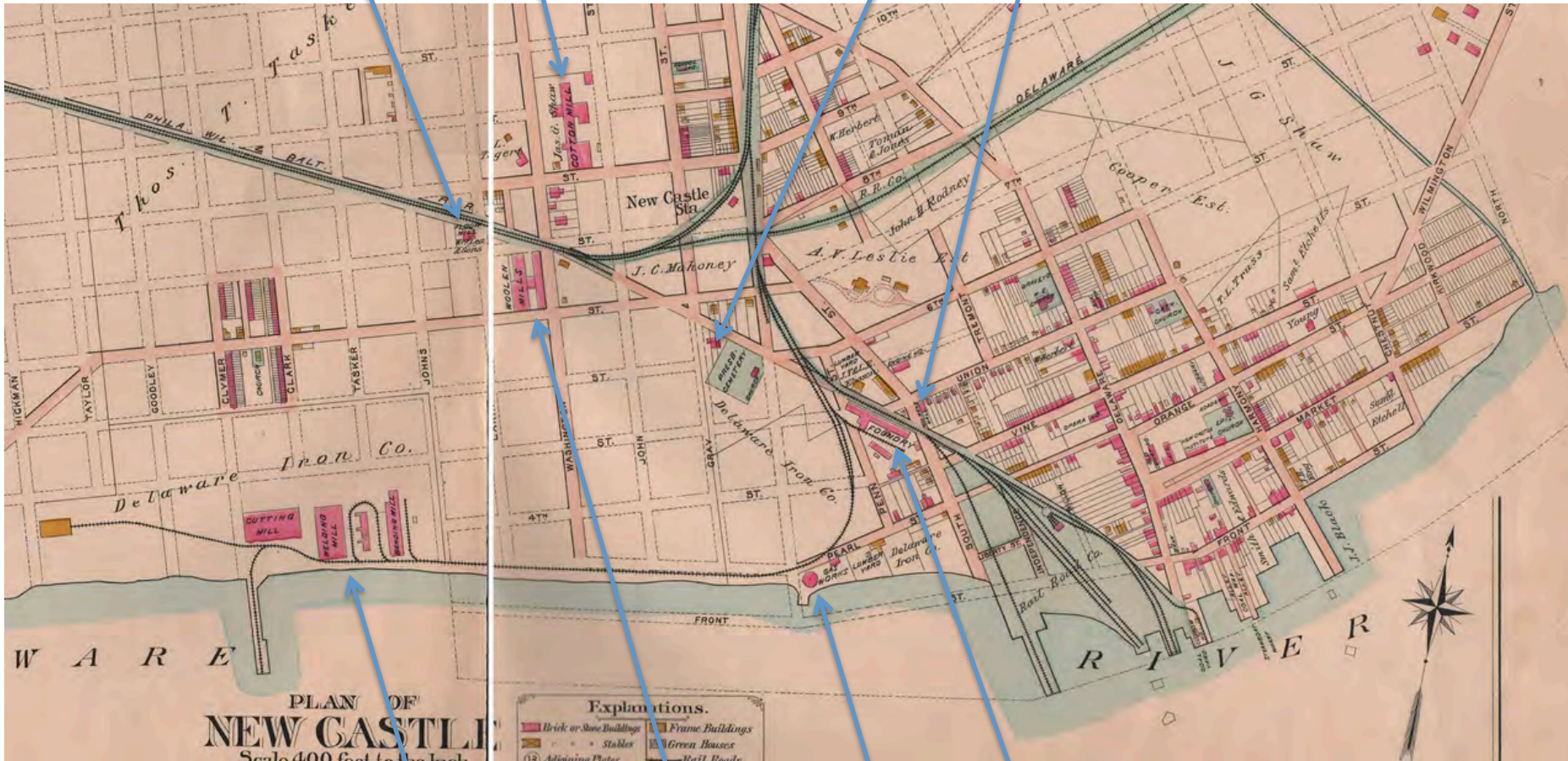
Later industries were north and east of town: Bellanca, Baldt & Brylgon Steel

Flour mill

Triton/Shaw cotton mill  
Tasker/Deemer steel

Umbrella factory  
Glove factory

Baist Atlas, 1893



Tasker iron/  
National Tube

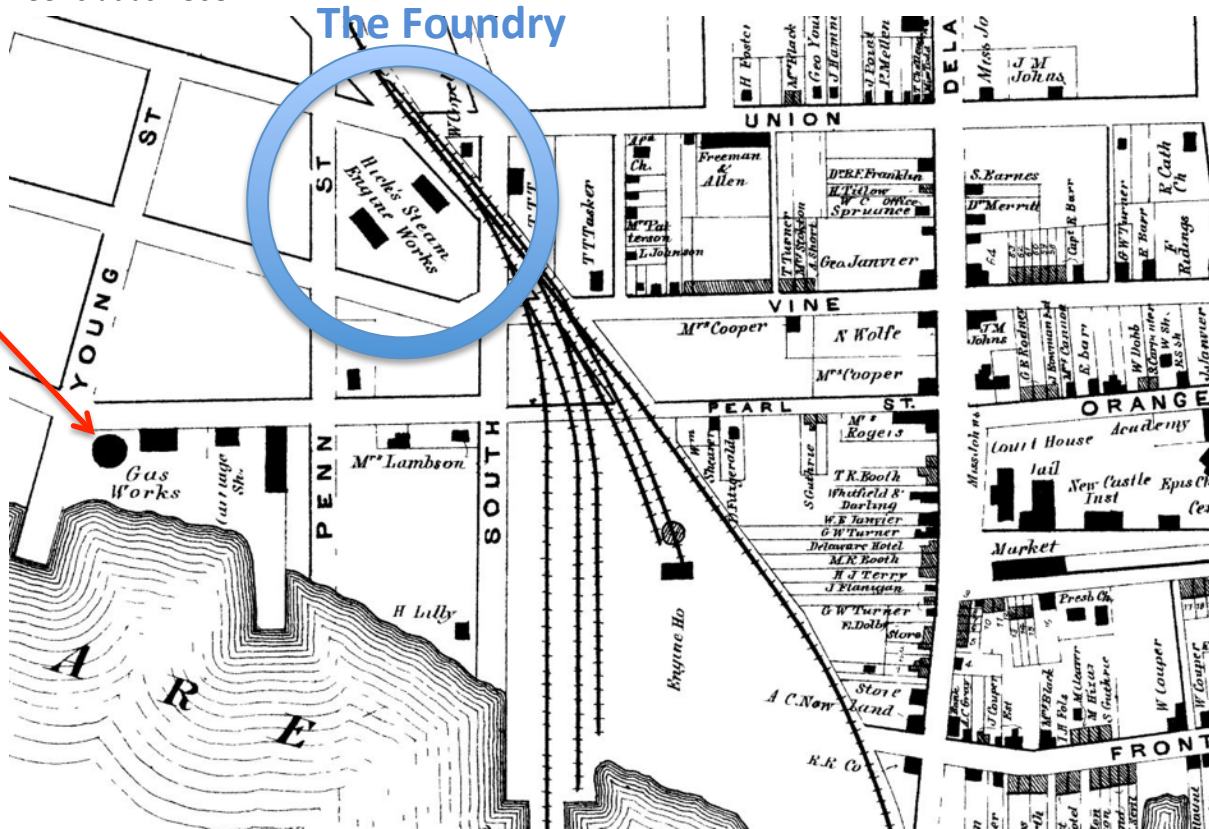
Woolen mill/  
Wilmington Fibre

Gas plant

New Castle Manufacturing/  
Hicks Engine Works/ 'the foundry'

# The First Heavy Industry in New Castle: New Castle Manufacturing Company/Hicks Engine Works

Beer's atlas 1868



Initially not for engines: founded in 1833 for cotton, wool, grain, plaster of Paris...

In 1837 the company started to make engines on contract to RR. It had produced 11 by 1840.



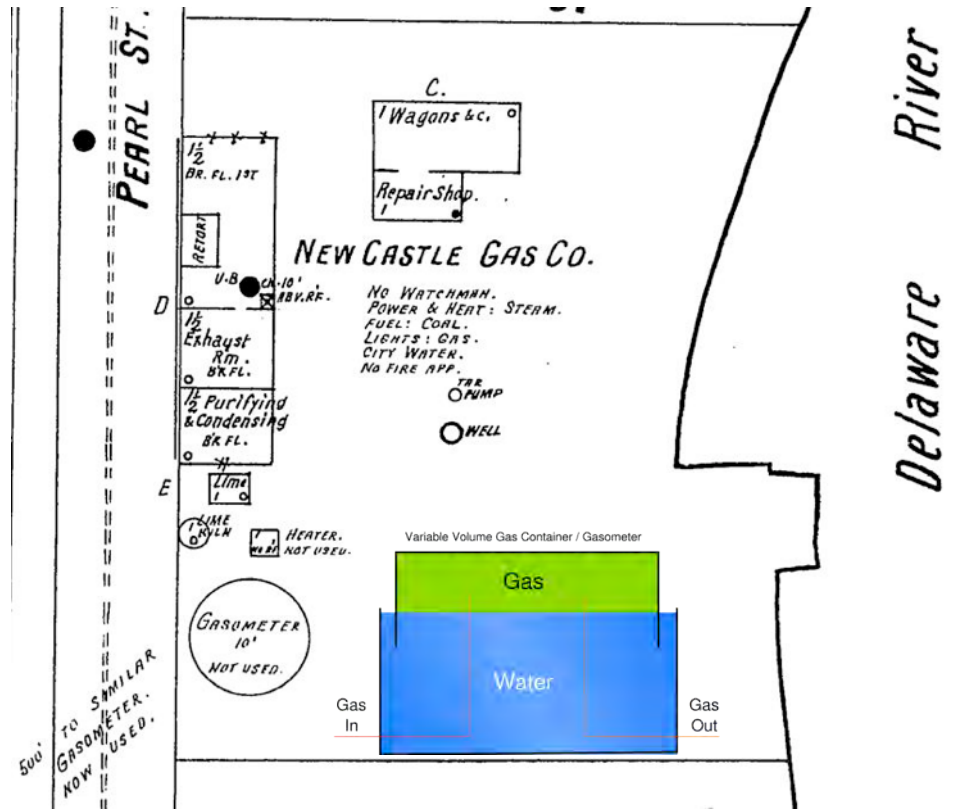
The only surviving engine built in New Castle is the 1848 'Memnon', #57, now in the B&O museum in Baltimore. It was built to haul coal in WVa, then used to haul troops for the North in the civil war.

# New Castle Gas Co

1857-1918.

Thermal decomposition of coal -> methane, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, tar

- A pier gave easy access to the raw material, coal.
- Byproduct (tar) could be pumped into the well (!).
- Gas could be pumped into a nearby 'gasometer', a storage device with a floating lid which provided absolutely constant gas pressure (important for distribution into nearby houses).

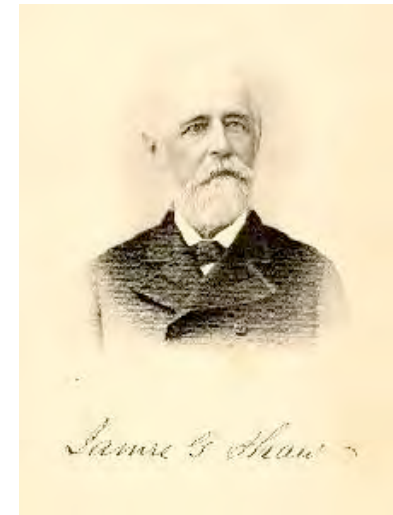


# Triton Cotton Mill (later Deemer Steel)

c1861-1900, Washington St., Shawtown

## From Speculator (1860) to Plant Owner and Developer

321 Brumfield	Mary	14 F	VPa			
321 Reynolds	Andrew C	48 M	VDel	Dentist		
321 McClain	Edward	32 M	VPa	Clerk		
321 Evans	John	23 M	VDel	Commision Merchant		
321 Caussey	William	23 M	VDel	Lawyer		1,000
321 Cann	William	28 M	VDel	Merchant	2,000	4,000
321 Shaw	James G	30 M	VPa	Speculator	10,000	5,000
321 Plesants	Charles F	28 M	VPa	Clerk		
321 Hartis	George	40 M	VEngland	Ostler		
321 Hartis	Ann	25 F	VEngland	Domestic		
321 Holladay	Sarah	18 F	Wreland	Domestic		
321 Miller	David	18 M	VDel	Servant		



In 1857 he moved to NC and bought land west of town (including Shawtown) – former Kensey Johns farm.

In 1860 he built a cotton yarn factory to be run by a Boston co. But the civil war...





## Occupations in the Town of New Castle (1870)

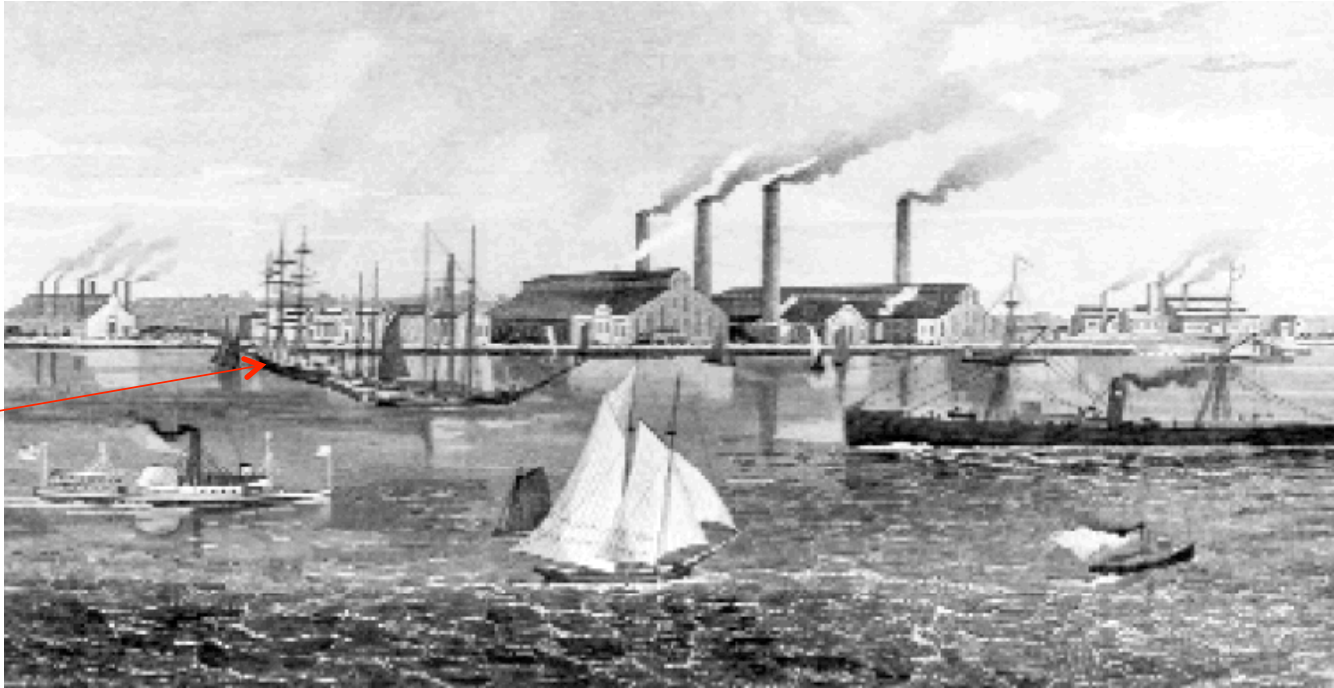
In 1870, working in a cotton mill (presumably Triton Mill, founded c1861) was the third most common paid occupation, after laborer and domestic (not counting 'at home' and 'without occupation')

There were 151 occupations listed. One person each was a gold beater, telegraph operator, sail maker, watch repairer, book gilder, cigar maker, hedger, distiller

Around 1880 Triton Mills closed – put out of business by competition with mills in the South much closer to the source of the cotton.

OCCUPATION (1870)	Number	Real Value (Avg)	Personal Value (Avg)
At Home	736		
Keeping House	343	9,177	1,955
Without occupation	160	16,422	8,136
Laborer	123	1,028	143
Domestic	92	1,000	
Works in Cotton Mill	84		125
Carpenter	28	1,625	276
Farmer	19	17,214	4,573
Blacksmith	12	1,700	335
At School	11		
Machinist	11	6,750	856
Hotel Keeper	10	4,200	593
Clerk in Store	9	1,000	200
Works on Farm	8	750	133
Gardener	7	1,133	130
Lawyer	7	14,200	23,028
Ostler	7	1,500	200
Sailor	7	1,000	40

# Tasker Iron Works (1872)



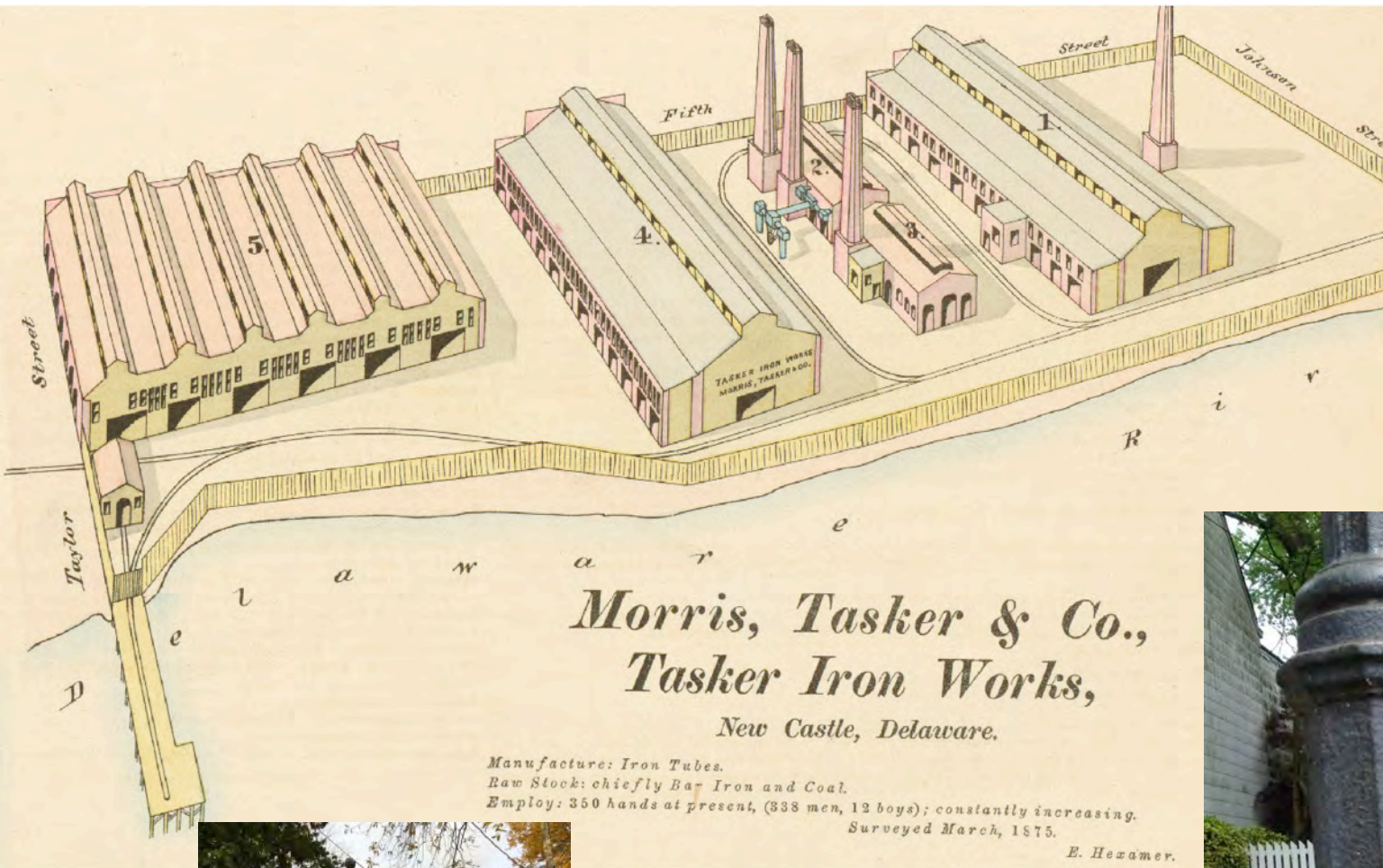
Remains of the pier are still visible at low tide, along with the outline of a boat.



Dobbinsville

Tasker Iron Works

The land was originally granted by Penn to cousin William Markham, and called "Markham's Hope". Recall that he was fired by Penn c1701 because of the problems of piracy in the colony.



Manufactured iron tube, employed 283 men 12 boys in 1875



Last remaining gas light fixture: near Dutch House on E 2<sup>nd</sup>



## Shaw -> Tasker -> Other companies

In 1864 Shaw sold land between the river and Triton Mills to Thomas Tasker who was one of the owners of the Morris Tasker Iron Works in Philadelphia.

In 1872 Tasker moved most of his plant to Delaware (same name). It was reincorporated as Delaware Iron in 1876 with his son as president.

About 1899 it became part of National Tube Company, a “Trust” -- a corporate monopoly organized in order to eliminate competition.

The company closed in 1900 and all assets were removed.

Workers in nearby Dobbinsville left.

Then new life when Baldt, Brylgon, Deemer & Edgar Allen steel mills and Bethlehem Steel loading facility opened nearby.

After Tasker company was closed the former cotton mill they owned was converted to the Deemer Steel Casting Company. Nothing was done with the Tasker iron factory.

Four of the 6 steel works in Delaware in 1910 Were in New Castle

(Directory of the Iron and Steel Works of the United States)

## DELAWARE.

Baldt (The) Steel Company, New Castle. Acid open-hearth castings for locomotives, ships, ordnance, electrical work, etc.—*Page 320.*

Brylgon Steel Casting Company, New Castle. Bookwalter machinery, electric motors, generators, and other steel castings; also high and low carbon, manganese, and titanium steel castings.—*Pages 320-21.*

Deemer Steel Casting Company, New Castle. Steel castings by the Paxson-Deemer process.—*New.*

Diamond State Steel Works, Wilmington. Acid and basic open-hearth steel castings for their own use.—*Idle and for sale. See page 321.*

Lobdell Car Wheel Company, Wilmington. Building; acid open-hearth steel castings for the use of the company and for sale. Also makes cast-iron car wheels, chilled rolls, and machinery castings.—*New.*

Tropenas Steel Company, New Castle. Tropenas castings for automobiles; also manganese steel castings for crushers, safes, and railroad purposes; also vanadium, chrome, and nickel steel castings.—*Page 322.*

## MARYLAND.

Powers (The James F.) Foundry Company, Elkton. Machinery steel castings by the Paxson-Deemer process; also alloyed castings.—*New.*

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

Naval Gun Factory, United States Navy Yard, Washington. Tropenas steel castings for ordnance for the Navy.—*See page 324.*

## VIRGINIA.

Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, New York. Works at Newport News, Va. Tropenas steel castings for ship fittings for the company's use; also steel castings for sale.—*Page 329.*

## WEST VIRGINIA.

West Virginia Malleable Iron Company, Point Pleasant. Malleable castings but can make open-hearth steel castings.—*See page 333.*

Wheeling Mold and Foundry Company, Wheeling. Acid open-hearth steel rolls and rolling mill and other heavy castings; also gray iron rolling mill, machinery, chilled rolls, and other heavy castings.—*New.*



Portrait c1900 of Selden Scranton Deemer (1861-1934) and Kate Deemer. He lived in the Lesley/Deemer mansion.



After his death, the mill was sold to Newlin Booth

WILMINGTON, DEL., SUNDAY, JULY 3, 1910.

# New Lease on Life of Dobbinsville, Delaware's Deserted Village

Some of the Ruins in Village Just Below New Castle, Have Been Restored—Thirty Families Now Living There—The Story of Dobbinsville

The devastation of Dobbinsville, like "Sweet Auburn," the deserted village of Goldsmith's poem, was due to "trade's unfeeling train. But unlike Auburn, which, to use the poet's words, "when once destroyed, can never be supplied," Dobbinsville is taking a new lease on life.

Dobbinsville is a group of about 100 two-story houses, built in rows, and therefore resembling a miniature city more than a village, about a half mile south of the centre of New Castle, Delaware. In 1872-3, when Thomas T. Tasker and Henry G. Morris removed a part of the well-known Pachel Iron Works, of Philadelphia, to New Castle, there was naturally an influx of iron workers to the little historical town. Perhaps a thousand men were employed by this new industry, known as the Morris-Tasker Iron Works. Alexander B. Cooper, in his history of New Castle, records that: "In order to accommodate these people with houses convenient to their work, Richard J. Dobbins, a wealthy contractor and builder, of Philadelphia, about the time the plant was started, bought the land and erected thereon about 100 small two-story brick houses, adjacent to the works." These dwellings were arranged in five rows each of 14 to 21 houses extending from either side of Seventh street, two rows along Clark street, two along Glymer street, and the fifth row along Dobbins street, a small street between Clark and Glymer.

**Dobbinsville's Better Days.**  
As soon as the houses were completed they were occupied by the iron workers.

times crowded into a single little four-roomed house. No correct figures as to the population of Dobbinsville at the height of its better days were ever obtained, but there were probably anywhere from 500 to 1,000 inhabitants.

Nothing disturbed the general prosperity of this little city as long as the Morris-Tasker Iron Works continued operations. The change of name to the Delaware Iron Company was only an incident in the life of Dobbinsville. But, when, in 1889, the Delaware Iron Company became a part of the gigantic trust of pipe and tube companies, the doom of Dobbinsville was sealed. The New Castle plant was closed down, and there being no signs of livelihood open to the three or four hundred workmen formerly employed at the factory, they gradually departed, taking their homes with them.

**No Signs of Human Life.**  
A short time after the departure of the workers from Dobbinsville, the little houses were kept in first-class order, for there was always the possibility of the iron works starting up again. But after several years of vain waiting, all hope of the re-opening of the plant was given up. And in the meantime the five rows of houses that made up Dobbinsville, through lack of use, and neglect, gradually went to decay. Shutters, doors and window sashes were blown by the wind and beaten by rain until they tottered down. The steps to the dwellings rotted away, the cellars filled with water, leaking roofs and open shutters let the rain inside, and slowly but surely, the little houses have taken on the appearance of old time ruins. Weeds and rank vegetation have



HOW THE BACKS OF THE HOUSES LOOK NOW.



COWS PASTURING IN DOBBINS STREET.



Now Inhabited Again



INHABITED HOUSES NEXT TO DELAWARE ON GLYMER ST.



THE UNINHABITED ROW ON CLARK STREET.

The greater number were taken by American workmen and their families, but the Poles and other foreigners crowded in Dobbins street. Here, it is said, from five to ten families were some-

times hidden the brick pavements laid down when the houses were new. In Dobbins street and in Clark street west of Seventh the cows are pastured. In

All that part of Dobbinsville west of Seventh street, except the corner properties, there are no signs of human habitation.

**Making a New Start.**  
In the section of the little village east of Seventh street, however, a new life is springing up. Mr. Dobbins, the builder, had, in recent years, been willing to dispose of his houses, which originally cost perhaps \$800 apiece, at a figure much lower, but no buyers appeared. About four years ago, however, Patrick J. Leonard bought a row of the houses on

Clark street, east of Seventh, and his brother, Thomas Leonard, also purchased several of the homes on the eastern part of Clark street. The houses bought by the Leonards have been put in good repair and gradually, one or two families at a time, they have been occupied again. Along Clark street the whole row is occupied, and with curtains and shades at the windows, the pavements reclaimed, the children on the door steps, and cheerful lights streaming out through the windows at night, the street takes on the

appearance of a new little town, and the homes for a number of New Castle's workmen. Perhaps thirty families are now living in Dobbinsville. The houses are there, and for a much smaller sum than it would take to build new ones, the old ones will be restored to their original condition. Then the streets and pavements will once more be laid out, the cows driven off their pasturage along the grassy streets, and Dobbinsville, in continuation to the words of the poet, "when once destroyed, can never be supplied," will again spring up as an active and important settlement in the life of the town.

**New Life Due to Steel Works.**  
And the rehabilitation of Dobbinsville, is, strangely enough, showing the progress of the times, due in a large measure, not to an iron works, through which it first had its being, but to the influx of toilers in New Castle's four new steel plants. The Baldt, the Brygdon, the Deener and the Edgar Allen Company. Between 500 and 750, or even more men

these great plants, and the workmen and their families will eventually return to Dobbinsville. The houses are there, and for a much smaller sum than it would take to build new ones, the old ones will be restored to their original condition. Then the streets and pavements will once more be laid out, the cows driven off their pasturage along the grassy streets, and Dobbinsville, in continuation to the words of the poet, "when once destroyed, can never be supplied," will again spring up as an active and important settlement in the life of the town.

# Industry Sites South of New Castle in 1926 aerial view

Future site of Amoco polypropylene factory  
Built c1961, exploded October 22, 1980

Former Tasker Iron/ National Tube Co  
Dobbinville



Bethlehem Steel (artillery shells), Delaware Rayon, Printpack

(Deemers Beach)



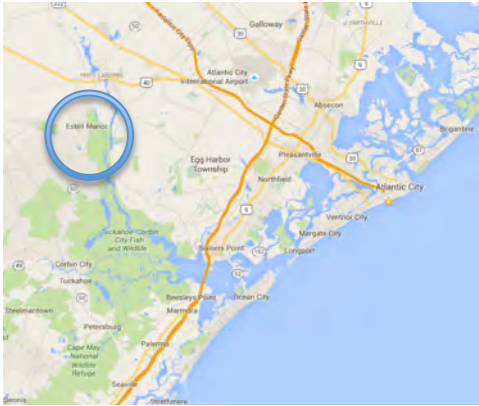
## Bethlehem Loading Company (1914—1919)

It and 14 similar plants were established around the country before the U.S. entry into the war (1917). The factories loaded artillery shells.



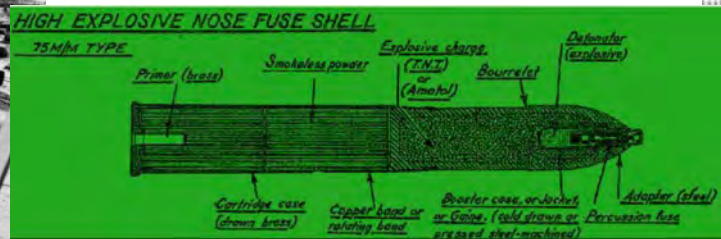
We can learn about the layout and functions of the buildings from a similar plant in New Jersey (1917-1918)

# Estell Manor State Park, Mays Landing NJ — Site of Another Bethlehem Loading Co.



Bethlehem Loading Co, Mays Landing plant was one of 14 built nationwide. It employed up to 2000 people, and had loaded 134,000 shells before the war ended in Armistice Day, 1918.

The plant assembled the parts of 3,6, and 8 inch shells and filled them with molten TNT. Buildings were connected by trains which carried parts and finished shells.



## Workers at the Bethlehem plant lived in New Castle.

-- recollection from Frances Haut, age 99, interviewed at Methodist Country Home

- The "Canary Cottage" near Witt's Bakery on Delaware was a rooming house for girls.
- It wasn't named for color of the buildings, but the color of their skins from working in explosive plant [with nitro compounds]

# Bethlehem Steel, Delaware Rayon, Printpack

The Grantham Lane Industrial Site Still Active After 100 Years

A few of the buildings, like the power plant structure are still in use.

Delaware Rayon (1928)

- 1914-1919 Bethlehem Loading Co
- 1919-1926 Plant closed
- 1926-1946 Delaware Rayon
- 1946-1953 Mohawk Carpet –rayon carpet
- 1953-1959 Plant closed
- 1959-1967 American Viscose – cast/  
extruded films
- 1967-1973 Amoco - same
- 1973-1986 Crown Zellerbach– same
- 1986-1996 James River – same
- 1996- present Printpack Inc –films used in  
packaging

Power  
Plant



Printpack Inc (~1993)

Power  
Plant



Two other active industrial sites: Woolen Mill/Wilmington Fibre,  
Bald Steel/Speakman co.

# Printpack Inc.

Grantham Lane & River Rd.

Produces extruded plastic film, prints on it, and delivers it to the product manufacturer.



At the other end of Grantham Lane, Grantham House, National Historic Register, roof of front section collapsing, surrounded by refrigerators and cars, adjacent to a junkyard and marshes. Early settler (c1700?), sons fought in Rev. War



Bethlehem Steel,  
Del. Rayon,  
Printpak

# Deemer's Beach (1925-35)

Inner range light



John S. Deemer (center holding straw hat) with friends and vacationers on boardwalk during summer of 1928.



Courtesy Hagley Museum and Library

# 'The Manganese' (AMSCO, American Manganese Steel)



EDGAR ALLEN AMERICAN MANGANESE STEEL CO.

Factory site

Waste dump



1909 – Tropenas Steel, later Edgar Allen, AMSCO, ABEX – closed 1986  
Produced work-hardening manganese steel by Tropenas process used in railroad switches and brakes.

# Recollections of John and Hugh Ryan Jr.

descendants of New Castle iron and steel workers



John's grandfather was an Irish immigrant who fought in the U.S. Civil War. His father worked in the Tasker iron company, and later in the Tropenas Steel Co. where he died in 1909 in a boiler explosion. John worked as a machinist or tool maker for Pusey & Jones shipyard, Bellanca Aircraft and Dupont Jackson Labs at the Chambers works in New Jersey. During WWII he worked on the Manhattan Project.

<http://nc-chap.org/oralhistory/ryan.php>



Hugh Jr.'s father also worked in the Tropenas factory and advised his son not to. Hugh Jr. decided his father was right. The oral history videos describe his childhood:

<https://nc-chap.org/oralhistory/hryan2.php>

He wrote about the Tropenas/American Manganese/ABEX plant with nostalgia when it closed in 1986

<http://nc-chap.org/oralhistory/hryan/menOfSteel.php>





From "Men of Steel", by Hugh Ryan Jr., March 6, 1986

The presence of the American Manganese Steel Plant, as I knew it, had considerable economic effect on the New Castle area through the years. Many of us were clothed, fed put through school and lived on earnings from the sale of railroad frogs, steam shovel buckets, drag buckets, points, lips , links and the vast variety of steel castings fabricated here at New Castle. The molds were made by Roy White, Ed Cline, Dick McGrory, Lou Stidham and others, all working under the watchful eye of Grover Ingle, the foundry foreman. The castings would be shaken out and sent over to the annealing furnace where Ed McDaniel's team would don their asbestos suits and fasten the crane hooks to the pile of six or eight tons of cherry red steel. He would then guide Dominick Chirilli's crane over the water pool and signal "lower". The resultant steam explosion and flying water was a dramatic sight to witness.

The Plant was not an easy place to work as indeed no steel foundry is. It was physically demanding on its workers. The air was always dust filled and you breathed it. But somehow you had pride in associating yourself with this work. It was an invaluable experience working with men like Alex Garneski, Joe Medora, Ralph Divito, John Gilkey, Joe Armpriester, Joe Rossell, Harold Emery, Bill Dalby, Dominick DiSabatino, Fred Rush, Edgar Bowen, Mope White, Bill Denny, Grover Ingle, Harry Ingle, Chick White, Bill Payton, **Charlie Hewlett**, Joe Mullin, Frank Kelly, Tony Esopi, **Hughie Ryan** (Sr) , Ed Butler, Ed Cline, Horace Conover, Harry Gallagher, **Bill Peden**, Barney Williamson, Cliff Ivery, Francis White, Johnny Proud, Earl DiSabatino, Johnny McDevitt, **Mike Indellini**, Emmett Covelli, **Frank Yaccucci**, Johnny Hall, Claude Phillips, Norman Banks, Don Nichols and many others.

# The Umbrella Factory

425 Umbrella Row (a.k.a Gray St).

between the Presbyterian Cemetery & former Gambacorta car dealerships



Built c1880 by A. V. Lesley as an umbrella factory, but lasted only a short time. Converted to four houses (two since demolished).

The adjacent “rural cemetery” was once only accessible by rail!

The adjacent street was the subject of a prominent 1991 lawsuit between Brosius-Eliason Co. and John DiMondi about and what constitutes a street. [http://de.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19911115\\_0005.DE.htm/qx](http://de.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19911115_0005.DE.htm/qx)



# Streets and Paper Streets

When is a street a street?



Latrobe 1804



The General Assembly passed an act extending the limits of the town of New Castle. 11 Del. L. Ch. DCXXIII (1859).

New Castle Cotton  
Glove Factory  
(c1895?)

&

Shirt Factory



HOMES OF J. T. AND L. E. ELIASON.  
VIEW ALONG FIFTH STREET, LOOKING NORTH FROM SOUTH STREET

Multi purpose: glove factory, newspaper, fire hall, Red Men's hall

From Ideal New Castle, 1899, Commercial Club

## INDUCEMENTS TO MANUFACTURERS.

Beautiful sites. Free land.  
Exemption from taxes for ten years. Ample wharfage with deep water.  
Cheap labor.  
Excellent transportation facilities, both by rail and water.  
Low tax rate. Good telephone and telegraph service. Delightful climate.  
Trolley line to Wilmington, both passengers and freight carried.  
Cool summers. Pure water. A healthy city.  
Raw material near at hand. Cheap freights  
Both electricity and gas available.

June 2, 1903 Agreement between Trustees & Baldt Steel

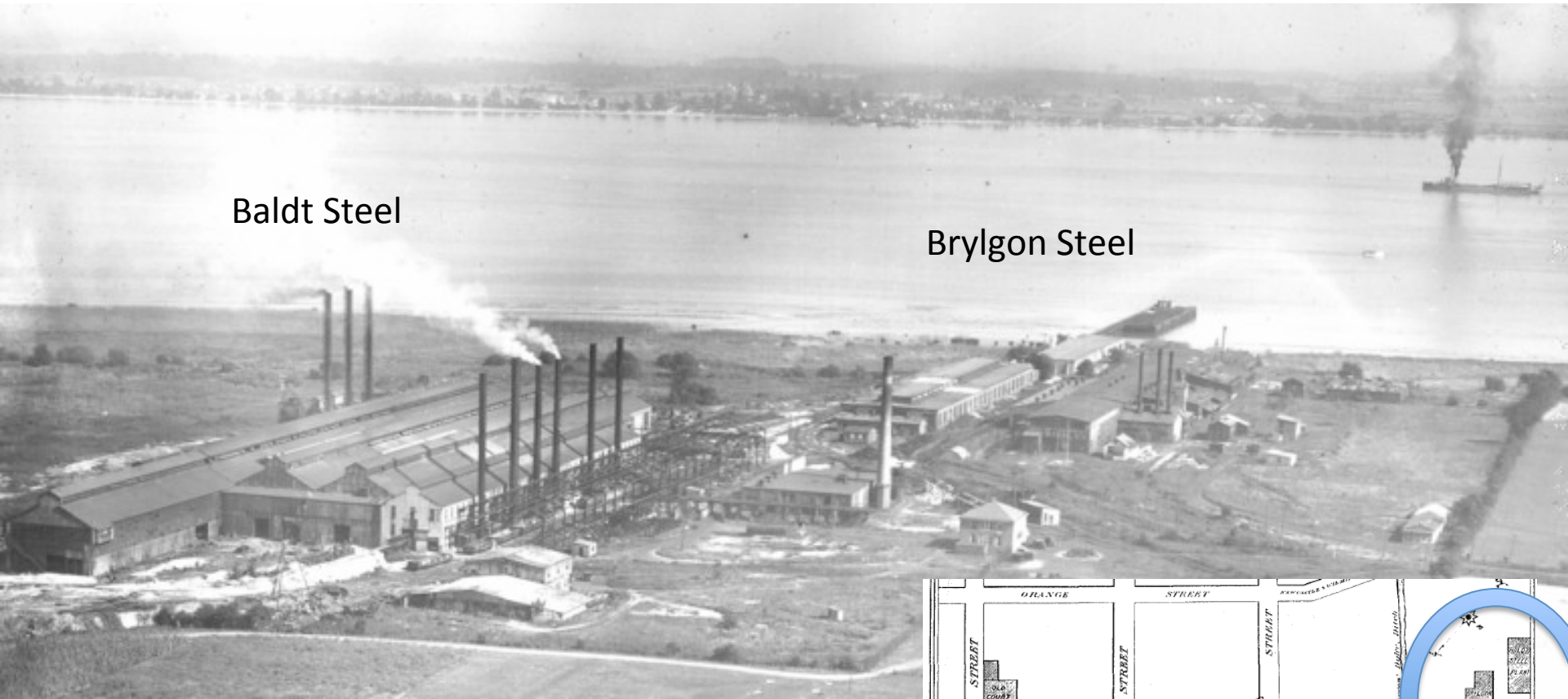
“Whereas the said Trustees are willing and desirous of facilitating and assisting in the establishment of said industry and company,

Baldt erect an open hearth steel plant costing \$200,000 on land purchased from Francis Janvier, a Trustee

The Trustees will pay \$6,000 in installments

Whereas, owing to the abandonment of many of the manufacturing interests of the City, the City of New Castle has for some years been in an unfortunate financial and industrial condition, whereby many inhabitants of the City have been unable to obtain employment and the welfare of the whole City materially injured; ...

# North of New Castle (adjacent to Glebe & Cemetery)

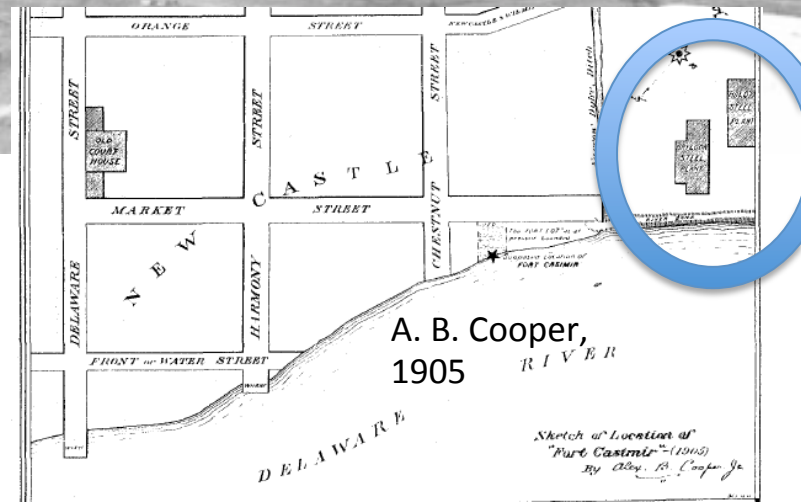


Baldt Steel

Brylgon Steel

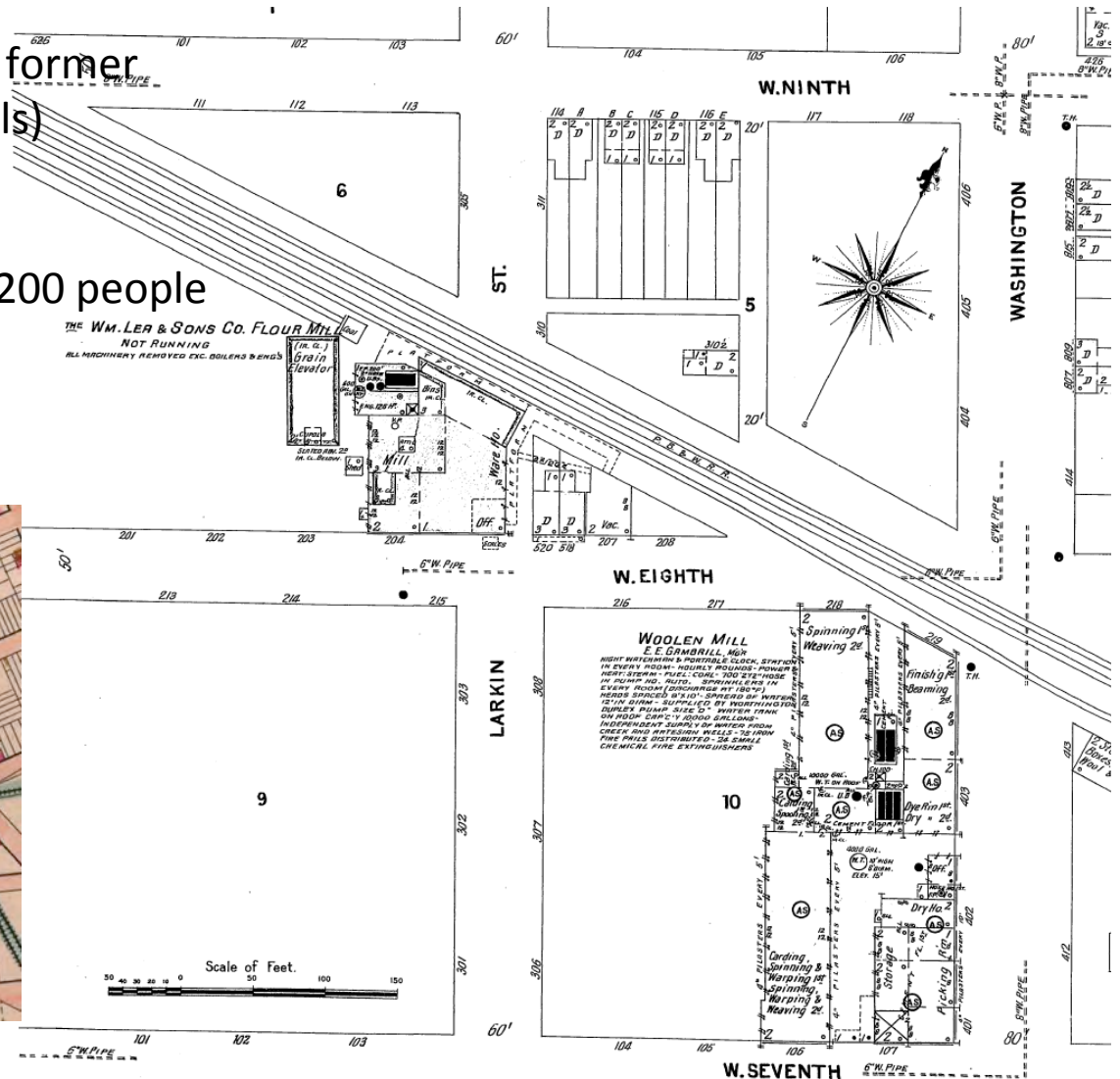
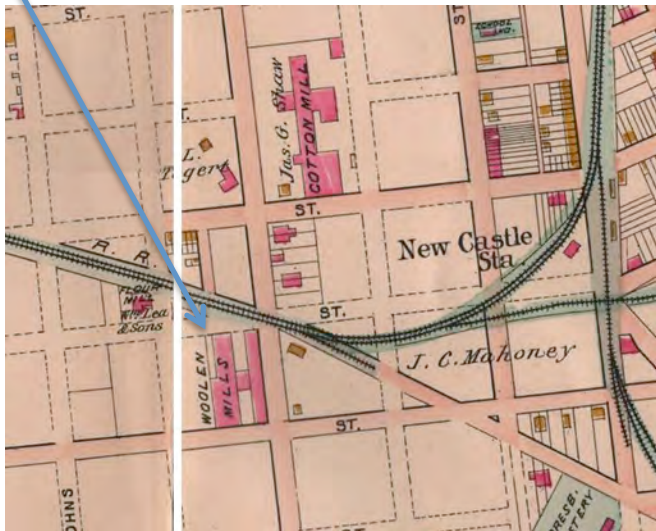


These companies and others merged c1916 to form the Penn Seaboard Steel Co.



# Knowles Woolen Mill --> -> Wilmington Fibre

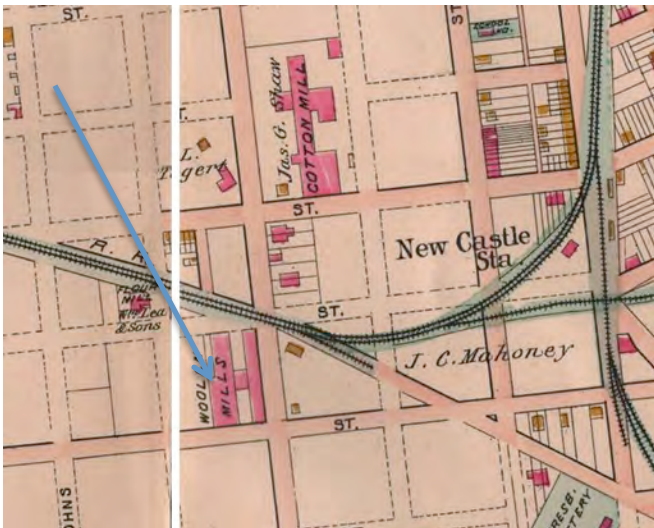
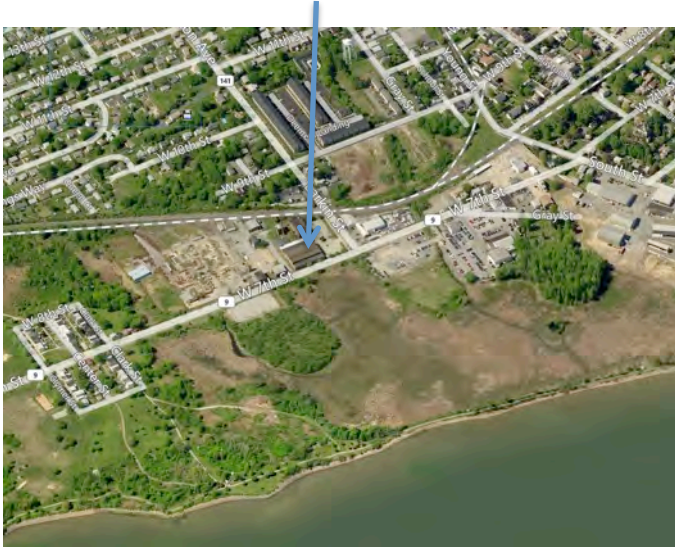
- 1873 Founded by James Knowles, former partner of James Shaw (Triton Mills)
- 1878 Destroyed by fire
- 1884 Again destroyed by fire
- 1886-1902 Flourished, employed 200 people





# Wilmington Fibre Specialty Co.

Along with Printpack, the last manufacturing companies in New Castle



- 1904      Founded in Wilmington
- 1920      Moved to New Castle, made fibre parts like gaskets.
- 1970s     Began fabricating plastic products like guitar picks



July 4, 1927



1927 One week after Lindbergh's flight to Paris, Bellanca's *Columbia* flew to Berlin



1928 Bellanca moved his plant to New Castle







# Industry South of New Castle

Site of Amoco polypropylene factory  
Built c1961, exploded October 22, 1980



Printpack

Phillies win world series in 1980, 38 years to next time.

30

# EVENING JOURNAL

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER / WILMINGTON, DELAWARE / WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1980 / 110TH YEAR, NO. 35 / 25 CENTS

## TRIUMPH

### Phillies enter record books as baseball's world champs



**By Larry Rosenberg and Marie McCree**

It was a night of triumph for the Philadelphia Phillies as they captured the World Series title for the first time in 28 years. The team's victory over the Yankees in Game 6 of the seven-game series was a historic moment for the franchise and the city of Philadelphia.

The Phillie Phanatic, the team's mascot, was seen celebrating with the players on the field. The stadium was filled with fans, many of whom were cheering and singing. The atmosphere was electric as the Phillies secured their place in baseball history.

The team's manager, Dick Allen, was seen embracing the players in a moment of pure joy. The victory was a testament to the team's hard work and dedication throughout the season.

The Phillies' triumph was a source of pride for the entire city. Fans were seen celebrating in the streets, and the team's success was a source of inspiration for many.

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## TRAGEDY

### Thunderous chemical blast leaves 5 dead, 28 injured



**By Larry Rosenberg and Marie McCree**

A massive explosion at the Amoco Chemical Corp. plant in New Castle, Delaware, on Tuesday night left five people dead and 28 others injured. The blast, which occurred at approximately 10:30 p.m., was one of the most powerful ever recorded in the area.

The explosion, which was heard for miles, caused significant damage to the plant's infrastructure. Large sections of the building were destroyed, and debris was scattered across the site. The blast also caused a fire that burned for several hours.

The cause of the explosion is still under investigation. However, it is believed that a chemical reaction led to the disaster. The explosion occurred in a storage tank that was being filled with a highly volatile chemical.

The incident has raised concerns about the safety of chemical plants in the area. Officials are working to ensure that similar accidents do not occur in the future.

The families of the victims are being supported by the community. The Amoco Chemical Corp. is providing financial assistance to the families of the deceased and the injured.

## Victory city erupts with joy

**By Terry Blivins**

Three days of World Series coverage — A 1980 A.D.

It started building in the bottom of the eighth inning at the stadium bar at Broad and DuPont. The wild and rowdy celebration, "Error more often" and a creature whose name is a red creature designed into the shirt and hat on the Philadelphia Phillies.

The frenzy started with fans who wore Phillies jerseys. The Phillies — triumphally following the script of a heart attack — struck out the first batter, then looked to home.

But after McGraw stamped a third strike past Royce Williams, who, in effect, the Phillie Phanatic became victory over. It officially bore down, Philadelphia not allowed to. It, indeed, had become the original capital of the nation.

At the stadium bar, an elderly man wearing a faded meat company jacket started crying. He argued and begged. A man in a black shirt and a hat took chains whirled a full beer in a full. He spoke the evening, shouting, "Overjoyed" at the bar.

Nobody complained.

From a neighborhood of South Philadelphia, a man in a Phillies jersey and a Phillies hat was seen shouting and cheering. He was seen shouting and cheering. He was seen shouting and cheering.

Thousands of people were seen shouting and cheering. They were seen shouting and cheering. They were seen shouting and cheering.

The Phillies' triumph was a source of pride for the entire city. Fans were seen celebrating in the streets, and the team's success was a source of inspiration for many.

## Fleeing flames, debris, residents count blessings

**By Ralph S. Mowbray and Nancy Kasper**

Amoco Chemical Corp.

As he paced behind the wreckage of the burning Amoco Chemical Corp. plant last night, Larry Ash looked at the site years he had worked at the plant.

"All the things they have in there are enough to make the place 'be hell,'" he said.

"I was trained on the line for 15 years. They said if you ever see something like that explosion, first take the rest and run."

There were no survivors — only the bodies of five people who were killed in the explosion. The explosion occurred in a storage tank that was being filled with a highly volatile chemical.

The incident has raised concerns about the safety of chemical plants in the area. Officials are working to ensure that similar accidents do not occur in the future.

The families of the victims are being supported by the community. The Amoco Chemical Corp. is providing financial assistance to the families of the deceased and the injured.

## Cast ballot at schools

Polls will be open until 8 tonight in the New Castle County School District for a referendum on a proposed tax increase of 4 1/2 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

Voters may cast their ballots at any of 13 schools throughout the district, regardless of where they live. The schools are open to voters who are U.S. citizens and are at least 18 years of age. The schools are open to voters who are not registered voters.

Further information on where to vote may be obtained by calling the district at 674-8100 before 10 p.m.

A discrepancy in the number of ballots and registers were reported in yesterday's Morning News and Evening Journal pages. The discrepancy is a chart in the Evening Journal, which is correct. The correct chart appears today on A1.

## News inside

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**Unseasonal** — Calicut Springs voters at the Veterans are preparing a 600-word petition, confirmation and family planning, but all have been rejected. The petition is for the "unseasonal" A1B.

**Goals and gobins** — A guide to Halloween activities, including haunted houses and other activities. C1.

**Index** — C10, A10, B10, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, H10, I10, J10, K10, L10, M10, N10, O10, P10, Q10, R10, S10, T10, U10, V10, W10, X10, Y10, Z10.

**Weather** — Fair, low in the 40s, high in the 50s. Windy, with a chance of rain. See page 10 for the 7-day forecast.

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2021 OCT 22

# Evacuees return from shelters

Continued from A1

Everyone waiting at the barricade had felt or heard the blast, or both.

Some of those at the barricades had come from Dobbinsville, a collection of older row houses, which was one of the areas evacuated by firemen and police. A few spent the night at an emergency shelter set-up at William Penn High School.

In Dobbinsville this morning, evidence of the power of the blast could be seen. In one home, the whole window frame was dislodged. In another, the broken window and torn screen revealed a house plant hanging in a pot, wilted from the cold air blowing through the broken glass.

One woman said she was in her kitchen when the blast went off, breaking her picture window in the living room where her husband was sitting. She said she kept shouting to her husband, asking what had happened, but he just kept saying, "Oh, my God, Oh, my God."

She started around to the neighbors to see who else had damage; but one man told her, "The hell with

the glass—God's will is done here, God's will is done here, God's will is done here." She did, along with several hundred other area residents, who were evacuated because of fear that there might be further explosions.

The woman did not want to give her name.

Kay Reeder, who lives on Center Street, said she was half asleep on her living room couch when the explosions broke every window in the front of her house. She had just finished replacing one window her husband had broken. She had thought at first he had broken the window again.

This morning Mrs. Reeder stoically swept the broken glass from her sidewalk as smoke still rose from the plant. She said that living next to such plants as Amoco and the Getty refinery, "You just take it for granted that sooner or later they're going to go up."

Don McLaren, an employee of Larmore Inc., was working at the moving company's warehouse at 1 Bellecor Drive, about 6:30 p.m. "It was like an airplane had dropped on the roof."

Roberta D'Anna, 16, was in a hurry at 7 last night as she spoke of the blast from her home at 221 Grantham Lane, just across the road from the plant. "I came back to get my camera. We have to get out of here fast. A couple more tanks are about to go."

Miss D'Anna, a junior at William Penn High School, was sitting in her living room doing her homework earlier in the evening. "I heard a sizzling sound, then an emergency signal. Then came the blast." The explosion blew in the front door of the D'Anna home, ripped down a screen door and shattered all the windows in the house.

With her in the house were her mother, Rosalie D'Anna, and her grandmother, Elsie D'Anna. "My mother was hit on the head with the broken glass. She was taking a shower," said Roberta D'Anna.

Robert Arnold, 33, of Collins Park, was unloading propane tanks from a railroad car at the plant when he also heard the sounds that preceded the explosion.

"I heard a hissing sound, and then a bang, and a hiss and then I saw gas and heard the alarm. When you hear

everything off, so I was running up the steps to shut the car off, when I heard the explosion."

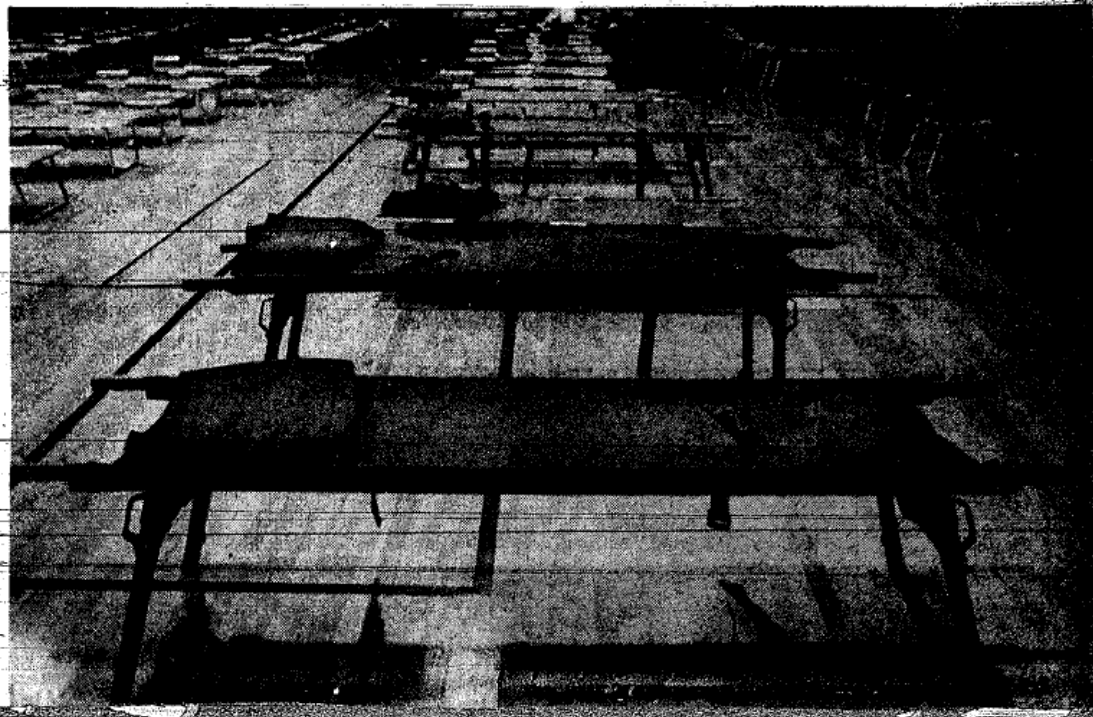
Arnold was knocked down, but not seriously hurt. He was treated for smoke inhalation at St. Francis Hospital and released.

"It's a miracle," that his injuries were so minor, Arnold said in an interview at the hospital. The face of his digital watch was scratched by flying debris, but he received no wounds.

Man and tank, Robert Arnold said.

In Dobbinsville, his father, Lester Arnold, also was lucky. The blast broke most of the windows in his place at 639 Clymer St., but Arnold was unharmed. He seemed annoyed at being ordered to leave his home. "The cops were swarming over the place," he said.

Carol McNulty, who lives still further away at 52 Juniper St. in Washington Park, was ready to leave for good. She had worried about living even a half mile from the plant. "I don't like it being back there."



Cots were set up last night at William Penn High School for people evacuated after the Amoco explosion.

Staff photo by Ron Goshen

## Officials list explosion's casualties

The five men killed in last night's explosion and fire at the Amoco Chemicals Corp. plant south of New Castle were identified this morning by an Amoco spokesman as Charles F. Bohl of Rising Sun, Md., Richard B. Davis of New Castle and Joseph E. Tussey of Elsmere, all process assistant operators; Thomas L. Freeland of Wilmington, a maintenance mechanic, and John J. Reynolds of Newark, a shift superintendent.

No ages were immediately available.

Four men were dead on arrival at the Delaware Division of the Wilmington Medical Center last night, but only Reynolds could be identi-

fied. The others were burned beyond recognition and will have to be identified by the medical examiner, according to Max Q. Elder, director of public affairs.

Under New Castle County's disaster plan, a doctor on the scene sorted victims according to their injuries, sending the most seriously injured to the Delaware Division or Crozer-Chester Hospital in Upland, Pa. Riverside Hospital was put on alert, but received no patients.

In all, twenty-eight were reported injured.

State police helicopters transported two men to Crozer-Chester last night. They are George Arrington, 49, of New Castle, in critical

condition in the intensive care unit this morning, and Robert Duval Sr., 42, also of New Castle, in critical condition in the burn center.

Those admitted to the Delaware Division with burns and other injuries, and listed in serious condition this morning, were William L. Lysinger Jr., 39, of New Castle; and Francis H. Chudzik, 42, Walter S. Mateja, 62, and John R. Shupe, 39, all of Wilmington.

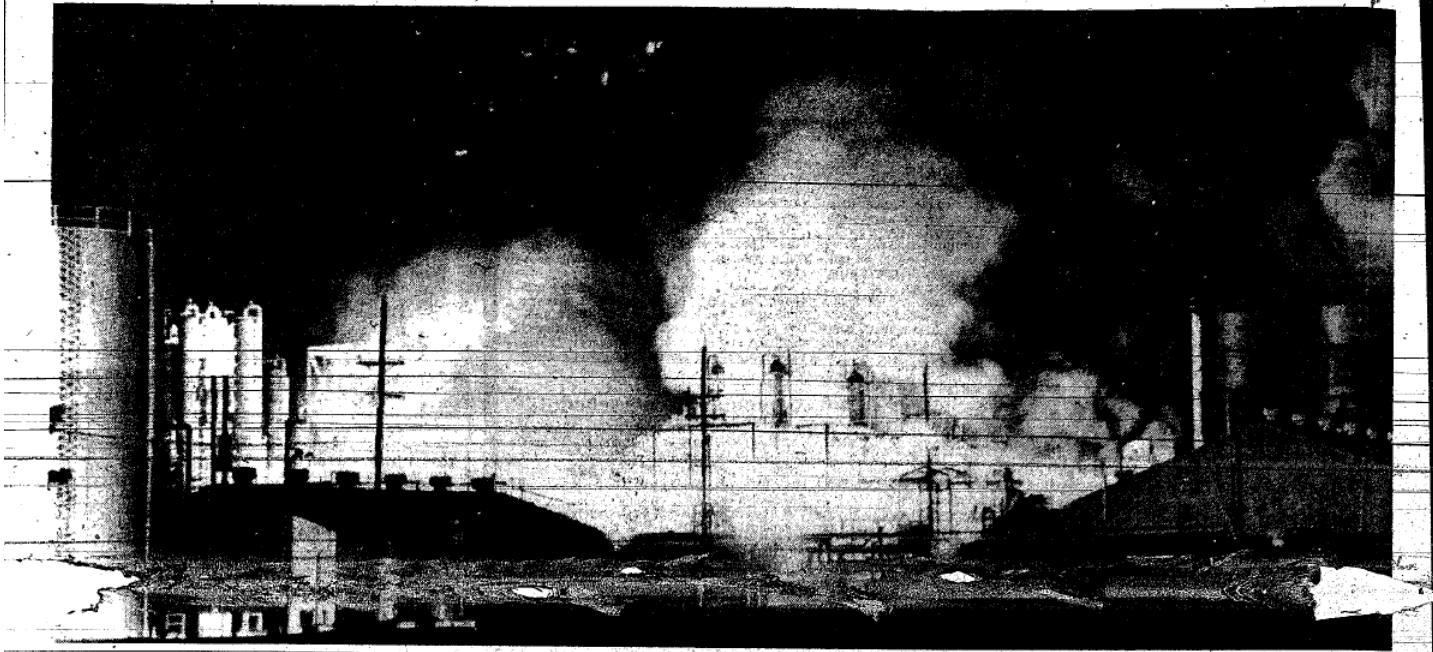
Also admitted to the Delaware Division, but in good condition this morning, were James A. Crossan, 29, and Lewis E. Lynch, 33, both of New Castle; Michael Lucas, 39, Smyrna; Elmer S. Lynch, 56, and Zoll C. Collins, 41, both of Newark;

Charles K. Wakeling, 46, Wilmington; Jerry Parker, 31, Dover; and Earl G. Swanson, 37, Millington, Md.

Treated and released from the Delaware Division were Gerald Hope, Alton Drummond, Ronald Smith, Robert Grady, Rick Austin, Bill Karia and Rudolph Keller. Ages and addresses were unavailable.

Treated and released from St. Francis Hospital in Wilmington were: Clifton Clark, 35, Bannockburn, Pa.; Daniel Coveill, 32, Coates Park; Douglas Lea, 31, Delaware City; William Jordan, 48, New Castle; Robert Arnold, 33, Collins Park; and Ronald Belser and Joseph Gonzo, for whom ages and addresses were unavailable.

# Champagne drowns years of disappointment



Fire lights the sky after an explosion last night at the Amoco chemical plant near New Castle.

# Explosion's damage extended for miles

The dead, police said, were found in the immediate area of the blast. The early count of six dead once rose to seven and then was finally revised to five.

Early today, Kent Carson, the plant's employee relations manager, said that until last night the plant had operated for more than 800 days, without having an injury that forced a worker off the job.

Delaware 9 from Dobbinsville, on the north, to Federal Lane will probably be closed all day, state police said. While the fire raged last night, portions of U.S. 13 and Delaware 273 within a mile of the plant were shut for more than an hour.

About 600 residents of Dobbinsville, Shawtown and Washington Park were evacuated shortly after the explosion because officials were worried about secondary explosions. Many of the evacuees were taken to the nearby William Penn High School and George Read Middle School, but all had returned to their homes by about 7 this morning.

Also evacuated was the U.S. Postal Service mail-sorting building at Hares Corner, Wilmington. Postmaster Edward A. Biegel said 20 workers were ordered out of the building at 9:30 p.m., until about 2:30 this morning. As a result, mail deliveries today throughout Del-

aware will be lighter than usual. Biegel said his night shift will come in early tonight and that deliveries should be back to normal tomorrow.

State police said the explosion may have occurred in a propylene tank in processing area of the plant. However, a worker said the explosion occurred in a reactor in which propylene, a highly flammable gas, is mixed with other chemicals to make polypropylene pellets.

No toxic fumes from chemicals at the scene were released, police said.

At the Delaware Division, Robert Arnold said he and his fellow workers considered him one of the luckiest men alive because he was unloading chemical tanks in a building less than 100 yards from the explosion.

Arnold, a small thin man, said he heard a whistling sound and then an alarm went off. "I went up top and was ready to shut it off when I was blown off the platform. I got up and went to put the sprinkler system on. I rounded the bend, walked out the door and that was it," he said as he threw his hands up in the air.

Arnold was taken to St. Francis Hospital, and when he was released a few hours later, he went right to the Delaware Division to find out about his co-workers. At the emergency room entrance he met a group of Amoco employees from

nearby plants who had brought relatives of the injured men to the hospital and came to find out who were among the injured.

"And you were right in there?" asked one. "It's a miracle you're still here. And you walked away?"

"I know, I know," he sighed and then walked off to find out about the ones who weren't as lucky as he was.

Ruth Lynch, sister of Lewis Lynch, one of the injured workers, had just visited her brother and was sitting outside the busy hospital last night almost in a daze.

He said he was going on break when it happened. He and another worker were in the canteen. He said it happened so quick. They went through a door to get their fire coats. When they opened the door, it blew him up to the ceiling, right out of his boots. . . . They crawled out to the highway and met a lot of other workers who didn't know what happened, but were just trying to get away.

Miss Lynch said her brother told me when it went off the air was burning hot. He said he didn't see anything. He felt tremendous heat and then saw a lot of debris falling all around him. That's how he injured his arm, something fell on him.

Amoco spokesman said the company would conduct its own investigation into the cause of the

catastrophe.

James O'Leary, an Amoco spokesman from Baltimore who was on the scene after being called away from a meeting in Houston, Texas, last night, said, "It's going to be several days before anyone's got anything pieced together."

The fire was visible for miles, and other fires broke out in the marsh grass around the plant.

Two state police helicopters transported the injured to nearby hospitals. One crew airlifted injured workers to the burn center at Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Upland, Pa., and returned with burn specialists from the hospital. A triage unit — where the initial, emergency diagnosis of the seriously injured patients is made — was set up at Crown Zellerbach Corp. on Delaware 9, near Amoco.

The explosion rocked buildings as far north as Hockessin, and shook the ground in Salem County, N.J., across the Delaware River. Motorists in Pennsylvania, N.J., parked their cars along the river to watch the black smoke rolling northeast from across the river.

A large plate-glass window, worth about \$800, was blown out of the Z Mart store on Maryland Avenue in Richardson Park, about six miles away, said Bill Buccell, the store's grocery manager.

Lawrence Petrucci, of 1624 W. 10th St. in Wilmington said he was

standing in his garage at the time of the explosion and the blast "rocked me from side to side."

Amoco employs about 300 people, with about 260 working days at the plant. The day workers reported to work this morning and many would be assigned clean-up duties, O'Leary said.

Officials said the polypropylene resin manufactured at the plant is used in plastic products for autos, tousing, tires and appliances. Cpl. Barry Beck, a state police spokesman, said the fire started in the processing area of the plant and spread to the finishing building.

From there, spot fires ignited by hot fragments of metal were propelled into the outlying marsh between the plant and the community of Dobbinsville.

Employee Arnold claimed the explosion occurred near a propylene tank, inside a high-pressure chemical reactor in which plastic pellets are made.

At 10 p.m., Beck said, the concern seemed to be six large propylene storage tanks threatened by heat. "What they must do is cool these tanks down," he said, "plus there are several tank cars on the [railroad] spur [around the plant]." Beck estimated the size of the tanks at 30,000 cubic feet.

Police said the ends of the horizontal storage tanks could blow off in an explosion, hurling huge chunks

of metal for as far as 2 1/2 miles.

By 11:30 p.m., firefighters said the chance of another explosion was slim.

Detective Gerald Montgomery said the explosion occurred a moment after an alarm at the plant sounded. "No sooner did the alarm go off when the explosion occurred," he said. Montgomery said the tanks of propylene are "like bombs."

Police, fire marshals and agents of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were conducting investigations. A 20-member ATF "national response team" was being assembled from throughout the nation and would be on the scene today, a fire official said. Benjamin Roy, state fire marshal, was heading the state investigation.

Fire officials today said they had no reason to suspect arson.

## Contributors

Staff reporters Harry Adams, M. Roy Adams, Buzzy Albert, Sandy Dennison, Jerry Hager, Jane Harriman, Peter Harris, Nancy Kestler, James McBride, Paul Milford, David L. Preston, Richard Sanz and Steve Marshall contributed to the stories on the explosion at the Amoco plant.



# Families of 5 killed in blast had lived each day with fear

By Anita Manning

Staff writer

"I never really thought it would happen," said Carol Davis, "but whenever there would be a noise, it would be the first thing I would think about."

Mrs. Davis, whose husband, Richard, was one of five men killed in Tuesday's explosion and fire at the Amoco Chemicals Corp. plant south of New Castle, was talking about the fear she and other wives of those killed in the blast felt for their husbands on the job.

Davis, 41, was born in Philadelphia and had worked at the Amoco plant for 10 years as a process assistant operator.

Mrs. Davis was inside their home at 102 E. Lunenberg Drive, Jefferson Farms, just after 6:30 Tuesday night, when she heard what she thought might be thunder.

"I went out to call my little girl," she said. "Then I saw the big smoke."

She said she gathered her three daughters, Dawn E., 15, Karen L., 13, and Laura A., 9, and went to a neighbor's home.

"We listened from a distance from a found out."

Adri Bohl, the wife of Charles F. "Chuck" Bohl, said she had always been aware of the danger her husband faced in his job as an assistant operator at Amoco.

"Any time there are reactors and propane gas involved, there is danger," she said, "but you never think about it."

Bohl, 46, of Octoraro Lake, Rising Sun, Md., worked at Amoco for 10½ years. Like Davis, he grew up in Philadelphia. The two attended Lincoln High School there, but their wives said they had never mentioned knowing each other.

Bohl attended art classes at the Philadelphia Museum of Art after high school, Mrs. Bohl said, and he enjoyed painting and doing artwork for their son, 11, and daughter, 8.

"He liked to make sculptured Halloween masks for the children," she said. "He was in the middle of making one for my son."

Relatives and friends gathered around the families of the men yesterday, offering comfort and support.

At the home of Thomas Lee Joseph Freeland, 42, of 2202 Grace Road, Hillendale, near Claymont, the visitors tried to console Freeland's wife, Rose Ann, and children.

Freeland, who grew up on Green

Street in Claymont, graduated from Claymont High School in 1958. He worked as a maintenance mechanic at Amoco.

John J. Reynolds, 55, of 212 Spruce Glen Drive, Meadowood, had worked for 19 years at Amoco as a shift operator. Kevin Reynolds, one of five grown sons of Reynolds and his wife, Mary, said his father was a "private person" who had a few close friends and a tight-knit family.

An Amoco employee who had worked with Reynolds, and sailed boats with him said, "You couldn't ask for a nicer guy."

Born in Elizabeth, N.J., Reynolds served in the Navy in World War II, his son said.

Joseph E. Tussey, 50, of 115 Olga Road, Elsmere, worked as a catalyst operator at Amoco for 19 years. He and his wife, the former Anna May Harrity, were "very close," according to Mrs. Tussey's sister, Catherine Johnson. "He was one wonderful person," Mrs. Johnson said. "He was a thoughtful, good family man, very close to his wife and his brothers and sister."

Tussey grew up on Wilmington's east side. He attended Wilmington High School and served in the infantry in World War II. He was discharged in 1944 with the rank of Corporal.

The couple had no children. Besides his wife, he is survived by two brothers, Raymond S. and William D., and a sister, Mary Tussey Craner, all of Wilmington.

## Window repairs start after Amoco disaster

A New Castle city official has authorized a contractor to make emergency repairs to windows in Dobbinsville that were broken in the explosion at the Amoco Chemicals Corp.

For now, the money will come from federal block grant funds that had already been allocated for general home repairs in Dobbinsville, according to Michael J. Gallagher, community development coordinator for New Castle.

But Gallagher said he would ask the City Council to seek reimbursement from Amoco.

Gallagher said windows in about 40 of the 90 homes in Dobbinsville were broken. Windows were also broken in three Washington Park homes, but those residents will have to arrange for the repairs themselves because that area is not included in the grant, he said.

Gallagher said he did not notice any structural damage to the homes in Dobbinsville, a neighborhood of aging rowhouses.

*Erans Black*  
fine carpet fashions by Armstrong

# Union cites staff cutback

Continued from A1

any comment would be "pure speculation."

Pavey said Amoco did not know whether a maintenance crew was at work on the gas pipe at the time of the explosion.

The fire, which began after the 6:31 p.m. blast, was brought under control by about 200 firefighters at 5:41 yesterday morning. By 7, nearly all of the 600 residents who had been evacuated were returning to their homes.

State Fire Marshal J. Benjamin Roy Jr. said pipes containing flammable gases were broken in the explosion. The gases — hexane, propane and propylene — "just helped to fuel or feed the fire," he said. At 7 last night, polypropylene pellets still were smoldering, he said.

Eleven of the state's 15 deputy fire marshals and 12 investigators from the East Coast offices of the U.S. Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms were on the case, Roy said. Representatives of the U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) were also at the plant.

The plant manufactures polypropylene resin for use in plastic products for cars, homes and appliances.

Plant manager Albert E. Ruscilli said company officials recently had decided to spend about \$10.6 million to modernize the plant, located on River Road south of New Castle. That money could go towards repairing the plant, he said.

Ruscilli said most of the damage occurred in the finishing operations, where powdered material is con-

verted into plastic pellets.

The blast also damaged the water cooling system, and the plant is without the water it needs to complete any work in the polypropylene manufacturing process.

Dale Casseday, president of Local 8-732 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, which represents workers at the plant, said yesterday he warned the company two years ago of possible safety problems because of understaffing.

"I wrote to Mr. [John] Swearingen, chairman of the board [of Amoco Chemicals' parent company, Standard Oil of Indiana] and advised him that the very thing that happened could occur because they were undermanning the plant," Casseday said. He said his letter warned that employee cutbacks could lead to an explosion. He wrote the letter, he said, after the company reduced employees from about 220 to 180.

Pavey said the company had no record of such a letter, and he expressed doubt that it had been written. Company records do show, however, that Casseday filed a grievance in April 1978, protesting cuts that had been made in manpower.

In his complaint, Casseday warned that the employee reductions in the processing and finishing operations could "increase the danger of a plant explosion," Pavey said. He refused to let a reporter read the company documents relating to the grievance.

After a series of meetings with Ruscilli, Casseday signed papers on Dec. 15, 1978, stating that he accepted the employee levels, Pavey said. If Casseday had been

unhappy with the arrangement, he should have taken the issue to an arbitrator, Pavey added.

State police said a figure of six or seven dead was given out at first based on inaccurate information that victims taken to the Crozer-Chester Medical Center in Upland, Pa., had died.

According to preliminary reports, most of the five dead men had been working in the cinder block control room — the nerve center of the polypropylene operation.

One of the victims, Joseph E. Tussey, a process assistant operator who lived at 115 Olga Road, Elsmere, was working overtime, co-workers said. Tussey normally worked on the day shift, with about 260 others. "Why he was working overtime, I don't know," a co-worker said.

The other dead men, in addition to Tussey and Freeland, were identified by Amoco as:

Charles F. Bohl, 46, Octoraro Lake, Rising Sun, Md.; and Richard B. Davis, 41, of 102 E. Lunenberg Drive, Jefferson Farms, both process assistant operators, and John J. Reynolds, 55, of 212 Spruce Glen Drive, Meadowood, a shift superintendent.

Twenty-eight were reportedly injured, with two at the Crozer-Chester Medical Center: George Arrington, 49, of New Castle, who was in serious condition in the intensive care unit last night, and Robert Duval Sr., 42, also of New Castle, in critical condition in the burn center.

Reporter Marta McCave also contributed to this story.

# Faulty valve cited in Amoco blast

## Gas cloud enveloped 2-man crew and ignited before they could flee

By Joe Trento  
and Gail MarksJarvis

Staff writers

Investigators say a faulty valve caused the gas leak that led to Tuesday night's fatal explosion at the Amoco Chemicals Corp. plant near New Castle.

Five workers were killed and 28 injured in the blast.

State Fire Marshal J. Benjamin Roy Jr. said yesterday that the devastating blast occurred after the valve sprung a high-pressure leak. Roy said a gas cloud made up of an explosive combination of propylene, hexane and propane engulfed a nearby two-man maintenance crew and ignited before they could escape.

The two men, Thomas L. Freeland and John R. Shoupe, are believed to have been working on the valve or a connecting pipeline at the time of the leak. Freeland, 42, was killed and Shoupe, 39, was still listed in serious condition today in the intensive care unit at Delaware Division.

The explosion at the plant on River Road blew out windows in a five-mile area and the shock wave could be felt for miles.

Union officials and investigators were trying yesterday to find out

## Over 200 file claims

Amoco Chemicals Corp. has hired a claims adjustment firm to handle damage claims resulting from the explosion Tuesday at its New Castle plastics plant.

The firm, GAB Business Services Inc. of Newport, received "a little over 200 claims" in its first 24 hours on the job, manager Richard Litchford said yesterday.

Anyone with a problem or complaint can call the firm at 999-0176, Litchford said.

The explosion shattered many windows in Dobbinsville, south of New Castle, and elsewhere. A New Castle city official authorized a local contractor to begin repairs in Dobbinsville with federal block grant money. New Castle City Councilman David Burroughs said yesterday that GAB will be billed for the Dobbinsville work. Others with damage claims should contact GAB directly, he said.

whether gas should have been blocked off from the line before the maintenance work started.

Employees familiar with maintenance procedures at the plant say gas lines normally are blocked off and purged of dangerous gases before maintenance work is done.

The procedure is considered a routine precaution required before a company safety permit can be issued, the employees said. Company policy requires that a safety

permit approved by a supervisor be issued before any maintenance work can begin, they said.

Amoco spokesman Paul Pavey refused to release any information concerning the safety permits or work orders covering maintenance done by Freeland and Shoupe.

Roy's investigators don't know what set off the gas cloud, saying it could have been a spark caused by a dropped tool or a cigarette.

"We may never know what set the fire off," he said.

Gas was supposed to be detected by an elaborate system of electronic and mechanical "sniffer" alarms. Roy said either no such automatic system existed or it failed completely Tuesday night.

Roy and other investigators are also trying to determine why the plant's water fire-suppression system was made useless by the blast, forcing firefighters to bring water in from the outside.

As the task force of local, state, federal and company investigators poked through the rubble yesterday, company employees said Tuesday's explosion was not the first incident of its kind at the plant.

Michael Joswick, who has worked at the plant since 1967, said he was present during two incidents where high-pressure leaks developed at the plant, which makes polypropylene, a plastic.

Joswick said the first leak in the fall of 1967 — when the plant was owned by Avisun Co. — required that a worker climb to the top of one of the reactor vessels where chemicals are mixed to install a wooden plug to stop a high-pressure leak.

See NO RECORDS — A10, col. 1

Marcello ('Mike') DiAllesandro worked at Amoco the day of the explosion. He was worried about other tanks exploding.

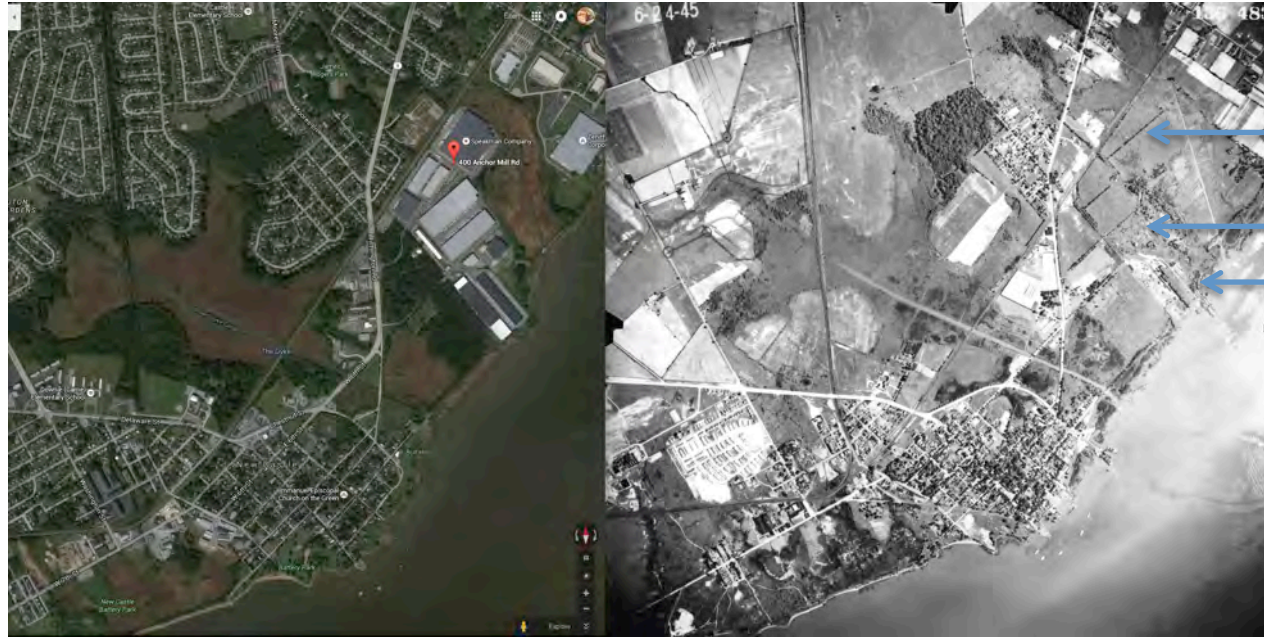


[Youtube video](#)

Born in 1943, came to New Castle via Canada in 1961 and immediately went to work at Amoco. The plant took oil byproducts from Sunoco to produce polypropylene pellets for pellets etc. Among his jobs was working inside reactors chipping product off beaters.

# Speakman Co,

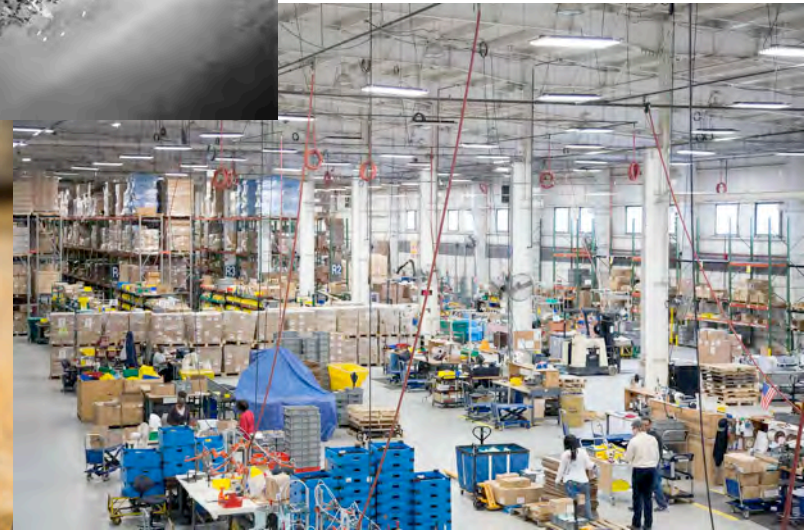
Founded 1869; recently moved from 30<sup>th</sup> St., Wilmington to the Baldt/Brylgon site in Twin Spans area. Employs > 100 workers. Manufactures plumbing fixtures  
Some onsite manufacturing, mostly assembly of materials from China.



Speakman Co.

Baldt Steel

Brylgon Steel



# Dotted Line Streets



November 15, 1991

BROSIUS-ELIASON CO., A DELAWARE CORPORATION, PLAINTIFF,

v.

JOHN A. DIMONDI AND THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF NEW CASTLE, DEFENDANTS

COURT OF CHANCERY OF DELAWARE, NEW CASTLE, Berger, Vice Chancellor.

“In 1875, New Castle was incorporated as a city pursuant to 15 Del. L. Ch. 152 (1875) (the "City Charter"). Pursuant to Section 25 of the City Charter, **new streets could only be opened upon written application by twenty resident freeholders and the Concurring vote of the City Council.**

“The City ... has no knowledge of any ordinance or resolution by which the disputed portion of Young Street was opened, of any condemnation proceeding relating to the disputed property; it has no records of any payment being made to a landowner with respect to the disputed property; and it has found no evidence that the City ever maintained the disputed property as a public street.

“There is some evidence that Young Street once existed over the disputed property. Jefferson M. Moak ("Moak"), an archivist for the City Archives of Philadelphia and former librarian who has studied the history of Philadelphia map making, testified as an expert on DiMondi's behalf. Moak examined three maps ... and the George William Baist Atlas of New Castle County dated 1893. According to Moak, each of those maps shows Young Street as an open street between Sixth and Seventh Streets. **Moak reached that Conclusion because the relevant portion of Young Street is drawn with solid lines rather than dotted lines.**”

[http://de.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19911115\\_0005.DE.htm/qx](http://de.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19911115_0005.DE.htm/qx)

A public street may be created by statutory dedication and acceptance, common law dedication through adverse use, or the recordation of a subdivision showing streets, the conveyance of lots by reference to the subdivision plan and public use.

Here there is only some circumstantial evidence that the disputed property may have been used as a public street at some time between 1859 and approximately 1935. This evidence is insufficient to establish public use of the disputed property as a street.

Moreover, even if there once was a street, the evidence clearly establishes that it has been abandoned.

A public road acquired by use, as opposed to dedication, may be abandoned where there is non-use for at least 20 years.

There has been no showing of public use of the disputed property. DiMondi, likewise, failed to establish a public easement by implication.

Berger, Vice Chancellor.

# Industry becomes the Major Employment in New Castle

Shipping >1664 English Took Over; Ships by law went first to NY  
>1682 Penn Arrived; Commerce on the river went to PHL

Law >1777 British Invasion; General Assembly -> Dover  
1880 State Courts, county offices -> Wilmington

## Transportation

NC was a transit hub since c1800 for Boston->NY -> PHL -> **NC** ->Baltimore ->DC  
NC & FT Turnpike Co. (Competition: C&D Canal 1829)  
NC & FT RR 1832 (Bypassed by PHL, Wilm. & Baltimore RR 1839)

Industries came and went: manufacturers of railroad engines, iron pipe, anchors, hardened steel for railroad switches and brakes, cotton and woolen fibers and cloth, flour mill, illuminating gas, gloves, shirts, umbrellas, artillery shells, rayon fabric, vulcanized fiber, bulk polypropelene for bottles etc. AN INDUSTRIAL TOWN!! They brought people and jobs. When the jobs disappeared, so did the people. Limited lifetime of companies same as today.

## Shopping area

NC stores served the town and surrounding area (less over time) and employed locals.

The Trolley came in 1896, a two edged sword: people could come, but they could go  
Workers and shoppers could commute to Wilmington. Cars continued the trend.