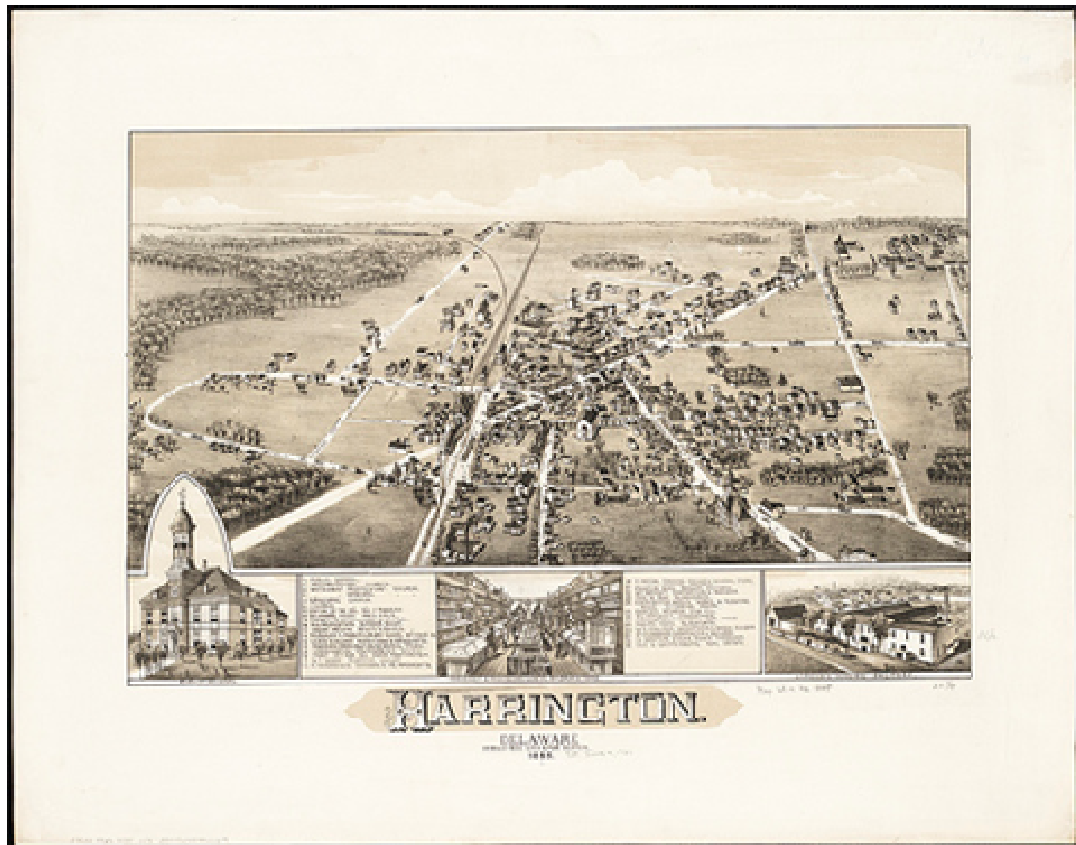


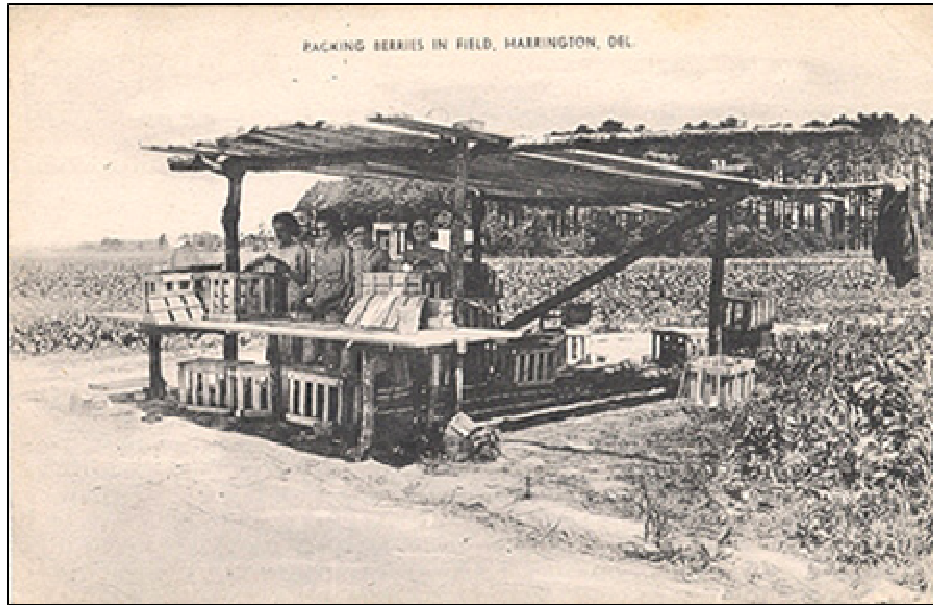
**HISTORY**

The City of Harrington can trace its roots back to the 1730's when the Clark family first settled in an area developed out of 6,000 acres of Mispillion forest. In 1780 Benjamin Clark, a descendent of the first settlers, built a home and tavern at the corner of what is today the intersection of Commerce Street and Railroad Avenue. This area became known as Clark's Corner. The tavern was a stop for stagecoaches, as well as, a place for farmers to barter goods and converse. More homes were built around the Clark's home and tavern and a community was formed.



With Clark's Corner being such a focal point of the community, it was an ideal place for a railroad stop. In 1856 the Delaware Railroad was constructed from Dover to Seaford by way of Clark's Corner. The Delaware Railroad was the southern extension of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad, which in turn was a division of the Pennsylvania Railroad. During this time the City saw a population and industrial growth which was a direct effect of the new railroad. With the addition of the railroad, Matthew J. Clark subdivided a part of his property in town lots which helped the community develop. Clark's Corner was renamed Harrington in 1859 in honor of Samuel Maxwell Harrington, the chancellor of the Court of Chancery and the President of the Delaware Railroad. Ten years later on March 23, 1869, the City became incorporated by the General Assembly with town limits defined. In between that time, a post office serving farming residences, stores and small businesses was built in 1862 and later a library was added in the 1880s.

In 1900, there were four canning factories to process farm products and several clothing manufacturers. Other manufacturing included a sawmill, fruit evaporator, basket factory and fertilizer plant. By the 1930's there were about a dozen clothing manufacturers that received textiles from the north and south. The manufacturers would then send their products to major brands by rail. Despite success, the majority of manufacturers were closed by the mid 1970's. Industrial work remained through the 1980's when the city linked water and sewer services to the industrial park which attracted a lumber company and a box factory.



One part of Harrington that has remained an important part of the community since the 1920's is the fairgrounds and harness racing. In 1920 a group of entrepreneurs started the Kent and Sussex County Fair, which would later become the Delaware State Fair in 1962. The annual fair continues to this day and has provided jobs for local residents and a prime site for other community events. Harness racing started in 1946 when a group of people met at the fairgrounds for a 60 day meet. The following year the group became The Harrington Raceway and they built the track that is still there today. The track remains the oldest continuously operating harness racing track in the country. After several slow years, the raceway activities increased due to the addition of a casino in 1996. In recent years the track has been improved, as well as an added paddock for the horses, an administration building, and improved roads and parking.

Sources: 2004 Comprehensive plan; <http://harrington.delaware.gov/history>

### HISTORY AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Harrington takes pride in their community history and has taken several steps to ensure that history is preserved. One of the major historical components of the City is the construction of the Delaware Railroad which ran through Harrington. The railroad not only made Harrington a significant part to the Delaware Railroad system, but also helped Harrington develop as a city. The tracks still run through the community and are used by freight trains. Harrington is included

as a “Railroad Town” in the Industrialization and Capitalization 1830-1880 time period in the Management Plan for Delaware’s Historical Archaeological Resources.

**HISTORICAL PRESERVATION**

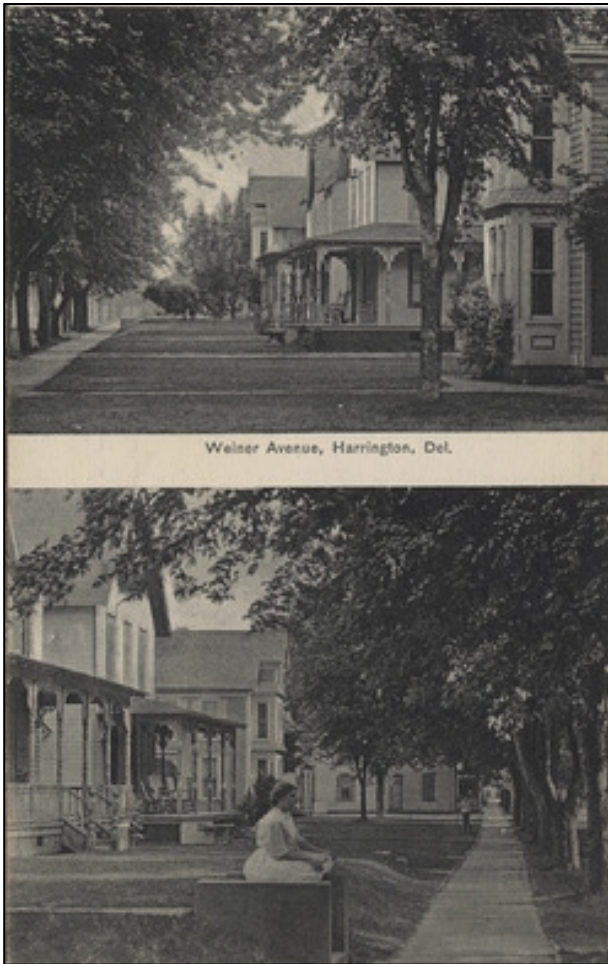
Although Harrington does not currently have historic preservation guidelines, the City has named three potential sites as historic districts that could possibly be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. They are the Harrington Historic District, Clark Street Historic District, and the Harrington African-American Settlement Historic District.

The Harrington Historic District, the largest of the three areas, could extend along Delaware Avenue and Railroad Avenue. The District boundaries are described as North Street and Simmons Road on the north, Delaware Avenue on the east, Reese Avenue on the South and West Street on the west. Areas of interest include Calvin, Dorman and Commerce Streets. The area is representative of urbanization and early suburbanization from 1880 to 1940. This potential district retains its physical integrity because the density remains the same as when it was first built.

The next potential district is the Clark Street Historic District which is east of the railroad. The area includes both sides of Clark Street and some adjacent properties on side streets from East Street on the west to Dixon and Simpson Streets on the east. This District also provides an example of early suburbanization development. The architectural styles include Colonial Revival and Bungalow. Physical integrity also remains in this area with original buildings being changed very little.

The final district is designated as the Harrington African-American Settlement Historic District. This area is located in the southwestern part of Harrington and is west of West Street. The District is bound by properties along Mispillion Street to the north, the City Limit to the west and properties on Milby Street to the south. This District provides an example of a self-contained community, including religious, educational and residential buildings associated with a black community that was isolated by institutionalized segregation.





Weiser Avenue, Harrington, Del.

Image Source: State of Delaware Public Archives & University of Delaware Library Digital Collections.

Although the City does not intend to impose historic preservation by ordinance under this Comprehensive Plan, the City Council is willing to work with property owners or private groups to recognize properties that are of significance to the community, the State of Delaware and the Nation. If requested to assist private preservation efforts, the City will support property owners' requests for federal funding for historic preservation or designation of the potential historic districts.

#### Harrington Historical Society Museum

The museum is located at 108 Fleming Street has a collection of memorabilia of Harrington. It also has the railroad complex on Hanley Street and includes the railroad tower, caboose and watchman's hut. They are currently open Hours: Monday through Friday 11 am – 3 pm. Every third Sunday 2 – 4. March – December. Please validate the museum hours by calling 302-398-3698.

## GOALS

Goals listed are not in any specific order and should be considered as funding and/or resources are available.

- Continue ongoing support with the Historical Society Museum
- Promote partnerships to explore additional funding sources and opportunities
- Increase communication to understand the needs (expenses, revenues, membership) of the Museum
- Research funding sources for surveys of Historic properties to inventory
- Assist in Community outreach and increase membership drive