

# **North Brandywine Historical Trail**

**BSA Eagle Project by  
G. James Roman, III**

**FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

**WRITTEN BY: G. JAMES ROMAN III as a BSA EAGLE PROJECT  
ADMINISTERED AND MAINTAINED BY DEL-MAR-VA COUNCIL, BSA  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ORDER OF THE ARROW NENTEGO  
LODGE 20.**

Thank you for your interest in the North Brandywine Historical Trail.  
The trail begins at a point near Lea Boulevard and Philadelphia Pike, and ends at Naaman's  
Road and Philadelphia Pike.

Included in the trail package are the following:

1. write-up on each of the trail points of interest.
2. A map, outlining the trail, that indicates the numbered points of the trail and their locations.
3. A sheet for recording your answers.
4. A certificate of completion and order form for the trail patch and patch segments.
5. A roster for recording participant names.

The object of the historical trail is to visit each of the points, read the description, and answer the question for each. At the conclusion of the hike, a patch is available. Remember, you must complete the entire trail to receive the trail patch.

Welcome to the North Brandywine Historical Trail. As a member of the Boy Scouts of America, James completed this trail as an Eagle Scout Project over a period of two years. During that time, he gained a respect as well as a fascination for the number of historic events that have occurred in our community. As a result of those happenings, our community not only earned its name; it also gained significant historical value for participating in the liberation of our nation.

We hope you enjoy exploring the many wonders of this trail and grow to appreciate the importance of our community, so good luck and happy hiking.

Sincerely,  
G. James Roman III  
Author

P.S. Any additions or corrections of historical value are appreciated and will be considered for inclusion in the trail.

Welcome to Brandywine Hundred, an area rich in beauty and history. Once it was the home of the Lenni Lenape Indians. Since then it has been claimed by Maryland (1634) and governed by New Sweden (1638), New Netherland (1655), New York (1664), Pennsylvania (1682), and Delaware (1776). The name Brandywine itself dates from the 17th century. It is almost certainly Dutch but, despite a number of legends, the reason for the name remains uncertain.

Brandywine Hundred lies where the hills of the Piedmont rise from the flat expanse of the Coastal Plain. Along their boundary, called the Fall Line, the early settlers found both water power for industry and tidewater for navigation. And so the Hundred has long been an avenue of commerce. Until the 20th century, however, it remained largely rural, an area of farms and estates. Residential development began with the extension of the Riverview trolley line in 1895. The principal road, once called the King's Road, was incorporated as a private toll road, called the Wilmington and Philadelphia Turnpike, in 1813. It became a state road in the 1920s but the old name, customarily shortened to Philadelphia Pike, still remains. Along the King's Road or its successors have traveled such notable personages as George Fox (founder of the Society of Friends), Caesar Rodney, George Washington, and the Marquis de Lafayette. You will follow in their footsteps as you travel the North Brandywine Historical Trail. Again, welcome - to old churches, farmsteads, villages, mills, and roads, and to the remnants of once noble streams and forests.

John L. Schultz  
Eagle Scout Advisor

## **1. Shellpot Falls**

Our trail begins about 10 feet above sea level, where Shellpot Creek flows under Colony Blvd., just off Lea Blvd. The Fall Line occurs about 125 feet downstream from this point. Here one may see some squared-off stones, the remains of a dam and grist mill, the first industry in our area, built about 1662 by Jan Stalcop and his partners. The falls here were called "Skillpaddefallet" (Mud-Turtle Falls) by the Swedish settlers and from this comes our modern name Shellpot. This mill was the first of six mills that operated on the Shellpot, some into the early 20th century.

The falls were later known as Herring Falls. At one time they were a favorite swimming spot for the local boys, who called them the "Bulldog."

As you stand upon the small bridge that crosses Shellpot Creek, a wooden fence is positioned directly in front of you. How many wooden rails in height is this fence

## **2. Sellers Park**

As you travel toward Lea Blvd., and toward the Philadelphia Pike, the former Clifton can be seen on your right. It was once the estate of William Sellers, who founded the Edge Moor Iron Co., one of the area's first modern industries, in 1869. Here was fabricated the ironwork for the Brooklyn Bridge. The Edge Moor name was eventually used to designate the surrounding area. Today the site is occupied by Fox Point Industrial Park. The estate was sold in 1946.

As you travel along Philadelphia Pike, a wall runs along the length of the park. Of what is this structure made?

## **3. Shellpot Quarry**

In 1885, one P.P. Tyre opened this quarry of superior granite, known locally as Brandywine Blue Rock. This granite was of such quality that the four-foot blocks were used to support the St. Georges as well as the Brooklyn Bridge. Known locally as Petrillo's Quarry, after the last owner, all that remains of it are steep cliffs.

How many electrical towers sit on top of these cliffs?

#### **4. Penny House (1749)**

With the possible exception of the Block House ( # 35), this may be the oldest intact structure along the Trail. Built in 1749, on the farm of the Penny family who occupied it for more than one hundred years, this structure was used variously as a residence, blacksmith shop, cabinet-maker's shop and hostelry. Arthur Penny, father of David and William, farmed this land until his death in 1797. The house was then used as a cabinet maker's shop from 1798 until 1843.

Many notable personalities stayed here throughout the years. Robert Shaw, a local artist noted for his watercolors and etchings, had his studio here early in the century. Arriving in 1947, James Warner Bellah, author of many stories about the old West, lived in the Penny House for several years.

During the Revolutionary War, Knyphausen's artillery and Cornwallis' musket fire rattled the windows of this historical house. Historians say that the Marquis de Lafayette once warmed himself at the old fireplace. It is said, too, that George Washington often paused to drink at the spring in the rear garden on his journeys from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon.

Possibly the most famous visitors to the old homestead can still be experienced by visitors today. These include nine different ghosts. Included are Lucy, an 11-year-old girl who "lives" in a back bedroom; Abigail, who holds forth in the dining room, and the apparition of a lawyer who seems to prefer the middle bedroom. Others include a young girl who purportedly hanged herself in the house after an unhappy love affair, and three Continental soldiers.

Along the outside of the house is a stone wall. What tops this wall to deter trespassers?

#### **5. Penny (Bradford) House**

Directly beside the original Penny House, this structure was erected in 1795. Its primary purpose was to provide a second home for the rapidly expanding Penny family. Its second owners, the Bradfords, gave this house its present name. The porch-roofing of this structure has obtained an unusual color with age.

What is the color of this porch roof?

#### **6. Gordon Heights Lighthouse**

As you travel up Hillcrest Ave. it turns to the right and becomes Haines Ave. Note that the property boundaries continue the line of Hillcrest Ave. They are following the right-of-way of the trolley line that, until 1939, ran to Gordon Heights and Darby. Located upon Lighthouse Road, the Gordon Heights Lighthouse, built in 1920, has an unusual characteristic. Operated by the U.S. Coast Guard, it is said to be the only square concrete lighthouse in existence within the United States. As the rear light of the Marcus Hook Range, it helps guide cargo ships along the channel of the Delaware River. How many concrete segments were used to construct this lighthouse?

#### **7. Penny Hill Terrace (302 Philadelphia Pike)**

Originally owned by the Weldin Family, this structure was erected in 1790. Possessing farmland as far east as the river, Penny Hill Terrace was a major farming establishment. Located to the right of the front door is a porch light. Just above this light is an unusual object imbedded in the stone of the house. What is this object?

#### **8. Fraternal Order of Eagles (415 Philadelphia Pike)**

Playing an important role in the establishment of this historical trail, in its generosity the Fraternal Order of Eagles supplied financial support for this project. The author would like to take this opportunity to extend his sincerest gratitude. What is the lodge number of this institution?

## **9. St. Helena's Roman Catholic Church**

Until well into the 20th century, what is now St. Helena's Parish was an area of farms and country estates. Some of these have become public parks: Bellevue State Park, Bringham Woods, Rockwood, and Sellers Park. Others have survived only as place names: Gorden Heights, Lindamere, Phillips Heights, and Kynlyn. Residential development began about the turn of the century. The town of Bellefonte was incorporated in 1915. St. Helena's Parish was founded in 1936, when the first church, now used as an athletic hall, was built on Bellefonte Ave. The present church was consecrated in 1955. Surrounding the door frame of the church are objects carved in stone. What are these objects carved in the shape of?

## **10. Mt. Pleasant Elementary School**

Built in 1932, this was the first school building of the Mt. Pleasant School District. No longer existing, this school district has currently been incorporated with the Brandywine School District. What sits on top of the white cupola at the center of the school roof?

## **11. Bellevue State Park**

Stretching for approximately half a mile on the northwest side of Philadelphia Pike, this former home of William du Pont was built in the early 19th century to replicate Montpelier, the home of President James Monroe. Presently occupied by Bellevue State Park, the estate entailed 273 acres. As you pass the park along Philadelphia Pike, large fields can be seen. What are these fields used for?

## **12. 900 Philadelphia Pike**

This begins the village of Mt. Pleasant and typifies the average village house. Built in 1852, this building was used as a tenant house for employees of the area's industries. Count the number of slats in the right shutter alongside the front door. How many slats are there?

## **13. 904 Philadelphia Pike (Spring House)**

This building is known to have been standing as early as 1821. Its original purpose was as a spring house, supplying fresh water to the William du Pont estate. What material is this structure constructed of?

## **14. 11 Bell Hill Road**

Built in 1763, the original structure burned in the late 1980's. What is currently seen is a recreation of the original. Its function was to house the carriage driver and horses belonging to William du Pont. How many dormers protrude from the roof of this building?

## **15. 1003 Philadelphia Pike**

Originally the house of the estate manager for William du Pont, the house is currently occupied by the superintendent of Bellevue State Park. The first section was built in 1850 with a later addition built in 1880. In the original (stone) sections of the house, how many windows appear?

## **16. Mt. Pleasant Church of Christ (1011 Philadelphia Pike)**

Founded as a Methodist Church, Mt. Pleasant Church of Christ had its inception at a camp meeting held in Adam Talley's woods in August of 1833. The trustees bought one acre of land from George Cartmell for forty dollars and Cartmell donated another plot of land and all the stone for the building which was completed in 1838. There is a cemetery at the rear of the church where a number of Civil War veterans are buried. The earliest tombstone is that of one Wesley Weldin, dated October 30, 1842. Directly above the date engraved upon the date stone, two letters appear. What are these two letters?

### **17. Mt. Pleasant School (1010 Philadelphia Pike)**

Bearing the distinction of being the original school with the name Mt. Pleasant, this one-room schoolhouse was built in 1865. It closed in 1932 when the Mt. Pleasant School District was formed. How many chimneys protrude from the roof of this structure?

### **18. Bellevue Quarry (Wilmington Suburban Water Co.)**

Opened by Jacquet, Carr & Co. in 1827, this was the area's leading producer of Brandywine Blue Rock, a type of granite. The granite was used to build the Delaware Breakwater (at Lewes). It was shipped on sloops through Stoney Creek from the quarry to the Delaware River. As you travel north, you pass through what was locally called Quarryville and also cross Stoney Creek (from the Swedish "Steenkill"), also called Quarryville Creek. This 200 ft.-deep quarry is presently used as a reservoir by the Wilmington Suburban Water Co. As you face the Water Company, look directly behind the large tanks. What is in the back of this property?

### **19. Perkins Farm (1505 Ridge Road)**

The original land patent was obtained by Joseph Perkins in 1693 and the structure was built in 1779. The present building is open to the public for viewing. What is this structure made of?

### **20. Swan Tavern (2701 Philadelphia Pike)**

As you again come out onto the Philadelphia Pike and travel northbound toward Swann Tavern, you cross the valley of Holly Oak Creek. Once standing on the site presently occupied by the Goodwill building, the tavern was famous for the excellent meals it served. Many fights were instigated here. In 1840 John Faulk was attacked by nine thugs from Philadelphia. Faulk came out the winner, with five of them senseless on the floor, two had fractured ribs, and two had their noses smeared all over their faces. What popular fast-food establishment stands directly across the road from the Swan?

### **21. Practical Farmer Inn**

Immediately adjacent to site #20, the Practical Farmer Inn was built in 1750, and its location half-way between Chester and Wilmington made it the changing point for the stage coach horses, and many prominent persons in the early history of our country stayed there. In 1778 when the British frigates were patrolling the river, it was their habit to fire a few cannon balls into the settlement of Grubb's Landing, and one of these balls passed through the walls of this inn. The original inn was destroyed by fire on July 4, 1872, and the replacing structure was eventually torn down to make room for a shopping center. Many fencing duels were held here, and one Dr. Cardozeo was so adept that he cut the buttons from his opponent's shirt. How many businesses presently occupy this area?

### **22. Holy Rosary Convent (Grubb House)**

John Grubb was given a patent of 5000 acres of land from the courts in Upland, Pennsylvania. The Grubb family came to this area before William Penn, as early as 1679. The family lived in a cave along the banks of the Delaware. Emanuel Grubb, thought to be the first Englishman born here, was born in this cave. A year later, the first part of their home was built. The head of Worth Steel lived in it after the Grubb family. This house was at one time the convent for Holy Rosary Church. How many dormer windows protrude from the roof of this building?

### **23. Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church**

The Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church had a modest beginning, the first Mass being held in a private home in Worthland on January 4, 1920, by the Reverend James N. Grant, of Wilmington. Twenty-two people attended this service, but with the number of communicants growing, it was necessary for the congregation to move to the Community House. On December 8, 1921, the Right Reverend Bishop John J. Monaghan, D.D., dedicated the first Holy Rosary Church. The

present church was built in 1958. On the face of the church is a circular stained-glass window. How many panes of glass are in this window?

## **24. Governor Printz Blvd.**

Named after Johan Printz, Governor of New Sweden, Governor Printz Boulevard is a major road that was laid out along the route of the former Wilmington to Darley trolley line. It was completed in 1936 after work crews removed the old trolley tracks. At the intersection of Governor Printz and Philadelphia Pike there are two stone monuments positioned in the median strip. The smaller monument is dedicated by the Gold Star Mothers to their sons (a Gold Star Mother is one who lost a son during the Second World War). To who is the second, larger monument dedicated?

## **25. Methodist Church of the Atonement (3519 Philadelphia Pike)**

The Methodist Church of the Atonement, on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont, was the outgrowth of a Sunday school organized in 1864 in a room over Frank Ford's grocery store which stood opposite the Robinson House at Naaman's Road. Thomas Kimber, a Quaker, donated the land and provided \$ 2500 toward the building in 1866. Kimber was a preacher and teacher at Haverford College in Pennsylvania. Claymont already had the "Old Stone School" at Darley Rd. Kimber felt a chapel was needed for the Methodist farmers who worked the land in the area. At the time, they were attending Sunday school at Ford's store and going to church in Marcus Hook. Lumber for the new church was provided by Churchman Lumber Co. and the stone came from a quarry at Ridge Rd. The architect was Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia and the builder was Alfred D. Bird of Claymont. On the second tallest portion of the church, how many total slats are in both shutters?

## **26. 13 Manor Avenue**

Welcome to the former home of one Oliver Heineman, founder of Delaware County Lumber Company. This residence, built in 1929, also bears the significance of housing the creator of this trail. By this time you have probably worked up a thirst. So don't be shy; knock on the door and ask for a glass of water. We'll be happy to have you. You're not going to escape without answering a question, though. How many steps lead to the front door?

## **27. Claymont Farmhouse (19 Manor Ave.)**

This residence, the main structure reportedly constructed around 1760, is said to be the first farmhouse in the Claymont area and was owned by one Joseph Gorby. Additions to the house were added in 1848 and 1900. The original barn to the property was located where Archmere Academy's gymnasium now stands. The lane to the property, from Philadelphia Pike, became Manor Ave. Casey Lane, in front of the property, was named for George Miller Casey a descendent of the original owner. The house has been continuously occupied by a Gorby descendent, with the exception of four years, since it was built. "Mr. Fipp" is reported to be the ghost in residence???? How many posts support the front porch?

## **28. John J. Rascob Mansion (Archmere Academy)**

This Neo-Renaissance Italian structure, formerly the residence of John J. Raskob, was imported from Italy stone by stone and was finished in 1918. Raskob was Secretary of the Du Pont Co., a builder of the Empire State Building as well as a prominent figure in the national Democratic Party. This estate was the presidential campaign headquarters for Alfred E. Smith in 1928. Called Archmere by Raskob because of a view of the river through an arch of trees, in 1932 it became Archmere Academy, founded by The Premonstratensian Fathers of the Roman Catholic Church. Facing Archmere from Philadelphia Pike, how many pots sit atop the entrance gate?

### **29. Claymont Schoolhouse (3611 Philadelphia Pike - Corner of Darley Road)**

On August 9, 1805, John Dickinson, patriot and statesman, who lived on what is now Darley Road, conveyed to the farmers and freeholders of Brandywine Hundred the plot of ground on which was erected this building, still called the "Old Stone School House." The building was created of native stone and served its purpose well until 1905, when on June 4th of that year two thousand dollars was raised to enlarge it to care for the increasing school population. Later it housed the Claymont Library. What is the school number of this building?

### **30. Wren's Nest (3701 Philadelphia Pike)**

Here lived Felix Octavius Carr Darley (1822-1888), who attained both a national and international reputation and was mid-19th century America's most popular book illustrator. During his early career as an illustrator in 1841, he received design commissions for Graham's Magazine and The Saturday Museum, as well as special design requests from such writers as Thomas Dunn English and Charles Dickens. Some notable personalities to visit Wren's Nest include Edgar Allen Poe, Charles Dickens, Nathaniel Hawthorne, James Fenimore Cooper, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Washington Irving. The structure itself was built in the early 1800's and was owned by the Carr Family. In later time the house became known as the Darley House and goes by that name today. In front of the house is a historical marker that provides additional information. What legend is mentioned on this marker?

### **31. Episcopal Church of the Ascension (3717 Philadelphia Pike)**

In 1843 the Right Reverend Alfred Lee, D.D., Episcopal Bishop of Delaware, conducted religious services in the Old Stone School House. As the mission grew a church called "Ascension" was built and consecrated by Bishop Lee on September 14, 1854. The church originally stood across the pike from its present location on land donated by the Reverend Mr. Clemenson. Church Lane takes its name from the fact that it ran by the church. In 1927 the church was moved across the pike to its present location and the new parish house built of stone was added. What is the color of the cross atop the church?

### **32. Worth Steel Co.**

Originally founded as the Long Streth Nail Factory in 1790, this was the first of its kind in the United States. The present occupant melts and reprocesses scrap steel and is the largest consumer of raw electricity in Delaware. What company presently occupies this factory?

### **33. Naaman's Creek/Bridge**

The community of Claymont was first located around the Fall Line of Naaman's Creek; here were the stores and dwellings. On the hill where the City Steel Company (originally Worth Steel) office now stands was the mansion of Richard Clayton, who called his place "Claymont" (short for "Clayton's Mount"). This name was later given to the railroad station and, when it was located here, the post office. To serve this community, Naaman's Road was laid out from the public landing in 1789. In 1802 the old stone arch bridge over Naaman's Creek was built by Adam Wilkinson for the Levy Court. The original stone arches of this oldest permanent bridge may still be seen under the present bridge, which was built in 1919. George Churchman, a Quaker, and a founder of Claymont, was born in Darby, Pa. In 1832, for the sum of \$10.00, he bought a sawmill and grist mill on Naaman's Creek that dated back to 1701. It eventually became the largest sawmill in Delaware. The logs were brought from Lock Haven in upstate Pennsylvania and floated down the Susquehanna River to Port Deposit as "arks," then down the Chesapeake Bay and up the Elk River to Back Creek. There the logs were hauled by mules through the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal to the Delaware River, then floated up the Delaware to Naaman's Creek with the tide. In 1654, Johan Cloudi Rising came to the area as Director General of New Sweden. One of his first acts was to hold a treaty of friendship with the Indians. He called a council at Printz Hall on Tinicum at which ten sachems or kings attended,

representing different clans or tribes in the vicinity. A distinguished chief called Naaman was the principal speaker on that occasion. The natives, though it had only been sixteen years since the arrival of the Europeans, had found the proximity of the white race destructive to their people. They complained that the Swedes had brought much evil, for many of the natives had died since their arrival into the country (probably from smallpox and other infectious diseases). Rising “soothed them with gifts,” which he liberally distributed among them, the result of which was the natives’ determination to maintain friendly relations with the Governor and his people. Naaman exclaimed, “Look and see what presents they have brought to us, for which they desire our friendship.” Look for the blue and gold historical plaque at the corner of Philadelphia Pike and Naaman’s Road. What are the last two words engraved upon this plaque within the text?

### **34. Robinson House**

In 1723 Colonel Alexander Robinson built the beautiful colonial mansion, later known as Naaman’s Tea House, at the junction of Naaman’s Road and Philadelphia Pike,. It was here that George Washington stayed from August 23-25, 1777, awaiting word as to where Lord Howe was going to land. Upon receiving the information that Howe had landed at Head of Elk (now Elkton, Md.), he ordered “Light Horse” Harry Lee to remove and hide the millstones of the nearby mill. This was done and the millstones may still be seen, one located in the hallway fireplace of the house, and the other buried in the back yard. After the Battle of the Brandywine, the mansion was recaptured by the British. It was later liberated by “Light Horse” Harry Lee in 1778, who sneaked up from the river through corn fields and took the place together with three British Officers who were eating breakfast. Some distinguished visitors of the residence include “Mad” Anthony Wayne, Robert Morris, and Lafayette. George Washington was so fond of a variety of pears that grew on this property that it has since been named the Washington Pear. What is the color of this historic house?

### **35. Block House**

When the Swedes, led by Peter Minuit, arrived in 1638, our community was occupied by the Unami, or Turtle, Clan of the Leni-Lenape Indians. In order to fend off native attacks, the Swedes built the Block House which stands directly behind the Robinson House. It may be the oldest surviving building in Delaware, possibly dating back to 1654, although historians do not agree on this point. This one-room structure has distinctive rectangular holes on all sides of the building. What could these holes have been used for? Congratulations! You have just completed the hiking portion of the North Brandywine Historical Trail.

#### ANSWER SHEET

- |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 13. | 25. |
| 2.  | 14. | 26. |
| 3.  | 15. | 27. |
| 4.  | 16. | 28. |
| 5.  | 17. | 29. |
| 6.  | 18. | 30. |
| 7.  | 19. | 31. |
| 8.  | 20. | 32. |
| 9.  | 21. | 33. |
| 10. | 22. | 34. |
| 11. | 23. | 35. |
| 12. | 24. |     |

The final question on this trail is the easiest of them all. Did you enjoy the North Brandywine Historical Trail?

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION  
NORTH BRANDYWINE HISTORICAL TRAIL

I certify, on my honor, that \_\_\_\_\_participants of  
\_\_\_\_\_ (City and State) completed the North Brandywine  
Historical Trail On \_\_\_\_\_ (Date). Completed questionnaire for each  
participant is enclosed with fee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by Hike Leader      Date

Send \_\_\_\_\_ Patches      @ \$ 3.00 ea. = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed for this amount:      \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
PAYABLE TO:

Mail Patches to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE LIST ROSTER OF PARTICIPANTS ON REVERSE SIDE  
ROSTER OF PARTICIPANTS  
NORTH BRANDYWINE HISTORICAL TRAIL

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.  | 16. |
| 2.  | 17. |
| 3.  | 18. |
| 4.  | 19. |
| 5.  | 20. |
| 6.  | 21. |
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| 13. | 28. |
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| 15. | 30. |