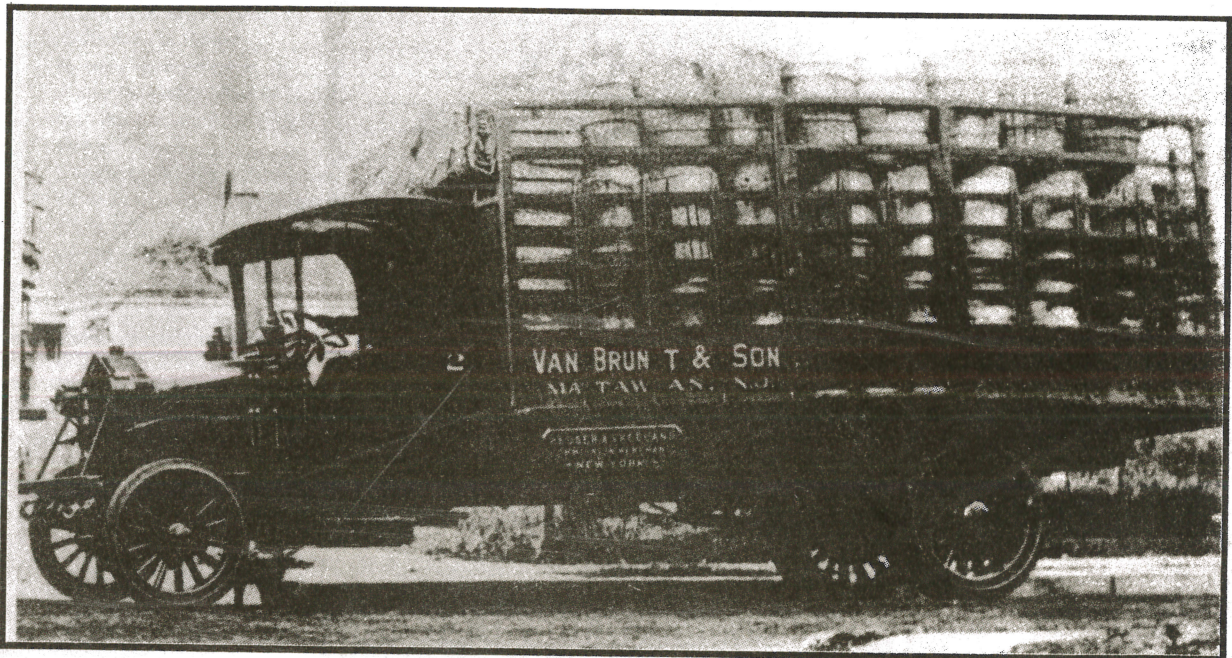


*Summer Issue 1999*

MATAWAN-ABERDEEN  
HOMETOWN SHOPPER™

EST. 1990



*This old Federal truck is loaded with barrels of produce for delivery to the markets in New York. Van Brunt's trucks used to leave the Matawan terminal for the city at 3:00 a.m. to catch the early buyers. Photo circa 1917-18.*

**Van Brunt & Son Motor Trucking Firm**

*Traces roots back to Matawan Stage Line of 1837*

(see article on page 4)

MATAWAN-ABERDEEN  
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## Van Brunt & Son Inc.

### The Oldest Truck Line In America

— 112 Years of Service —

When Fred Hermann and his family bought Van Brunt & Son Inc. in 1963, little did they know they were taking over a sizeable chunk of Matawan's local history.

In 1837 the steamboat "Monmouth" of Middletown Point, now Matawan, started runs to and from New Staten Island and Middletown Point. The fare was 50¢ roundtrip. As a direct result, the Matawan Stage Line was founded to operate between Freneau and Keyport. Early historical records indicate that a Nicholas Morgan Disbrow operated the stage line carrying mail between the Keyport Post Office and Matawan in 1850. Mr. Disbrow was succeeded by Sidney T. Smith who owned one coach which took four horses to pull when loaded to capacity with passengers inside and trunks and grips on the roof. In 1872, Carton & Company purchased the line, and shortly thereafter, sold out to Francis C. Bedle.

In the spring of 1887, William L. Van Brunt purchased the stage line. He acquired an old ice house on property situated on the corner of what is now Broad and Little Streets, Matawan, and converted it into a livery stable with one employee and one horse. In 1889, the stage line from the railroad station to town was purchased and Van Brunt continued his operation until the advent of the trolley line in 1903.



With the increased popularity of trains for passenger service and the demise of the steamer "Monmouth", hard times confronted the W. L. Van Brunt stables. A new concept was needed if the line was to prosper and grow. Mr. Van Brunt purchased a wagon and entered the freight cartage business.

In 1912 Van Brunt, moving with the times, abandoned horse-drawn wagons in favor of trucks. His first motor vehicle was a new Federal. He also used Pierce Arrows and Packards. The farms of Monmouth County gave this early truck line most of its freight. As industry came to the area, Mr. Van Brunt was called upon to fulfill their transportation needs as well. One early company produced the tile for the Holland Tunnel construction. At the peak of his business period, Van Brunt had 32 trucks and 25 employees.

The company continued as a livery and trucking business until Harvey Van Brunt joined his father in 1913. During the next two years all the horses and livery equipment were disposed of and replaced with motor trucks.

In the early 1900's, Van Brunt donated his horses to Matawan's Hook and Ladder Company No. 1. The firemen benefited from the gift until he began to replace his horses with trucks. Van Brunt's prominence in business and his

generosity to the firemen made him an important and respected member of the community.

When Congress adopted the Motor Carrier Act of 1935, William Van Brunt, and his son Harvey, obtained operating authority for the tri-state area.

During both world wars, the Van Brunt line was one of the principal carriers of military supplies manufactured in plants throughout the area.

On the death of W. L. Van Brunt in 1937, his son Harvey took over the reins of the company and the business continued to grow with the interstate trucking of freight in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

On January 1, 1963, Mr. and Mrs. Fred C. Hermann purchased the company and maintained the name Van Brunt & Son Inc. A new terminal was constructed in Sayreville to replace the former one in Matawan which was eventually remodeled into offices and apartments.

As the Hermanns learned about the long history of their business, they became interested in buying and restoring antique coaches of the type used by the Van Brunts in the early 1900's. One was restored and rode in Matawan parades.

Today Van Brunt & Son Inc. is still trucking with leased equipment. Their terminal is located on Bordentown Avenue in Sayreville.