

Jesus Love Temple (Formerly Schine Theater), 106 S. Walnut Street

Built in 1948 by the Schine Brother's Company, this structure replaced the Plaza Theater that burned in 1946 after 30 years of existence. The original architects were John and Drew Eberson, who helped the Schine Brothers design several theaters across the Northeast. The building held approximately 1,100 seats on the main floor and 575 seats in the balcony. It boasted the popular art deco interior design of that time period and was the largest, most luxurious theater on the Eastern Shore. It was built to show movies, but also become a hub of community activities including political gatherings, graduations, and concerts. The building was renovated in 2009 to serve as the Jesus Love Temple. Jesus Love Temple was started in 1980 by Rev. David A. Shockley, Sr. as a subsidiary of the Jesus Love Evangelist Association, which was incorporated in 1979. Rev. Shockley purchased the Schine Theater during that time from Mrs. Donna Smith, daughter of Mr. Jim Hammond, Sr. (Hammond Cadillac) of Milford.



Parson Thorne Mansion, 501 N.W. Front Street, Owners: MHS Society

The home of the Milford Historical Society was built starting in 1725 by a carpenter and miller named Joseph Booth. Booth's heirs sold the original rear, frame section and 263 acres of land to John Cullen in 1746. The Cullen family is credited with building the front brick section of the mansion in the Georgian style of architecture common to most structures during the colonial period in Delaware. After the death of George Cullen, the mansion was sold in 1787 to Rev. Sydenham Thorne, the local rector of the Anglican Church. Thorne lived in the mansion that bears his name from 1787 until his death in 1793. The mansion became the home of James and Sarah Clayton in 1808. Their son, John M. Clayton, was raised in this home as a boy. After the death of James Clayton in 1823, the property was purchased by local businessman, Col. Benjamin Potter. Potter lived in the mansion until his death in 1843, when the mansion became the property of his nephew, Dr. Benjamin Potter and his wife, Mary Fiddeman. By 1860 the home was owned by banker, Henry P. Fiddeman who was responsible for modifying the Georgian structure to reflect the Victorian styling of that era. Roof lines were raised with pitched gables and arcades were embellished with Victorian scroll work. By 1916 the farm and home were owned by George H. Draper, Sr. and his family who leased the mansion to various tenants while they continued to produce crops on the farm for their Milford cannery. James R. Draper, descendant of the family, donated the mansion and lot to the newly formed Milford Historical Society in January, 1962. The Historical Society has remained the caretaker of the Parson Thorne Mansion since then. A major restoration is underway to stabilize the foundation and repair many years of wear and tear on the oldest home in Milford. It was returned to its original paint scheme in 2008.



Christ Episcopal Church, 200 N. Church Street

Originally organized as the "Savannah Church," it was located at Church Hill. When Rev. Sydenham Thorne arrived in Milford in 1774 he saw the advantage of moving the church to Joseph Oliver's new village on the Mispillion River. In 1791 a new building was begun on a lot donated by Oliver at the corner of North and Northwest Second Street. Parson Thorne supervised the building of this church but fund-raising stalled in 1793 when he died. The church remained unfinished until Rev. Corry Chambers rallied the faithful in 1835 to enclose the building and rejuvenate the congregation. The structure was remodeled in 1863 and the bell tower added in 1895.



Causey Mansion, 2 Causey Avenue

The oldest home in South Milford built in 1763 by Levin Crapper. The original style was Georgian Colonial with the entrance on the south side (now the rear of the house). The drive extended to Kings Highway. It was the home of two Delaware Governors. Governor Daniel Rogers lived in the mansion from 1788 - 1806. In 1855, Governor Peter F. Causey remodeled the house to its present Greek Revival style and changed the principal entrance to the north side of the house and added the balusters and widow's walk. There is one brick slave cottage remaining along the drive on the west side of the house. Captain Vinyard purchased it in 1930 where he lived until his death in 1945. His daughter, Caroline, remained here until her death in 1984. It was restored in 1984 by Frances & Ken Novak and converted into a Bed & Breakfast Inn.



A Guide to Milford's Historic and Notable Properties

This guide contains several private residences, churches and businesses that are not open to the public. Please check with Milford Museum staff for information on selected properties that can be toured.

Welcome to the City of Milford

The *Walking Tour Guide of Milford* is published by the Milford Museum commissioners to provide a brief history of early homes, schools, and landmarks within Milford city limits. All of these structures are more than 100 years old and several pre-date the founding of Milford in 1787. Please use this publication as a convenient guide to Milford's early history. Most of these buildings are privately owned and we request that you respect their privacy. Many of the landmarks can be visited during the annual spring Milford House Tour sponsored by Downtown Milford, Inc. and other organizations as fund-raising events. The Milford Museum retains many early photos and histories on all these buildings and encourages you to visit our museum for more detailed research.

Milford Museum, 121 South Walnut Street

Formally the old Post Office Building, it has been the property of the State since the U.S. Postal Service transferred ownership to the State in 1962. After fulfilling the State's obligation to use the building for public health services for twenty years, the General Assembly of Delaware in 1982 passed legislation authorizing the transfer of ownership from the Delaware Division of Health to the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, stipulating that the building be leased to the City of Milford for one dollar a year as a public museum. In May 1983, the city council created the Commission on Landmarks and Museums which continues to occupy the building today.



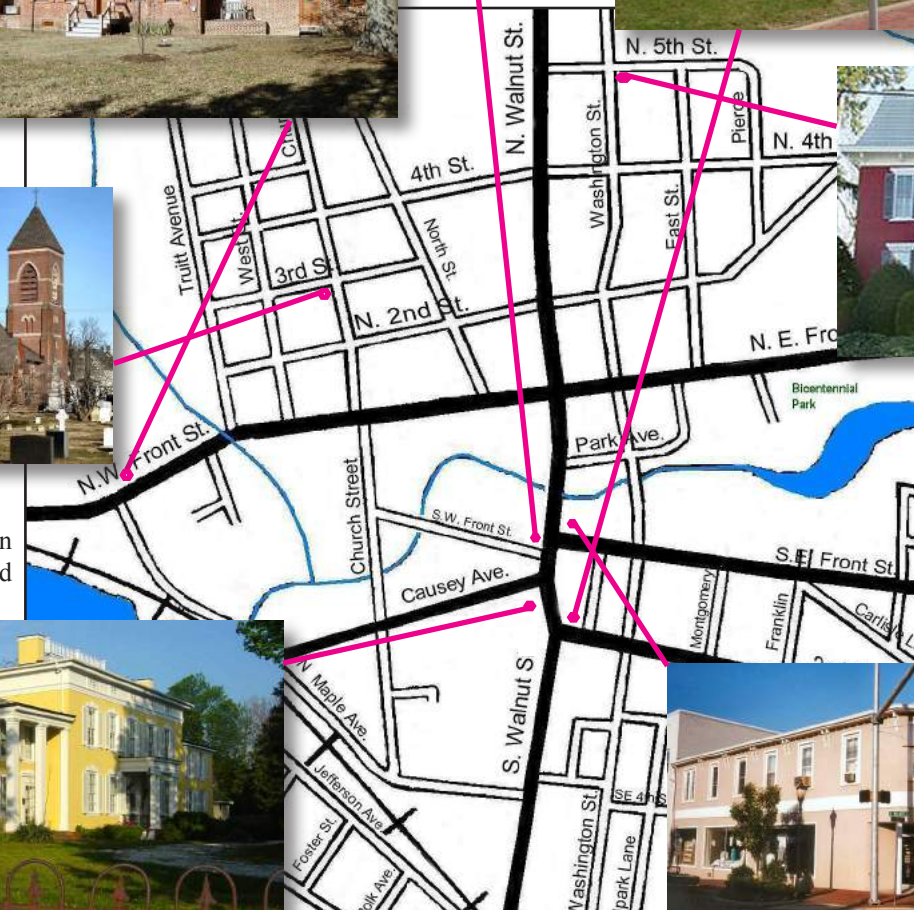
Peter L. Lofland Home, 417 N. Walnut Street

The Victorian home was built in 1880 by Peter Lofland, son and family scion of famous local physician, James P. Lofland (d. 1851). Peter Lofland was a land speculator and manager of the Lofland family business interests. The home was built with bricks provided by a debtor of Mr. Lofland for payment of a balance owed. He leased the home in 1880 to Alexander C. Pullen, prominent horticulturist and owner of the local Diamond State nursery in Milford. Mr. Pullen was a major investor in the nursery and orchard industry that dominated Milford business from 1870-1920. After his death, the Pullen home was eventually inherited by Mrs. Lizzie Nutter, daughter of Peter Lofland, and heir to his ownership of remaining ground leases issued by Joseph Oliver between 1787-1807. The home descended to Sarah Nutter Snyder who maintained the historic mansion during her lifetime (1920-1985), remaining in the family until 2002 when it was purchased by Anna Marie & Rick Hansen. They are in the process of restoring the home to its former grandeur, replacing much of the original wall paper and fixtures to the late 19th century style. The boxwood gardens associated with this home date to 1900.



"The Busy Bee" - Derrickson's Mens Store, 1878 - 2011, Corner of S. Walnut & S.E. Front Streets

The original store was built by Col. George H. Hall in 1878 and served as a dry-goods store and local landmark for 50 years. Arthur "Buck" Derrickson and his son, Tom, operated the store for another 60 years as a clothing store (1920-1980). It formerly had a distinctive cupola mounted at the corner that was torn down in the 1930s. The building was last renovated in 1995 by Wm. Graves for a uniform shop and today is home to a silk screening operation. The interior of this building is 125 years old and still functioning as a corner-shop in downtown Milford



The Towers, S.E. Front Street

The "Towers" was originally a log structure built about 1788 and used by early Milford women as a millinery shop following the founding of Milford in 1787 by Joseph Oliver. The date recorded on the chimney is 1783, but most historical accounts of the day refute this date and suggest it was built after the first lots were sold in 1786-87. Cynthia Virden Lofland married Isaac Lofland and lived on the N.E. corner of North Street and N.W. Front street, opposite the Towers location until his death in 1803. In 1803, the widow Lofland rented her store on the first floor to a young druggist from Smyrna named, John Wallace. She married John Wallace in 1804 and moved into the Towers home with her new husband and son, John Lofland, in 1808. He was a successful merchant and made a fortune during the War of 1812 selling his goods. John Wallace died in 1849 leaving the Towers home to his son, Thomas Wallace, half-brother to John Lofland, "The Milford Bard." Thomas Wallace sold the Towers to Dr. William Burton in 1862 during his term as governor from 1859-1863. After the death of Governor Burton in 1866 the Towers was left to his second wife, Ann Hill, and following her death in 1885 to his daughter, Rhoda B. Roudebush. Mrs. Roudebush was married to a wealthy New York lawyer who, following his death in 1885, moved back to Milford to live in the Towers. She began an expensive renovation of the old home in 1887 and completed the conversion to a Victorian mansion in 1891 at a reputed cost of \$40,000 in that period. The gables, towers, fish-scale shingles and elaborate interior woodwork with stained glass windows were results of this upgrade. Rhoda Roudebush lived in the Towers until her death in 1917. The Towers is a Bed & Breakfast establishment today.



Williams-Tharp-Jewell Home, Corner of Church St. and N.W. Front St.

The brick building on the corner of Church Street was constructed in 1814 by merchant, John Williams, for his son, Reynear Williams, at the time of his wedding to Maria Potter. It was designed to be a general merchandise store on the first level and home for the newlywed couple on the second and third floors. Maria Potter died in May, 1814, leaving Reynear Williams a widower. He later married Elizabeth Causey, daughter of Governor Peter F. Causey. After Reynear's death in 1839, his heirs completed the frame section of this multi-use home and business in 1840 and rented it to Daniel Godwin, an early Milford grocer. A distinct brick dividing line can be seen joining the two structures from the west end on Church Street. Governor William Tharp purchased the entire structure in 1847 when he moved to Milford from Farmington to run for Governor. Following his death in 1865, his daughter, Ann Tharp Reynolds, lived in the residential home (east side) until 1890 when Peter Houseman purchased the property for a grocery store. John Jewell from Houston, DE purchased the store in 1925 and lived here until his death. His sister, Thelma Jewel, operated the grocery store until 1990. The historic home was in imminent danger of demolition in 2004 when local restoration expert, Daniel Bond, upgraded the structure and restored it to its original use as a store and residential home. This store and home were in the center of Milford's business district from 1814-1840, when businesses began to move to N. Walnut Street.



New Century Club, 6 S. Church Street

This late Victorian building was built in 1885 as the Milford Classical Academy which was organized and funded by Peter F. Causey, Jr., son of Governor Causey. The private school started in September, 1883 in an earlier building behind the Presbyterian Church on S.E. Front Street in Milford to provide quality education to students in south Milford. Renowned attorney, Ruby R. Vale, was an early instructor at this academy. He later married Elizabeth Williams and lived in the Vale mansion until it burned in 1952. The Classical Academy completed its final academic year in 1898 and the Milford New Century Club began holding meetings in the building on October 2, 1899. Mrs. Jonathan Spencer Willis served as first President from 1898-1900 and again in 1901-1902. This classical schoolhouse has not been altered since its construction in 1885.



Milford City Hall, Corner of 2nd Street & S. Walnut Street.

Funds to build Milford City Hall were donated to the City of Milford in 1959 by Ruby R. & Elizabeth Williams Vale, owners of the land where City Hall now stands. Elizabeth Williams was the daughter of Robert H. & Maria Causey Williams, whose home sat on this corner of S. Walnut and S.E. 2nd streets in Milford from 1880-1928. Following the death of her father, Elizabeth Williams Vale, inherited her parents home and lot. In 1928, she and her husband, Ruby Ross Vale (1874-1961), built an elaborate Italianate stucco mansion on the site of her parent's home and lived there until it burned in a freezing winter fire on December 28, 1952. Ruby Vale was a renowned corporate attorney who served as the corporate counsel for Standard Oil Company of Philadelphia, predecessor to Exxon. He was a graduate of Dickinson College and Law School and wrote an important legal textbook pertaining to corporation law principles. City Hall was renovated in 2010 and today serves as offices for City of Milford and City Council.



Milford Public Library, 11 S.E. Front Street

The first Milford library was opened in the home of Mollie Atkins Brown on N.W. Front street recently renovated by Daniel Bond as a residence. A public library was operated by the City of Milford from 1925 until 1961 in the second floor of the Carlisle Fire Hall in the large room known as the Community Building. In 1962 the library moved to S. Walnut Street at the site of Milford banker, John B. Smith. This location was sold and the new public library was opened on S.E. Front & Washington street in 2001 after a major community fund drive raised \$2 million for the building. The library was expanded and improved in a second major building project completed in 2010. Today the library sits on the site of the former Henry Hudson & Windsor Homes which were razed in 2000.



Vinyard Shipyard

The four-acre site occupied by the Vinyard Ship Building Company represents the last functioning shipyard in Delaware. Founded by Wilson M. Vinyard in 1896, the yard began the process of converting steamboats and other wooden vessels to gasoline and diesel power at the turn of the century. Wilson and his son, "Sonny," gradually expanded their expertise to military ships for the Navy and Coast Guard during World War I and II. Seventeen 110' sub chasers, ten 75' Coast Gaurd patrol boats and five harbor tugs were built to support the war efforts from 1917-1946. During the years between wars, Vinyard built over fifty luxury yachts starting in 1927 and ending in 1951. Joan and Sudler Lofland purchased the Vinyard property in 1996 and have preserved three Vinyard cruising yachts, using much of the early shipyard machinery. Today the Loflands maintain a rare maritime collection that features pleasure yachts, early outboard motors, woodworking and machine shops that recall an era when shipbuilding was a prime industry and employer in Milford. That last restored Vinyard yacht "Augusta," built in 1927, was launched again in June 2011.



Vaules-Grier Home, 200 Lakeview Avenue

The Vaules-Grier home is an outstanding example of late Victorian architecture. The original home was built in 1872 by W. Thornton Vaules, station agent for the Junction & Breakwater railroad depot on Maple Ave. Dr. G. Layton Grier married Thornton Vaules' daughter, Ella, in 1895 and moved into the home as a young dentist. When Dr. Grier moved the L.D. Caulk Company from Camden to Milford in 1900, this home became the entertainment center for famous chemists and dental research specialists from around the world. In 1906, Thornton Vaules died and Dr. Grier began a major transformation of the basic home into a Victorian mansion. Leaded glass windows, molded plaster walls, parqueted floors, balconies and towers were added to the existing structure to make this home a showplace for the new president of L.D. Caulk Company. Dr. Grier and his wife, Ella, added formal gardens to the property along with a 24-column "pergola" in the finest Victorian style of the early 20th century. After the death of Dr. Grier in May, 1944, his home was given to the Milford Memorial Hospital by his daughters, Anne & Margaret. The Grier home became a home for nurses-in-training from 1948-1952 and the home often had 10 nurses and a supervisor living in residence during that period. Roland & Sarah Beauchamp purchased the home in 1953 and lived in the home until Sarah died in 1977 when Thomas H. Draper purchased the property with his wife, Rachel (Grier). Today the Vaules-Grier home is owned by Dave and Dawn Kenton.



Train Depot, Maple Avenue

The brick Milford railroad depot was completed in July, 1859 by directors of the Junction & Breakwater Railroad, the spur leading eastward from Harrington, the main DelMarVa rail line running downstate from Wilmington to Cape Charles and Norfolk, VA. Governors Causey, Tharp and Burton were all supporters of this rail link that eventually extended service to Milton, Lewes and Rehoboth by 1873. The rail depot's first station agent was Thornton Vaules, who built his home in 1872 on the corner of Lakeview Avenue overlooking Silver Lake and the depot. The railroad depot served Milford freight and passengers needs until 1946 when passenger service was halted. The railroad was purchased by Conrail and today is owned by Norfolk-Southern lines. The depot was restored by J. Sudler Lofland in 1985 and sold to Earl Coverdale as an insurance office and later to Bruce Herrmann, owner of Herrmann Financial Service.

