



SHAPED BY HISTORY & ANCHORED IN NATURE

JULY 2021

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRESS CONTINUES FORWARD

The roads and infrastructure at Fort DuPont have come a long way since new construction began in 2017. Roads were deteriorating and utilities insufficient to support the anticipated growth. Here is an update on work underway.

- Road construction on North Reedy Point Road starts this summer. The Road will be widened and a bike path installed. The new bike path will extend from the C&D Canal to the park lands along the Delaware River where the new Fort DuPont recreation amenities are being planned. This

path will also connect into the future bike path within Fort DuPont that will run along the river and circle back out to Rt. 9 so that bikers using the Castle Trail can enjoy the grounds of Fort DuPont.

- Polktown Place will also be under construction soon. The road, which leads from Rt. 9 to N. Reedy Point Road, will be realigned in order to install storm water management controls where flooding occurs.

- In the newly constructed Canal District, the last section of road is being completed and will pave the

way for 19 more homes, 16 of which are already sold.

- In February, construction will begin on the Rt. 9 roundabout, which is located at the entrance to Fort DuPont.

- Natural gas is the next big utility installation, and it is scheduled for completion this summer. Our residents have patiently waited and will soon be able to convert from LP. Natural gas is also an important factor in our efforts to attract commercial development.

- Old Battery Lane, which runs under the bridge from Polktown to the river, will be reconstructed next year. Water and Sewer along OBL will be installed later this year in order to support our next phase of residential and commercial development.

## LAST PHASE OF THE CANAL DISTRICT



## INSIDE

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## DID YOU KNOW?

# WHO NAMED OUR STREETS?

by Laura Lee



The evolution of the Fort DuPont street names follows both the military presence and the later renaming of some when it became the Governor Bacon Health Complex. In re-establishing the community, it was determined that some of the more simple street names that already existed (but were not in the 911 system) were already taken by someone in New Castle County - you can't have two Oak Avenues for example. In this new revitalization of the site, we chose to go back to the original historic military names for some and use the new streets as an opportunity to remember local history.

In the Canal District, Bonner Street commemorates the Bonner family, who lived at the fort from 1928-1941. Lieutenant Col. Edward Bonner served as the inspector with the quartermaster department. Bonnie Bonner Rorabaugh, one of his three children, is now 94 and her photographic memory brings life to the old fort - we will share her exploits here in future articles.

Cook Street is also slated for the Canal District and honors a longtime working-class family of Delaware City. Cook family members served in the military as well as provided civilian labor there - the small house at the corner of 5th and Canal Streets was once theirs.

Especially forgotten was the legacy of local African American soldiers, some of which are buried in the African Union Church Cemetery located on the Castle Trail. Elbert Street remembers Private James Elbert, who left his siblings and widowed mother at a young age to answer the call to serve when President Lincoln signed an order facilitating the recruitment of African American troops. Elbert served in Company C, 8th United States Colored Troops, was injured twice, and almost executed for desertion of duty when he was given a furlough. Not being able to read and write (as evidenced by his "X" signing on historic documents), he did

not realize the nature of a furlough (you do have to return!).

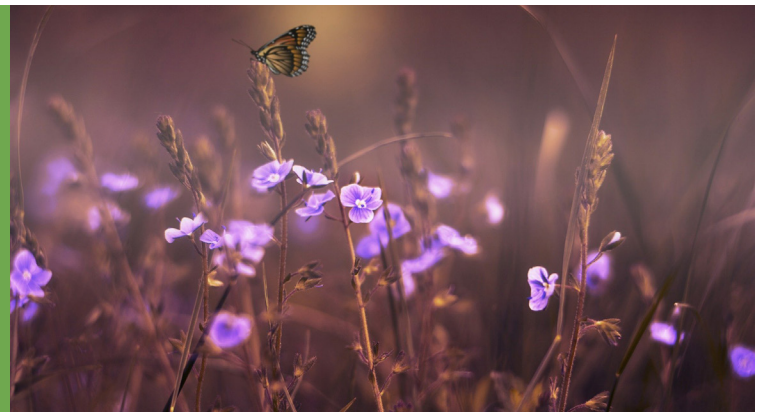
Places always tell a story of the people there, and we hope by carefully choosing the street names, people will want to know more about the history, embrace the heritage, and feel a part of it.

*Laura Lee is the former park interpreter at Fort Delaware and Fort DuPont State Parks, and is currently on the board of the FDRPC. Have a history question Fort DuPont? Send it our way and she will endeavor to answer it.*



## FORT DUPONT GREEN INITIATIVES - MEADOWS

Establishing wildflower habitats is the single most effective course of action to conserve pollinators. During your walks around Fort DuPont, watch for the planting of indigenous flowers in our bio-basins, flower beds and the meadow under construction by Battery Elder - a treat for bees, butterflies and people alike.





# FORT DUPONT GREEN INITIATIVES - BEES



## NEVER GIVE UP

Protection and preservation of history is second only to nature at Fort DuPont. So last year, when a tree fell, exposing a damaged hive, we called in a beekeeper to help rescue these pollinators. Thomas Lunt was brought in, and saw that the hive was in bad shape. It was infested with small hive beetles, and the queen had died. They needed to get strong, a new queen had to be created, and there was only one egg surviving.

So Tom scooped the honeycomb out of the tree and any bees that remained and put them in a box for transport. Over the winter, he nursed

the hive back to health, and even with very few drones left, a new queen was created.

"The queen is marked now," Tom said. "And somehow she has successfully mated." Marking a queen is important in several ways. Queen marking makes the queen easier to find in a colony, particularly in a large populous colony, and sometimes when a queen hides.

"This is the sweetest and gentlest hive I have ever worked with," Tom said. "And I've just found eggs! So the hive is back on track."

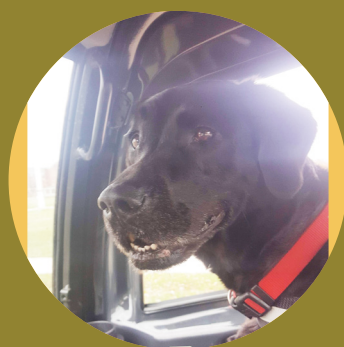
About two weeks ago, Tom was able to move the hive - and three more that had grown from the original hive - back to Fort DuPont.

Worldwide, bees perform 80% of all pollination - critical to our ultimate survival. Beekeeping contributes to the environment by helping balance the food chain, necessary for pollinating crops like coffee, apples, tomatoes, almonds, cocoa and others.

See the bottom of page 2 for more about pollination here at Fort DuPont.

## PETS & PEOPLE OF FORT DUPONT

Meet Gemma, Paul Imburgia's companion. Paul tells us, "Gemma is an 8 year old black lab. A man was dumping something at the gate of the Delaware Humane Society in a box at 5:45 in the morning. I knew it was a dog so I took her. She was 8-10 weeks old. Say hello if you see us out walking!"



Paul Imburgia has the longest resident tenure here at the Fort. He is the owner of a fourth-generation moving company, Firpo-Heritage Moving Systems, enjoys offshore fishing, can fix or build just about anything, and he and Gemma go almost

everywhere together. Paul is generous, always willing to help someone get something done or fix something for them.

Want to share with your neighbors? Forward your info or pet info to [cpini@fortdupont.org](mailto:cpini@fortdupont.org).

## GOVERNOR BACON HEALTH CENTER CLOSED



Governor Bacon Health Center is officially closed and the Fort DuPont Redevelopment and Preservation Corporation is actively looking for tenants. The building is 3 stories with 20,000 sf on each floor. Inquiries should be directed to [PThomas@FortDuPont.org](mailto:PThomas@FortDuPont.org).



# REBIRTH

THE FORT DUPONT THEATER STARTS ITS SECOND CENTURY IN THE SPOTLIGHT



The curtain may have fallen decades ago on the Fort DuPont Theater, but she is slowly coming back to her former glory as the exterior gets restored.

Though the funding for the interior is not yet in place, so much of it is still intact and it's easy to see how beautiful it was back in the day.

We're looking forward to restoring this historic landmark and being entertained by it once again.

THE CHAPEL THAT HOLDS THE HISTORY OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

No doubt you've seen some of the work going on at the chapel on Old Elm Ave. This historic building has evolved with the inhabitants of Fort Dupont for many years, and we have begun our efforts to protect the building and revitalize it once again for today's residents.

Watch for next month's newsletter, where we will feature the plans for its restoration.

## Residents:

*Do you have questions or concerns?  
Email them to our  
Director of Communications at  
[tbuchanan@fortdupont.org](mailto:tbuchanan@fortdupont.org)*



## COME EXPLORE

A HISTORIC WATERFRONT COMMUNITY  
IN DELAWARE CITY, DE

[FORTDUPONT.ORG](http://FORTDUPONT.ORG)