Old Methodist Cemetery, 200 North Street

The James M. Hall home was built in 1880 by a Philadelphia investor and banker who had moved to Milford in 1880 to live next door to his widowed sister, Clara W. Wetherly, on N.W. Front Street. Hall became a director and President of the First National Bank located on the corner of N. Walnut St. and N.W. Front (Wilmington Trust site). Following his death in 1910 the home was inherited by his sister who sold it to Alice C. Geib and her husband, a furniture merchant in 1921. Later heirs of the Wetherly family purchased the property and left it to Miss May Watson, a respected school teacher who lived in the house until her death. The home was then purchased by the Avenue Methodist Church, but was later deemed surplus following a plan to extend a new fellowship hall onto the lot. The Church board decided the home to restoration investor, Daniel Reed, with the caveat that the house be moved to a new location. On July 1, 2009, the movers arrived to transport the three-story home two blocks east to North Street, adjacent to Dan Bond’s home at The Towers. The house-moving was a festive day for the town. Many believed the home was too large to move successfully. Bond completely reconstructed the 150-year old residence at its new location.

Joseph C. Landers House, 215 N.W. Front Street

In 1810, Purcell Landers, early Milford merchant, built this Federal style home for his son, Dr. James P. Landers, prior to his death in 1819. His last will provided for his four children, but specifically directed the “house across the street” should go to his son, James. Dr. James P. Landers lived in this home until his death from typhoid fever in 1851. He was the most respected physician in Milford and was the chairman of the Delaware Senate in 1820. The Landers home was inherited by his son, James R. Landers who served as Secretary of State under Governor Peter F. Caucy in 1855. He enlisted in the First Delaware Calvary with his good friend Col. George P. Fisher and later served as paymaster for U.S. troops during the Civil War. He was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1872. James R. Landers died in 1894 and his home was purchased by Sylvester J. Abbott about 1897. Senator Abbott was a clothing merchant and banker who, in 1910, was appointed as Deputy Auditor for the U.S. Treasury by Theodore Roosevelt. He lived in the former Landers home with his wife, Rosalia and two daughters until his death in 1923. His daughter, Mary Pauline, married Professor Richard M. Brown, Jr. an agronomist in 1914. In 1939, she returned to live in the home with her sister, Rosalia. Local teacher and community leader, Rommy Staley and her husband, Phillip, owned this home from 1990-2011.

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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 predate the founding of Milford in 1878. Please use this publication as a convenient guide to Milford’s historic heritage. Most of these homes are privately owned and as a 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.

Central New Windsor Hotel, 25 N.W. Front Street

The site of the New Windsor Hotel was occupied from 1808-1880 by an earlier hotel named “The Union” and built by Martinus DeWilde. Frank Kramlich arrived from Reading, Pennsylvania in 1867 to purchase the venerable hotel from descendants of the DeWilde family. Kramlich rebuilt the earlier hotel into a larger imposing structure, mostly constructed of wood. During the disastrous Milford fire of January, 1891 that started in the stable behind the Wainwright-Carlise home at 12 N.W. Front Street, most of the hotel was burned. Undeterred, Frank Kramlich, again rebuilt the hotel. The Civil War General A.T.A. Torbert was buried in this cemetery following his untimely death at sea in 1880. The Second Methodist congregation oversaw the old cemetery from 1842 until the church was moved in 1875 to Railroad Avenue and named Avenue Methodist Episcopal church.

Joseph C. Landers House, 215 N.W. Front Street

Joseph C. Landers sold the lot on which this home stands to William Sorden in 1877. After Sorden’s death in 1880 this lot was purchased by Dr. William Burton. Dr. Burton sold the property to Isaac Davis, who, in turn sold the property to Leonard Atkins, a banker. The home became known as the “Mollie Allens Brown” home in 1920 when this descendant of Leonard Atkins bequeathed her extensive collection of books and other artifacts to the citizens of Milford, forming the nucleus of the city’s public library. She often invited school children to her home to read before a library room was completed in the Milford Community Hall in 1925.

Gris-Rogers House, 111-113 Herberton Avenue

“Lakelawn” was the name given to this home by Dr. Frank Layton Gris (1870-1937). Frank Gris was the son of local founder and inventor, George Smith Gris and his wife, Margaret Layton Gris. Dr. Frank L. Gris graduated from dental school in 1894 and married Florence Castell, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Castell. In 1908, Dr. Gris bought “Lakelawn” and made it the dental research business of Milford. They proceeded to develop innovative amalgam fillings and synthetic porcelain that launched the L.D. Castell Co. on a worldwide expansion and financial success. Dr. Gris, once head of the manufacturing side of the business while his brother, Dr. Layton Gris, handled marketing and sales. “Lakelawn” was the site selected to entertain President Warren G. Harding during his visit to Milford on June 9, 1923. Unfortunately, President Harding only had time for a whirlwind tour of downtown Milford and the old ballpark. Dr. Gris died in 1937 and the house descended to his children. In 1948, undertaker, John Rogers, purchased the property for his undertaking business. The house was still owned by Perry & Diana Rogers and is operated as “Rogers Funeral Home.”

Fay-Howell House, 122 N.W. Front Street

This corner was originally occupied by John Draper, local shipbuilder, who built ships on the Mispillion river at the base of N.E. 4th Street until his death about 1820. His daughter, Ann Draper Yoe, sold the corner lot and home to a banking investment house known as Yoe & Williams for a prominent office in Milford. The Draper-Yoe house was moved to N.W. 2nd street (Wilson house). A brick, three-story bank building was built on the corner lot in 1850 but the organizers absconded with all bank deposits causing a failure and serious panic among investors. In 1855, Jackson Mitchell purchased the bank building and lot and converted the interior as a residential home for his family. He and his daughter lived in the house until it was sold to E. Mills Harvey, Milford grocer and town historian. Mills Harvey stocked the home with rare books, manuscripts and photographs and collections from purchased from early Milford families. Following Harvey’s death in 1896, Charles Parker resided in the historic Bank House and bequested it to his neighbor, Michael Rivers, after his death in 2008.

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This house was built about 1856 by Samuel
Raffley who later sold the property to Dr. Mark
G. Lolland, who lived here until his death in 1881. Dr. Lolland was the son of Dr. James P. Lolland and
brother to James B. Lolland and Peter L. Lolland; all prominent citizens from 1831 to 1906. The Lolland
family retained possession of the home after the death of Dr. Mark G. Lolland and the home eventually
passed to the family of Arthur Hall. Following the death of Arthur Hall, Michael Rivera purchased the home
and shop for his famous upholstery business. Mike lives in the historic home today with his wife, Cathy.

This original brick home (eastern half) was built by John May Laws in 1777 on a lot purchased from town founder, Joseph Oliver. John
Laws was a merchant who traded goods at a river wharf at the rear of the home. The western side of the home was added in 1811 as
a branced building of the Commercial Bank of Delaware from 1832-1833. It was later used as an office of Discount and Deposit for the Bank
of Smyrna from 1831-1876. The two structures were built separately and joined in 1879 by Andrew Donnell of Newark, who purchased
both structures for his daughter, Mary Louise Donnell Marshall, and her husband, Dr. George W. Marshall, M.D. who set up his
new medical practice in the Marshall house. After his death in 1915, Dr. George W. Marshall was followed in the medical
practice by his son, Dr. William Marshall, II. “Dr. Wild Marshall” practiced medicine in this home and the
early Marshall Hospital, located on a lot to the east from 1914-1938. His wife and his children, Mary Ann and
Mrs. David Wolter scandalous restaurant by Hubbard MacMillan and his partner
Chuck and sold it in 2000 to local restauranteur, Daniel Bied. Today the home is operated as the
“Victorian Tea Room.” The old Marshall hospital building was razed in 1951. The former hospital
site serves as a boxwood garden for the Marshall family today.

This classic colonial English home was built in 1778 on land purchased by Isaiah James from
Milford’s founder, Joseph Oliver. James was an early Milford tanner, who conducted a major animal
hide-tanning operation behind his home and along Turner’s Branch joining the Millippe River
behind the present Methodist Church on Church Street. After James’ death about 1798, Benjamin
Potter arrived from Accomack, Virginia to purchase this tanning operation and expand it to
the west side of Turner’s Branch (Mullet Run). The James residence was passed down through various
owners until it was purchased by local architect, Calvin Clendaniel in 1887. Clendaniel restored the old brick house in its current
condition and rents it as a family residence. This is an excellent example of the type of colonial
homes that were owned by merchants and artisans during the 18th century.

When Parsons Sydenham West Stillman purchased the
former Cullen family farm and mill property in 1785, he and his wife, Betty Capper
Thorne, built this modest brick home for the miller they employed to manage the
industrial property for the Anglican minister and his new wife. Following the death of
Parson Thorne in 1795, the property was inherited by his nephew, Peter Caverly
and managed until his death in 1814. The home was occupied by subsequent millers
for James Clayton from 1814-1823, Amwell Long and John Darby until 1849. The
historic home was owned by Henry Hynson, local businesses, from 1880 until his
death when it was inherited by his son, George B. Hynson, author of “Our Delaware,”
the State song and Delaware Governor candidate in 1912. Following Hynson’s death
in 1924, the “Miller’s House” was rented and later sold to prominent attorney,
Elfreth of Philadelphia. Dr. Elfreth restored the home in 1962 and bequeathed it
to his son, Allen Elfreth, who leased the home as a rental property until its sale in
2011. The home has woodwork and panel details similar in design to the
perfume in the Parson Thorne Mansion, suggesting that the same carpenter did both homes.

William A. Hume House, 206 S. Walnut Street

William A. Hume moved to Milford in 1878 from Indiana to start a farm equipment and hardware store with his brother-in-law, William S. Taylor. The store was located on the Millippe River. After a successful two
year start, Humes built a very distinctive Victorian home at 206 S. Walnut Street
where he lived until his death in 1927. The home was inherited by his daughter, who married Milburn Dill. The Grier’s had a daughter, Sue, who married Milburn Dill and the home became known as the Sara Grier Dill home until her death. Zelma and Robert Nickels purchased the home during the 1960s and later sold it to a retired couple from Washington, D.C.

The earliest mill in the area was an 1854-built mill built by Joseph Boud in 1854 along Herring Branch, the site of Marshall’s Pond dam today. Evidence suggests that John Walton and his family built several homes along the road leading from this mill (1735-1785) to Fork Landing where they owned a farm on the Millippe River. The old road
behind Ransom Machine Works and Jomlin bus offices was the location of the first graveyard in this area. The present Union Cemetery was organized in 1973 by Thomas Humphreys, owner of the 180 acre “Fork Farm” and the brick mansion located at 1805 E. George Street in the Union Cemetery date to 1855, but earlier wooden markers and stones date back to 1735. Today
the cemetery is the final resting place for twelve Civil War veterans and several Spanish American War veterans. It is maintained by the City of Milford Division of Parks & Recreation and several local Boy Scout troops.

Crocker House, 205 S. Walnut Street

Daniel Godwin bought the lot at 206 N. Walnut Street in 1840 from Peter C. Caussey who was living at the corner of N. Walnut & N. 2nd Street.
The Godwin property about 1840 and moved to Philadelphia to pursue a lucrative career in merchandising.
The property includes the original brick store built in 1842, (the present Shell store), the
National Hotel he built about 1830, and the stately Federal-style house he built on the sloping hill
for his personal residence. This house became the home of Robert H. Clark, paymaster for the U.S.
Navy in Washington about 1845. The home was razed in possession of the Clark family until 1900 and
later was purchased by Dr. John B. Baker after World War II and served as his residential office
until his retirement in 1985. His son, John B. Baker, Jr. now owns the home today.

Crocker-Collins House, 205 S. Front Street

This was one of the earliest shipbuilder residences built before Henry Hudson
divided South Milford into lots for building lots for development in 1840. The
original home on this site claims a date of 1794 as displayed on the chimney; however, the
owner, David West, built only small wooden boats for local trade. Peter C. Caussey purchased
the lot in 1828 and sold it to a young shipwright named Mary charcoal. The Collins-Carroll family
from 1833 until 1855, Mary and her husband, William F. Rovilla, built one of the earliest sailing ships on the
Mississippi River. The Collins-Carroll family lived in the home at 205 S. Front St. and their
daughter, Mary, moved here in 1868. Thomas Carlisle was living in the home at 205 S. Front St. and his brother, Benjum, moved here in 1890. Lea
theCarlisle family house and another daughter, Carlisle’s daughter inherited the home and lived here
for many years. The property is owned by Sheila R. Wrenn and today the
former Carlisle family shipyard is located at the foot of Millippe River Memorial Park
at the entrance to the walking path over the Millippe River leading to City Park on the north side.


The original rear section of this manor was built by Henry Eggotton from 1793-
1805. His widow married William Black, owner of the 120 acre farm that included the old grist mill on Marshall’s Pond. In 1805, William Black added a large room downstairs and two rooms above the early kitchen. In 1820, the home was purchased by Robert B. Moore, who inherited it from his family and later sold it to Rev. Truman P. McCollory, a local merchant and part-time Methodist minister. McCollory added an impressive three-story rear section to the home in 1833 and lived here until his death in 1874. McCollory’s son, Hiram W. McCollory, inherited the property and later bequeathed it to his family in 1888. The home was purchased by the Union Cemetery 1912, John W. Grier, and his wife, Mary Bower, purchased the home for use as a summer retreat. Dr. Marshall maintained the home until his death in 1919. Today it is owned by Brenda and David Cott, who have undertaken a major restoration and upgrade of the historic home.

Union Cemetery, St. Rochelle’s Belf (Shoreditch) (Roo)