

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, March 28, 2011

**The Delaware Travel Council, 1956–76:** Miles Frederick was a Pennsylvania Dutchman who liked promoting Delaware, moved to Dover, and convinced Governor J. Caleb Boggs that a travel council was essential to promote the First State. The Delaware Travel Council was to be an affiliation of museums, hotels and motels, restaurants, and other businesses that could benefit from increased tourism. Along with this was recommended a State Tourism Office, which came into being with an absolute minimum budget, and Frederick became its only employee. What he lacked in formal education and finesse, he made up for in dedication to hard work, and the state never got more for its buck than it did with Miles Frederick.

From the beginning, the independent Travel Council intended to represent the *whole* state, from the several beach communities in the south to the outstanding museums in the north. Evening dinner meetings were held six times a year, with two in each county. Active members included not only Winterthur Museum (represented by Dorothy Greer), Hagley (represented by Joe Monigle), and the Hotel du Pont (represented by Harry Green) but also the Delaware River and Bay Authority (Bill Miller and Bill Wagaman), Delmarva Power & Light (Lloyd Leslie and Ed LaFond), Recreation, Promotion & Service (George Sargisson), and Dover Coca Cola (Julian Massey). Murray Metten represented the *News Journal* Company, Dudley Connors the Diamond State Telephone Company, and George McLeod the Bank of Delaware. Hotels and motels from Wilmington to Rehoboth Beach included the Howard Johnson Motor Lodges (Harry Bissell), Atlantic Sands (Preston Godfrey), Hotel Henlopen (Harry Bissell), Milford Hotel (Seymour Gellens), Boardwalk Plaza (Orme Meade), and Holiday Inns (Walter Anderson and myself). Restaurants, some of which were used regularly for the meetings, included the Dinner Bell in Dover (Lockwood Emmert), the Dinner Bell in Rehoboth (Ruth C. Emmert), The Avenue in Rehoboth, Anglers' in Lewes, and more than once the annual meeting was catered at Buena Vista.

For its part, the state did its best to assist the Travel Council, but the Tourism Office worked with a tiny and insufficient budget. The Governor appointed a Director of Tourism, a post filled by young politicians who regarded it as the first rung on the ladder. People such as Sam Shipley and Tom Evans held the job, but the office managers, after Miles Frederick moved on, did all the work. Dave Hugg and Don Mathewson held this job in succession, and much of the time there was no money for an office assistant. In general, after 12 years or so, the members of the Travel Council enjoyed the associations, the camaraderie at the meetings, and the speakers who were invited, but very little had been accomplished to encourage tourists to visit Delaware.

I became president of the Travel Council in January 1969, when Russell Peterson took the reins as governor. We hoped for a new lease on life with the governor's blessing and his recommendation for an expanded tourism budget. The governor, however, had other priorities, and it was not to be. I tried to get the banks and others to come through with meaningful grants to the council, but they did not think it would be money well spent. I failed completely in my attempt to raise tourist promotion to a higher level. At our annual meeting in January 1972, held at the Arsenal-on-the-Green in New Castle, Joe Monigle of the Hagley Museum took over as president of the Delaware Travel Council. He tried to hold it together with more modest goals, but by 1975 or 1976, it was closed out. The idea was right, but the timing was wrong.