

Stratford's History

Farming in Stratford, Part 2

*Respectfully submitted by Carole Dadino,
Stratford Historian*

South Jersey's Earliest Farmers and First Settlers

The land Stratford occupies, was once farmed by Lenni-Lenape Indian clans, who sold their land to early settlers for a few trinkets. Between 1714 and 1716, Major Abraham Porter, a King's Agent, obtained 3,000 acres of local farmlands.

Stratford's Farm Families

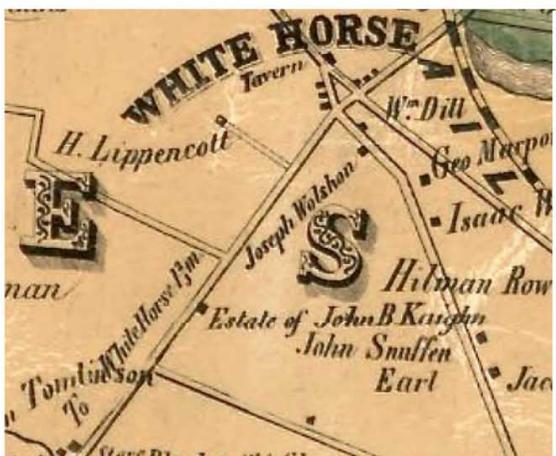
In 1745, John Hillman purchased about 500 acres of Major Porter's farmland. Benjamin Tomlinson was then deeded a portion of the land, from Josiah Hillman. In 1832, Benjamin's son, Ephraim, was given the land surrounding Laurel Lake, and Big Timber Creek. His son, Albert, farmed the land until his death in 1924. The land was then turned over to John Stafford who, in 1955, sold a portion of his farmland to the Laurel Mills Development Co



Construction on Warwick (Yellin) School. Vassar Ave., to the right, Longwood Rd. to the left

10 acres of the Stafford Laurel Mills farm was also turned over to the Borough for construction of a school.

Most of Stratford occupies the farmland once owned by John Hillman. Hillman converted the trees that stood on the properties into lumber and cordwood that was hauled to Chews Landing, loaded onto barges, and transported to Philadelphia. Deeds to Stratford's farmlands were transferred many times, over the centuries.



An 1875 map shows the Lippincott farmhouse (Later, the Old Orchard Inn.) The estate and farmhouse of John B. Kaighn can also be seen, on the map.

In 1889, The Rural Land Development Co. purchased the farmland, known as, the Hinchman-Lippincott Farm, from H. Lippincott plus a small piece of the J. Kaighn farm, and laid out a village they named "Stratford".

In 1885, Isiah Hunt purchased a portion of the J. Kaighn farmland and built a new farmhouse and barn.



The John Kaighn "Buttonwood House", on Laurel Road, about 1879. A few Buttonwood trees remain there, today.



As development continued, the last remaining farmland in Stratford, was Dairy Knoll Farm (Named in 1921). Operated first by John Hillman, followed by Isiah Hunt and the Reif and Raxon families, it was sold in 1955. The land is currently occupied by Rowen University School of Osteopathic Medicine, and Jefferson Health System.



The Reif family (above) became tenant farmers on the Hunt farm until 1921.



Howard and Sara Raxon were tenants on the Hunt farm, from 1921 to 1934. They purchased the farm from the Hunt Estate, in 1934. Above, Howard leading his horse team and Dairy Knoll Farm in 1952.



Hunt Farm House, and barn built by Isiah Hunt