



MASON-DIXON STARGAZER STONE

NEWLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE NEWLIN TOWNSHIP AREA OF THE BRANDYWINE VALLEY

Fall, 2020

**Executive Committee -- President: RoseLynn Malarek, Vice-President: Muriel George, Secretary: Diane McGowan,
Treasurer: Sandy Reber, Members: Kathy Conway, Bill McGowan, Kate Roby, Consultant: John O'Neal**

President's Report

Dear Members and Friends,

According to the Chester County Dashboard, Newlin now has 8 cases of Covid-19. While we still have a low percentage per capita (.062%), 8 cases are 8 cases too many. From what we understand, those who have the virus are, fortunately, in recovery, and we wish all a speedy return to total health.

This virus is a menace. Vigilance, discipline, and common sense are the orders of the day. We will get through this, maybe not this year or even next year, but ultimately we will prevail and emerge even stronger as the proud democratic society we are as we follow the values we hold dear as a civilized society.

The Newlin Historical Society continues our work to bring our rich history to all residents. We truly miss our general meetings where we get the chance to meet our members and friends; but rest assured, as soon as Covid-19 is firmly and fully behind us, we will resume our twice-yearly general meetings with guest speakers, free and open to all. In the meantime, visit us on Facebook. Our website – www.newlintwphistory.org – is up and running and full of interesting information relevant to our history. Speaking of websites, check out Newlin Township's website, www.newlintownship.org, where you will find Township information including minutes of the monthly meetings, references to Township Committees, a reference to your own autonomous Newlin Historical Society, a fascinating overview of Township history, and much more. Worth visiting.

In this fall issue of our Newsletter, we have an article written by guest contributor Don McKay on the history of the Embreeville post office, now of course, no longer in existence. It's interesting to note that although we are a small community consisting of 7,700 acres, we now have 4 post offices serving us – Coatesville, West Chester, Kennett Square, and the optional Unionville. Newlin Township is clearly the center of everything!

In a second article, you will find a brief history of the Brandywine Creek -- its geography, history, and economic impact on the area. The Brandywine has drawn people to settle on its banks for well over a thousand years, and it still does. This article will be the beginning of what we hope will be a gradual unfolding of the early history of Newlin Township. We hope you find both of these articles interesting, informative, and enjoyable.

Following the articles, we have information about the County's 1777 Atlas, a new tool in the research box.

An 1883 Map of the Embreeville Vicinity.



1872 Map of the Embreeville Vicinity

Brothers Charles and Louis Wickersham ran the general store and post office nearby Embreeville Station, a stop on the Wilmington and Northern Railroad.



Louis Wickersham ran the Embreeville Post Office and General Store from 1873 to 1891.



An early 20th Century photo of the general store and post office in Embreeville. At the time, Charles Kendig ran the store.



A 1981 photo of the former general store and post office in Embreeville.

The original article by Don McKay was posted on Facebook on May 8, 2020 – “Rediscovering Unionville-Chadds Ford.”

THE BEAUTIFUL and HISTORIC BRANDYWINE CREEK

By RoseLynn Malarek

The history of the Brandywine Valley is intertwined with the creek that gives our valley its name. The first inhabitants, the Lenape Nation, were drawn to the area because the creek, (which they called "Wauweset") supplied them with an ample supply of shad, and the surrounding deep forests were abundant with wildlife. Then the Europeans came. In 1638, Peter Minuit, working for Sweden, founded the colony of New Sweden and built Ft. Christina (named after the Swedish Queen Christina) near present-day Wilmington. Swedes, Finns, and Dutch inhabited and governed New Sweden until the English arrived and took control of the area in 1674. With the Europeans, came industrialization. The Brandywine, as it meandered its way along the countryside, had a steep descent of about 160 feet from Chadds Ford to Wilmington, a perfect tributary for providing energy for mills. The first mill was built in 1687 and the river soon became an industrial outpost as several mills were built along its banks. This was bad news for the Lenape. The dams built for the mills disrupted the shad run, and forests were cut down for development and farming. At the same time, the Indian ranks were severely depleted due to European diseases and wars with competing tribes. Their population shrank from a high of approximately 10,000 to 20,000 in 1660 to a mere 2,000 in 1682.

In October, 1682, William Penn arrived in the New World to establish the territory King Charles II had in the year before, generously granted to him -- 45,000 square miles of territory encompassing Pennsylvania and "the lower three states," now Delaware. In exchange, the king was absolved of a considerable debt to Penn's father. William Penn was a converted and very dedicated Quaker committed to freedom of spirit and fair treatment to all. He immediately began negotiations with the Lenape and signed several treaties with them. Unfortunately, these treaties were not always adjudicated in favor of the Lenape, or if they were, they were later ignored. By the 1750's, most of the tribe had left the Brandywine Valley. The last remaining Lenape in our area was Hannah Freeman, better known as Indian Hannah, who died in 1802 and is buried and memorialized here in Embreeville.

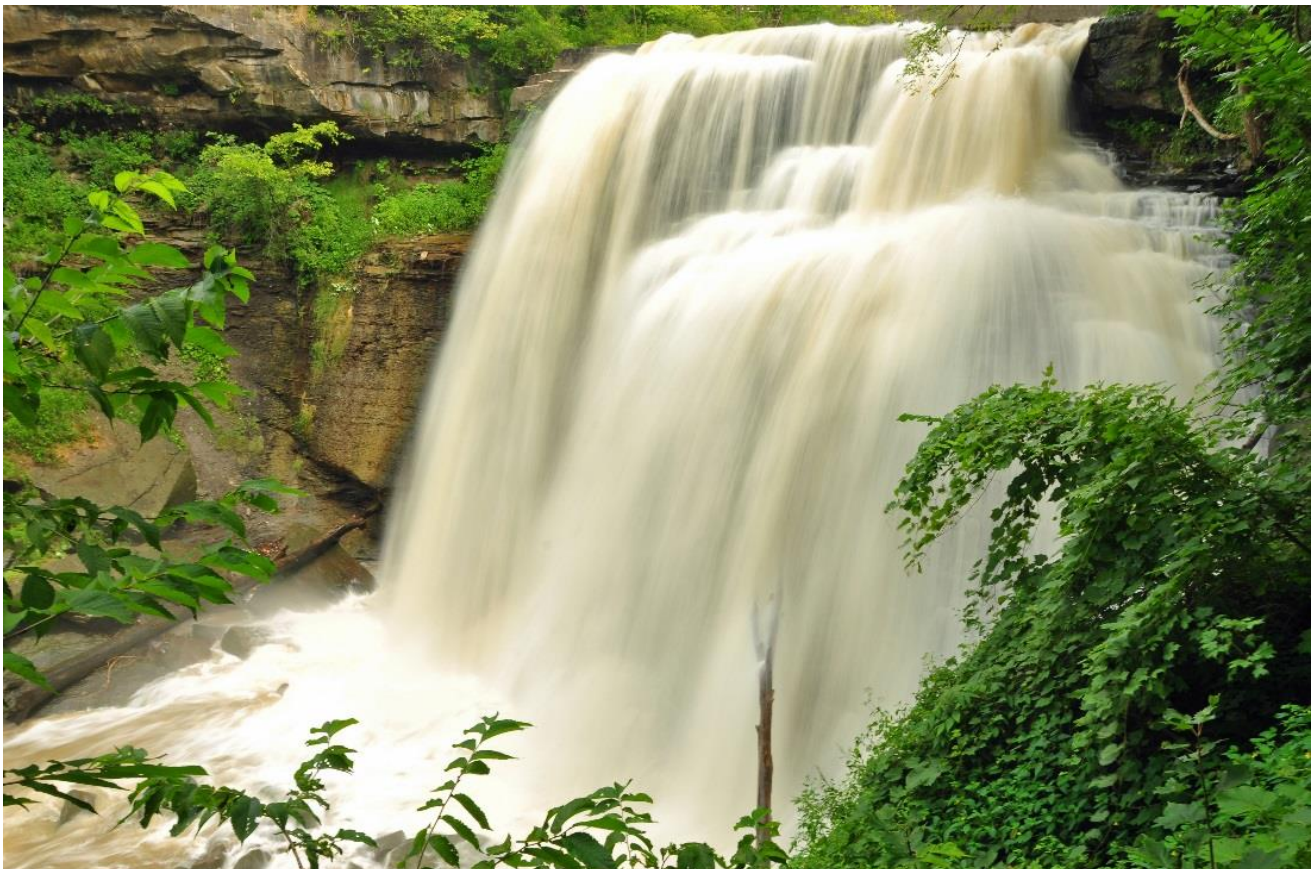
The Brandywine is not a long tributary -- West Branch is 33.1 miles and the East Branch 27.4 miles -- but it has long been much loved and admired as one of the most beautiful tributaries in the country and certainly one of the most historic. We know our Brandywine as a placid, tranquil waterway perfect for canoes, tubes, and kayaks; but, as noted earlier, it has a steep elevation before it reaches Wilmington with a discharge of 408 cu ft/s when it reaches the city. The creeks begin in bucolic Honey Brook as two brooks near each other, the West Branch and the East Branch. Our West Branch flows past Hibernia Park, Coatesville, Mortonville, Embreeville, and Northbrook before rejoining the East Branch between East Bradford and Pocopson Township. The combined branches then flow south through Chadds Ford, past the Brandywine River Museum, and into Delaware about 5 miles north of Wilmington. It flows through Brandywine Park in the center of the city before finally joining the Christina River one mile east of the city. The combined rivers then flow into the Delaware Estuary and eventually the Atlantic Ocean.

Today, we are grateful to live in such a beautiful and peaceful valley, but as we well know, that was not always the case. The Revolutionary War was coming. In 1773, the odious Tea Act led to the rallying cry, "Taxation without Representation." The colonists rebelled, and the "Sons of Liberty," disguised as Native Americans, threw an entire ship load of tea belonging to the British India Tea Company into Boston Harbor. Britain

reacted with the Intolerable Act closing Boston Commerce and ending self-government in Massachusetts. That act galvanized all 13 colonies, and the First Continental Committee was set up in October, 1774 to organize and unify the colonies in defiance of the British moves. The Committee appealed to King George III to redress their grievances, but that had no effect whatsoever. The Second Continental Congress convened in May 1775, basically organizing and preparing for war. By July 2, 1776, The Second Continental Congress declared itself independent from Britain, and two days later, the Declaration of Independence was signed. The war was in full bloom.

Well, we know how the war turned out, but things were not so rosy on September 11, 1777. The Battle of the Brandywine, the biggest and one of the most important battles of the War, took place right in our backyard; and the bucolic, tranquil Brandywine became a river of blood. The Battle of the Brandywine is a story that deserves its own time and place. For now, we are content to acknowledge Brandywine Creek's history and to love and admire the beautiful Brandywine Valley.

RoseLynn is a retired high school English teacher from Morris Knolls Regional High School in Denville, NJ, where at retirement she taught Advanced Placement English Literature, Humanities, and World Literature. She received a BA from Montclair State College (now University) and an MA from Seton Hall University. As a teacher, she was active in staff development and participated in workshops and panel discussions around the state. She was a consultant for 11 years to the Educational Testing Service on the Advanced Placement English Literature exams, was the first woman to serve as President of the Morris Hills Regional Education Association, was named Morris Knolls Teacher of the Year in 1983-'84, and represented Morris Knolls as the Outstanding Teacher in the NJ Governor's Teacher's Recognition Program in 1986-'87. She and her husband David H. (a research chemist) retired in 1995 and relocated to Newlin Township in 1998. They share an ardent love of gardening, (RoseLynn is a past president of the Delaware Valley Fern and Wildflower Society) classical music, and travel. Their two sons are David S., a computer scientist, and Eric, an environmental chemist. David and RoseLynn celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary this past August. RoseLynn currently serves as President and Newsletter Editor of the Newlin Historical Society.



Creek Falls as The Brandywine descends from Chadds Ford to Wilmington.



The placid Brandywine near the Brandywine Museum



One of the many falls on the Brandywine



Smith's Bridge



The Cristina River Basin and the Brandywine Creek

THE 1777 CHESTER COUNTY PROPERTY ATLAS

An Interactive Map

CHESTER COUNTY ARCHIVES – WEST CHESTER

In 2014, the Chester County Archives was asked to reconstruct and map public roads as they existed in 1777 in order to help understand the movement of British and American armies during the Battle of the Brandywine. Fortunately, the Archives has a collection of road orders dating from 1686 to 2006, but in order to locate and map the existing road system of 1777, it was first necessary to map the property owners because the locations of the roads were often described by those who lived adjacent to them. Thus, began an extensive project to trace and find the owners of property back in 1777 in order to accurately map the road system of 1777.

Newlin Township is one of the 24 Southern Chester County municipalities that has been mapped. The project, one of several projects related to the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777, was funded by the American Battlefield Protection Program in partnership with the Battle of the Brandywine Task Force.

While this mapping was initiated to learn more about the movement of troops during the Battle of the Brandywine, Chester County intends to eventually extend the mapping of 1777 roads and property owners to the entire county, a very long-term project.

The Interactive mapping in the Atlas can be used by present-day owners to discover who owned their property in 1777. To do that, go to 1777 Chester County Property Atlas, take the Instructional Video, and you'll be on your way.

