

Appendix A

A Brief History of the Brandywine

Ever since the Brandywine watershed was first inhabited by European settlers in the early 17th century, it has held an important and controversial role in society. Here, the Battle of the Brandywine was fought September 11, 1777 during the American Revolution. Here, the Du Pont's made their fortunes, built their empire, and constructed mansions and gardens at Longwood, Winterthur, Hagley, and Nemours. Here, Howard Pyle was born and established the Brandywine School of American Illustration that nurtured creative artists including three generations of Wyeths who have painted the landscapes and people of Chadds Ford. Here, controversy swirled over the blocking of anadromous shad migrations and removal of historic dams. Here, water withdrawals at the Cornog Quarry once stirred an uprising. Humans have both exploited and fought for the preservation of the Brandywine and the rich biological systems it supports for hundreds of years.

The earliest permanent European settlers were Swedish and Finnish who landed near the mouth of the Brandywine River in 1693. Most historians believe the name "Brandywine" came from an early settler, Andreas Brainwende (or Brantwyn), who established one of the first grain mills on the lower river. By the 18th century, the Brandywine Valley had become America's paper milling center and supplied paper to the print shop of Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia and the paper to print currency for the colonies.

One of the Valley's most famous figures was William Penn who introduced Quakers to this area. Under English rule, the colonists were allowed to retain their lands. In 1681, all of present-day Pennsylvania was granted to William Penn, and the following year the state of Delaware. Large numbers of English settlers began to arrive, many of them Quakers. They established large farms, and some built flour mills along the powerful creeks and streams of the Brandywine. The large supply and quality of Brandywine flour set an international standard, and the river maintained a leading commercial role through the 1800's.

The Wilmington & Northern Railroad Company began operations in 1874 during the industrial revolution. The line was to run from Wilmington to Reading, but was only completed as far as Birdsboro. The Wilmington & Northern was eventually annexed by the Philadelphia & Reading Railway Company and was added onto the Philadelphia & Reading line.

The railway became an invaluable means of transporting coal from the coal mines of north-eastern Pennsylvania to the docks along the Delaware River in Wilmington, Delaware. Although the rail lines are less active or abandoned and the paper and flour mills have long since disappeared, today the communities in the Brandywine Valley continues to grow. The Brandywine Creek watershed supports a population of approximately 235,500 residents, and it is projected that the population will continue to increase. With continuing growth will come more change, and farmlands and forests will be converted to homes and businesses.

In recent years, Chester County has lost farmland and open space at a rate as high as 5,000 acres per year. The waters of the Brandywine have been impacted by the industrial era and suburban sprawl. Changes in the natural hydrological condition of the watershed have resulted in chronic flooding problems along certain sections of the creek and its tributaries. County and municipal governments are now focused on the restoration of the Brandywine watershed, rehabilitating developed lands as Open Space and conservation of open space.