

The USS "Alligator" Submarine



The USS Alligator submarine designed by Brutus DeVilleroi, built by Neafie & Levy, Inc., and launched in the Delaware, on April 30, 1862.
- Watercolor by Jim Christley

Brief History of Delanco

After the time of the Lenni Lenape and the coming of settlers from Sweden, Belgium and England, our land was farmed by peaceful Quakers; hard-working fishermen, farmers and boat-builders who needed a way to ship produce to markets in Philadelphia.

The Rancocas was a hiding place for American ships during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. When steamboats came to the Rancocas Creek in 1824, the settlement here was known as Wallace's Landing. It was renamed Rancocas Crossing when the C&A railroad completed a drawbridge here in 1834.

Richard Wilmerton built his steam-powered sawmill here and the Fletcher family established a vineyard and winery here in 1848. The town was renamed Dela-Ranco or Delanco about 1848 by its founder Richard Wilmerton, the names coming from the Delaware River and Rancocas Creek.

It was a planned community with a village green and a main street running from the 1850 steamboat wharf on the Delaware to the train platform on the creek. Philadelphia industrialists built summer homes on the bank of the Delaware. Inventor Brutus de Villeroi tested his "Alligator" submarine on the Rancocas in 1859 just prior to the Civil War. Its successor became the US Navy's first commissioned submarine.

We established local commerce and industry even as we served as a bedroom community for the factories of the Delaware Valley. Shipyards were built on the Rancocas. The Ridgway brothers built a leatherworks and a shoe factory here in the 1890s. Theophilus Zurbrugg built his watch case factory in Riverside and a mansion in Delanco. Artisans arrived to work in the factories. Homes, schools and churches were built.

Originally a part of Wellingborough, then Beverly Townships, Delanco was officially recognized in 1926 following a public referendum. Delanco's sons and daughters have fought in every American conflict since the Revolution.

We cordially invite you to become...
...a friend of Delanco History

Your invitation to
Learn and Experience
the History of

Delanco New Jersey



John Bull locomotive, Camden & Amboy Railroad that established service here in 1834.

**Delanco History Board
Members, Associates
& Friends of Delanco History**

Purpose of the Delanco HB

We were established in 2005:
To research and discover,
preserve and educate, and
joyfully celebrate Delanco history

History Board Activities

Heritage Designations & Signage
History Education & Publication
Public Displays at the Twp
Delanco Community Events
Memorial Day Parades
Historic Reenactments
Veterans Ceremonies
Special Events
Babe Ruth Day

History Board Displays

Delanco Municipal Building

770 Coopertown Road
Open during regular municipal hours
Mon - Thurs 8:30 am – 4 pm
Fri 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Zurbrugg Mansion

531 Delaware Avenue, Delanco
Tours following 1st Wednesday meetings

Dobbins Memorial Methodist Church

330 Union Avenue, Delanco
Open Sunday mornings and by appointment

Delanco HB is affiliated with
Historical Societies of Burlington County,
Riverfront, Riverside, Delran,
Armed Forces Heritage Museum,
23rd NJ Reg – Jersey Yahoos Living History,
and Burlington County Historians

Monthly Meetings

Delanco History Board meets the first
Wednesday of each month, 7 pm
In person or by telephone 609-760-7746.
Check township calendar for details.
<http://www.delancotownship.com/>

Meetings are open to Friends of Delanco
History and the general public.



Historic Zurbrugg Mansion – 531 Delaware Ave
Built in 1910 for Theophilus and Lizette Zurbrugg

Delanco History Board was established in
2005 as an advisory board of Delanco government to
discover and preserve the township's history.

Members serve by appointment for 3-year terms.
Members must be current residents of Delanco.
Send a letter of interest to Delanco Township,
770 Coopertown Road, Delanco NJ 08075 or
BRussell@delancotownship.com.

Associate (non-voting) Members are welcome
to join and fully participate in all history activities.
Delanco residence is not required.

Friends of Delanco History is an informal group
interested in preserving and celebrating Delanco's
past. Members receive occasional info via email.
There is no cost or obligation. To join, send contact
information.

For more information:

Your Name:

Address (optional):

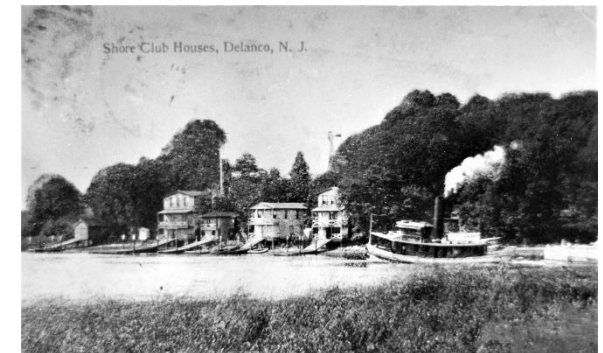
Telephone (optional):

E-mail:

What is your interest in Delanco History?

☐ Member ☐ Associate ☐ Friend

Send to PFritz5976@aol.com or to the
Delanco History Board, Delanco Township
770 Coopertown Rd, Delanco NJ 08075



A steam tugboat slides downstream past Boathouse
Row on the Rancocas Creek near "Dicky's Cut".

For community and history information:
www.Delancotownship.com

For Delanco Military Veterans Honor Roll:
www.veterans.delancotownship.com

For those on Facebook, visit:

"You Know You're from Delanco When..."
"Burlington County Historians"