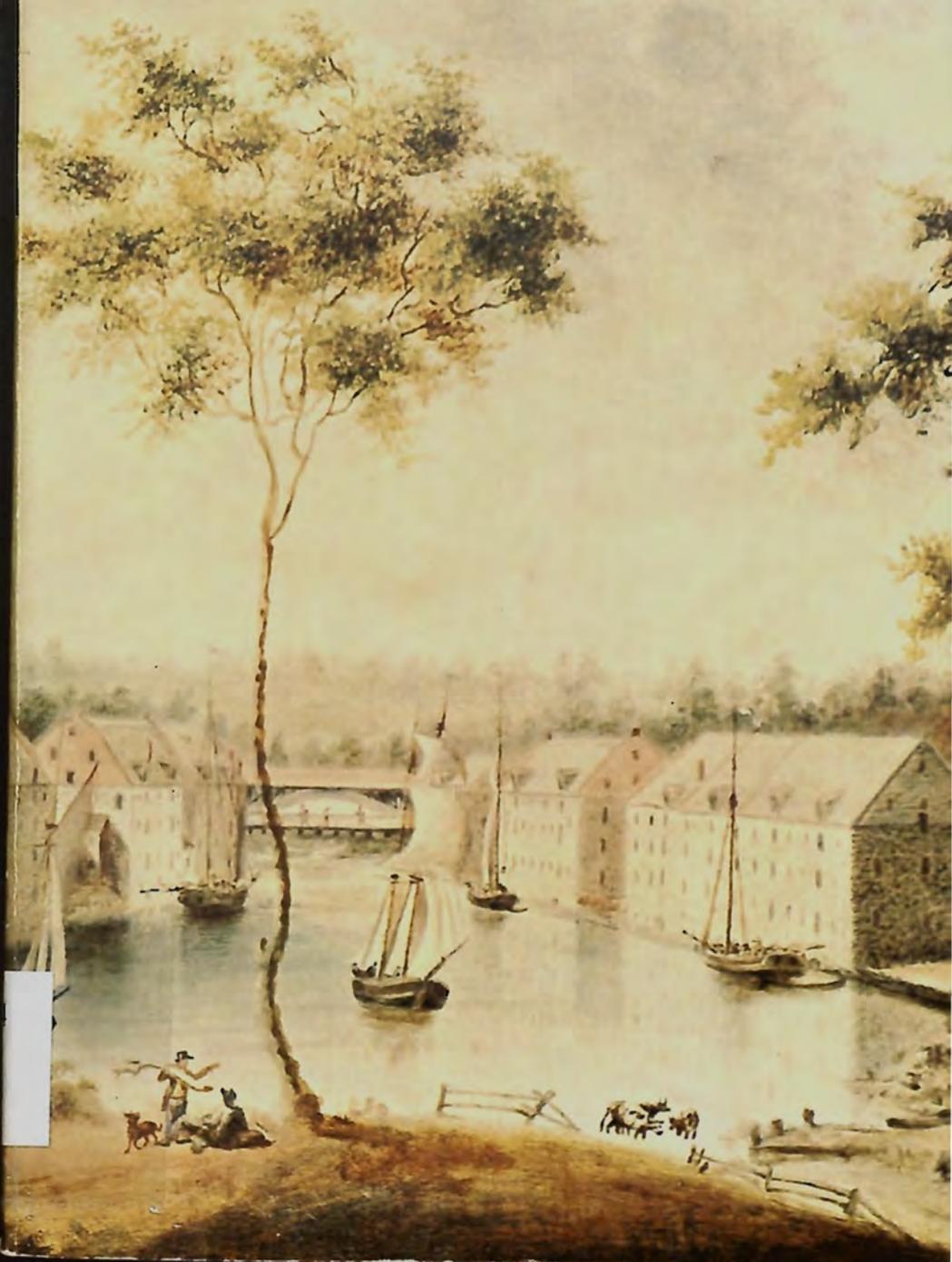
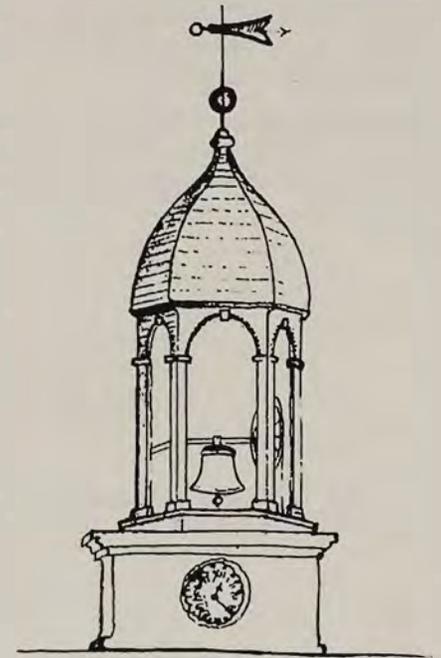


BRANDYWINE VILLAGE



Carol E. Hoffecker



Brandywine Village

THE STORY OF A
MILLING COMMUNITY

Old Brandywine Village Inc · Wilmington, Delaware · 1974

Cover illustration: View of Brandywine Mills,
oil painting by Bass Otis c. 1820. (Courtesy of
Lewis Rumford, II, Baltimore, Md.)

Illustrations are from the Eleutherian Mills Historical
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To HARRIET CURTIS REESE

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Foreword

THIS IS THE STORY of one of early America's most important industrial communities. It is a story of enterprise, innovation, and success—and of decline and disappointment. It is also the story of the efforts of a small group of citizens to preserve a part of this community and its history.

Brandywine Village is today almost in the center of greater Wilmington, but it was outside the corporate bounds of the city until 1869. Nevertheless, it was principally this industrial village that brought a degree of fame and fortune to northern Delaware in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And it was the mills of Brandywine Village that attracted notable visitors such as William Winterbotham and the Duc de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt who described this largest of new world flour milling communities in their travel accounts.

Dr. Carol Hoffecker, an historian with deep roots in the First State, has made a thorough study of the diverse source materials documenting the history of this flourishing mill village which drew its power from the lower Brandywine. Using diaries and deeds, tax records and personal reminiscences, she has recreated "the miller's world," depicting not only their industrial achievements and tribulations, but also their involvement with politics, banks, railroads, and religion. She has given to Delawareans a fresh and vivid account of their early history.

In 1962 Wilmingtonians read in their morning paper that the row of stone houses on North Market Street might be razed for commercial development and a parking lot. These surviving residences of the Brandywine millers represented an imposing remnant of the early community. Numerous individuals and organizations expressed concern over this threat, but no existing group was prepared to mount a campaign to save and preserve these structures.

The annals of historic preservation are filled with similar situations, and it is not uncommon for one person to serve as catalyst or take the first essential step to convert concern into action. At this point Harriet Curtis Reese invited four Wilmington friends for

lunch—Annette Bush, Colonial Dame; Albert Kruse and Robert Raley, both architects and restoration specialists; and Walter Heacock, museum director and an officer of the Historical Society of Delaware. This luncheon led to a public meeting and the incorporation of Old Brandywine Village as a nonprofit organization. Dr. Hoffecker recounts the later activities of this group, their success in saving first the Lea-Derickson House at 1801 Market Street, then another and another.

Although the story told here is a success story, the task is far from complete. The main historic structures are today either owned by Old Brandywine Village, Inc., or are in sympathetic hands. But major restoration is required on several houses; the extension of the park along the Brandywine is essential to the rehabilitation of the community; and the renovation of more recent houses and stores is needed to revitalize the area.

Not only as a co-founder but as an active board member and vice president until her death in September 1971, Mrs. Reese was the inspiration, the spark and spur which kept the directors of Old Brandywine Village steadfast in their task of preserving and improving this historic community. It is to the memory of Harriet Curtis Reese that this book is dedicated with admiration, affection, and appreciation.

Walter J. Heacock

Greenville, Delaware
June 1974

Acknowledgments

THE CREATION OF ANY BOOK depends upon the aid of many persons besides the author. This is particularly so in the case of a highly illustrated community history. During the months in which I have been preparing this manuscript, I have on many occasions sought the assistance of others who could supply me with information and photographs that reveal the life and development of Old Brandywine Village.

I am indebted to Mr. Dale Fields, Executive Director, and Mrs. Gladys M. Coghlan, Library Director, of the Historical Society of Delaware. They and their staff were exceedingly kind to permit me free rein in the Society's manuscript collection at a most inconvenient time for them when they were in the throes of moving their entire library into new quarters. The staff of the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library was also very helpful. Mrs. Betty-Bright Low and her Research and Reference Department helped me to ferret out a great deal of material on the operation of the mills. Mr. Daniel Muir, Mrs. Mary Day, and Miss Marjorie Gregory of the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library's Pictorial Collection Department took an eager interest in my project and helped me to locate the pictorial material reproduced here. Mr. Frank Herzog and Mr. Charles A. Foote, photographers for the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, also gave generously of their time and talents toward this project.

Among the officers of Old Brandywine Village, I am particularly indebted to Mr. Robert Raley, A.I.A., who offered me many files of the organization and a large collection of photographs. He also took the time to explain the process of architectural restoration that was employed in the Village. My research task was made immeasurably lighter thanks to the previous efforts of Mrs. Earl Krapf, a zealous and careful researcher, whose enthusiastic efforts on behalf of O. B. V. deserve a great deal more praise and acknowledgment than I can give here. It was she who tracked down the deeds on each of the restored buildings in the Village.

Professor John A. Munroe and Dr. Norman B. Wilkinson read

Brandywine Village

the manuscript and made valuable suggestions for its improvement. I am also indebted to those who worked on the editing and publication of this volume, particularly Mr. David Gilchrist, Publications Director of the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, who interrupted his other duties to see this book through the press. His patience and guidance are much appreciated. Mrs. Kerin Hearn assisted in the editing and Miss Barbara E. Benson was an indispensable help in preparing the index. Last of all I must thank Dr. Walter J. Heacock, Vice President of Old Brandywine Village, Inc., and General Director of the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation. Dr. Heacock asked me to undertake this task and provided me with many records of O.B.V. His continued encouragement and interest in the project have been much appreciated.

BEGINNINGS



Sketch of Brandywine Mills by Charles Willson Peale, October 23, 1789.
(American Philosophical Society.)

IN 1725 a Quaker family led by Ann Tatnall, widow of Robert Tatnall, left Leicestershire, England, and set sail from Bristol bound for America. With Ann Tatnall were her son and daughter, Edward and Mary Ann; Mary Ann's husband, William Shipley; and their three children, Thomas, Ann, and Elizabeth. Following a harrowing two-month voyage during which there was an outbreak of smallpox on board, their ship arrived at Philadelphia.¹ While the ship was kept in quarantine the Shipleys and Tatnalls had their first opportunity to witness the seagoing commerce of the bustling little city. In that year alone, 140 ships entered or cleared the harbor of this fast-growing metropolis of the middle colonies.² This was the Philadelphia that Benjamin Franklin knew as a young man; just two years before, in 1723, he had come to the Quaker City to seek his fortune.

When they were released from quarantine, Ann Tatnall and her family bought farmland southwest of the city near Springfield, Pennsylvania. Soon afterward Mary Ann Shipley died, but William did not remain a widower for long. At the Springfield Friends Meeting he met an intelligent and vigorous young woman named Elizabeth Levis who was a recognized minister of the Society of Friends. The two married and were the parents of two more Shipley children, William and Sarah.

In addition to her responsibilities as a wife and mother in a household with five children, Elizabeth continued to serve as

a minister. These duties required her to make frequent journeys to Friends meetings throughout Pennsylvania, where she witnessed to her faith and experience of the Inner Light. Sometime in the early 1730s Elizabeth Shipley experienced a powerfully moving dream. In her vision she was traveling through the wilds and came upon the vista of two rivers, one shallow, rocky, and swift, the other deep and slow-moving, joining together on a flat plain.

Not long afterward she had occasion to visit the Friends meetings south of Pennsylvania proper in the Three Lower Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex. These counties were a separate part of Penn's proprietorship ceded to him in a special grant by James, Duke of York, so that Penn could control the approach to Pennsylvania by sea. As Elizabeth rode southward along roads hardly improved from the Indian trails, she came to a ford on the Brandywine River where a rude barley mill stood about a mile from the old Swedish settlement of Christine. After crossing the stream and climbing a hill, she surveyed the land that lay behind and before her and was amazed to see the scene of her dream. Behind lay the Brandywine, shallow and full of rapids owing to the force of the water falling from the hills to the northwest. Just south of the ford, the Brandywine became calmer and deeper as it meandered through a low, flat coastal plain toward its confluence with the slow-moving Christina River to disgorge into the majestic Delaware. The surrounding lands were in a state of semicultivation. There were a few old farmhouses along the banks of the rivers, and the small stone Swedish Lutheran church then thirty years old must have been visible along the Christina. Nearly one hundred years before, Swedish colonists had planted their initial settlement on that spot and had built a wooden fort, long since decayed, on the banks of the little river that they named for their young queen.

Her visits completed, Elizabeth hurried home to tell her husband about her dream and her experience along the Brandywine. Convinced that the Inner Light had inspired her family to relocate in the region of the three rivers, she urged William to visit the area.³

William Shipley was a practical man not easily persuaded by visions or dreams, but he had reasons of his own to be interested in his wife's description of the land of the three rivers. William



Remains of the Barley Mill Dam, showing Van Buren Street Bridge, 1940. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.

was dissatisfied with farming and longed to become a merchant. He had probably decided against moving his family to Philadelphia on the grounds that the city was already too mature commercially to ensure his success. From what he heard concerning the Brandywine and Christina, this place might become a shipping center for farm produce in the surrounding region.

In 1735 Shipley went to see the land and its rivers for himself. There he discovered Thomas Willing, owner of much property along the Christina, busily laying out lots for a town to be called Willingtown. Impressed with the commercial potential of the place, he bought several lots in Willingtown and built a large three-story brick home with a gambrel roof at the southwest corner of what became Fourth and Shipley streets. His enthusiasm

infected several of his neighbors in the Springfield and Ridley areas who followed the Shipleys. By 1737 Willingtown contained thirty homes.⁴

In the 1730s Pennsylvania farm settlement had moved westward into Chester and Lancaster counties. Like other colonial middle-Atlantic farmers, those on the frontier raised wheat as their chief market crop. The frontiersmen discovered that the high cost of carrying their crops in wagons over primitive roads to the Philadelphia market eliminated most of their profit. A shorter, less costly route lay open southward to the Christina River near Willingtown. From that point the produce could be loaded on shipboard for Philadelphia or sent directly overseas to West Indian and European markets.⁵ It was this potential as a point of transshipment that attracted settlers to Willingtown.

Shipley took the lead in organizing the town's trade. He and other townsmen petitioned King George II for a charter whereby the town could become a self-governing borough and hold markets. In 1739 the King granted their request, but with the stipulation that the town be renamed Wilmington in honor of a courtier, George Spencer-Compton, Earl of Wilmington. The Shipleys were also prominent in the organization of the town's Friends meeting. Meetings were held in the Shipley home until 1738, when the Society erected a meetinghouse at the crest of "Quaker Hill," now Fourth and West streets.⁶

In 1741 Thomas Canby came to Wilmington with two of his sons, Thomas, Jr., and Oliver. Thomas Canby had been a youthful immigrant to America in 1683 when, as an indentured servant, he accompanied his wealthy uncle to Pennsylvania. Thomas grew with the new Quaker colony. Once freed from his indenture he acquired farmland in Bucks County, where he became a prominent man and justice of the peace. He married three times and fathered seventeen children. In addition to farming, Thomas Canby constructed a gristmill both for his own use and for his neighbors. At age seventy-three he decided to leave his farm in Bucks County to come to the new commercial community of Wilmington.⁷ Thomas recognized the magnificent opportunities that Wilmington offered as a site for merchant mills. Already the farmers of New Castle County and southeastern Pennsylvania were shipping wheat through the port there, and the rapid-flowing

Brandywine could provide unsurpassed power to turn the heavy stone wheels of gristmills.

The arrival of the Canbys brought a new direction to Wilmington's growth. Heretofore the town had concentrated on mercantile development along the navigable Christina River. The Canbys showed that the Brandywine too had its part to play in the town's economy. In 1742 Oliver Canby, Thomas' twenty-five-year-old son, constructed a mill and a dam connected to a short race on the south side of the Brandywine, a little downstream from the barley mill at the ford. Canby's mill was not the first gristmill on the Brandywine, but it was the first to be planned as a merchant mill rather than a custom mill. The merchant miller was not only a miller but also a trader in wheat and flour; Canby planned to buy wheat from farmers and to market the flour himself. In contrast to this was the practice of small country custom mills which ground for the farmers, who then took the flour home with them or marketed it themselves, often paying the miller in wheat.

The technology available in colonial America imposed severe limitations on the areas in which merchant milling could be pursued profitably. A merchant mill depended on three chief ingredients for its success: (1) a large supply of wheat, (2) abundant water power, and (3) access to the sea. All of these the Brandywine had, especially in the short stretch near Wilmington where the rapids ceased and the stream became navigable. Time was to show that Oliver Canby's mill of 1742 was the first step toward the creation of a major center for the manufacture of flour. In the following four decades many mills were built, served by elaborate dams and races. Nearby the millers built their homes. A bit removed from the town of Wilmington which lay over the hill facing the Christina, the millers' enclave became a distinct community called Brandywine Village. This book is a history of these people, their mills, and their village.



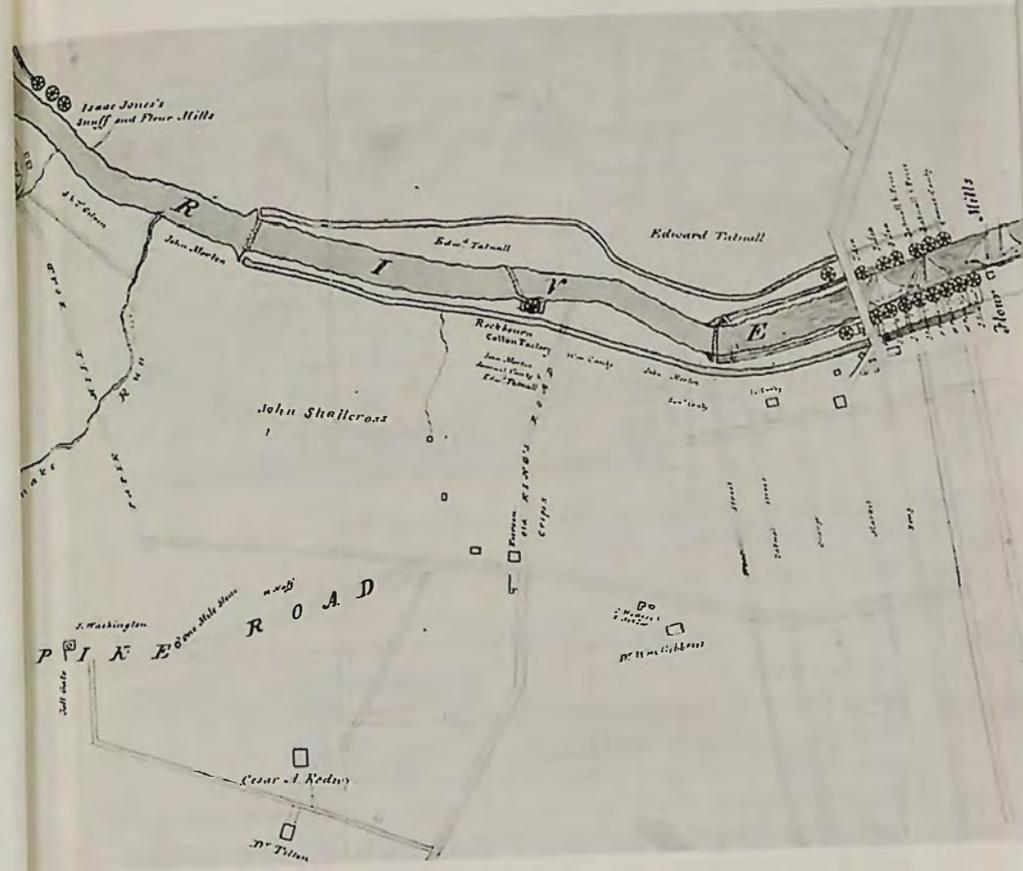
Ingleside, home of Oliver Canby built in 1744 near the Brandywine.
From Henry Seidel Canby, *Family History*, 1945.

THE FAMILY of Tymon Stidham, a Swedish colonist, ran the first mill on the Brandywine. The Stidhams owned land on the south side of the creek from tidewater to Rattlesnake Run. Their mill, the old barley mill that Elizabeth Shipley saw, was built sometime before 1687. It was probably powered by an undershot wheel, one in which the water was directed toward the lowest part of the wheel. This type of mill wheel was inexpensive to construct because there was no need to raise the water level very high by dams and races, but the undershot also made less efficient use of the available water resources than did breast and overshot wheels. Across the creek from Stidham's lands was the farm of Jacob Vandever, a Dutchman whose family had settled the area in the mid-seventeenth century. In the 1720s Samuel Kirk purchased the old barley mill and nearby lands from the Stidhams. He formed a company that raised capital to build a dam and a new mill.¹ The remains of this dam are still visible at the foot of West Street, a pile of rocks scattered across the stream.

In 1742 Oliver Canby bought shares in the Kirk Company and constructed a short race and a mill powered by a breast wheel at the foot of Orange Street. When his father died the following year, Canby bought out the Kirk shareholders. He now controlled three mill sites and the south side of the Brandywine from Rattlesnake Run to tidewater, riparian rights unexcelled in eastern America and the source of his family's fortunes for succeeding generations.²

Oliver had the wisdom and good fortune to marry well in selecting Elizabeth Shipley, the daughter of William Shipley by his first wife, Mary Ann Tatnall. He fathered four children, including two sons, William and Samuel, before his death at age thirty-eight in 1754.³ In about 1744 Canby built a large stone home on the hill overlooking his mill, where his family lived comfortably. This house, later called Ingleside, was the home of three generations of Canbys. When it was about one hundred years old the house was sold to Episcopal Bishop Alfred Lee and subsequently became the diocesan bishopstead. An inventory of Oliver Canby's personal estate shows that he owned a riding horse, two feather beds, a looking glass, a walnut chest, and a variety of other furnishings including china and silverware.⁴ After Oliver's untimely death, his wife Elizabeth's brother, Thomas Shipley, gave up a farm in Ridley, Pennsylvania, to assume control of the family milling business on behalf of his sister and her young family.

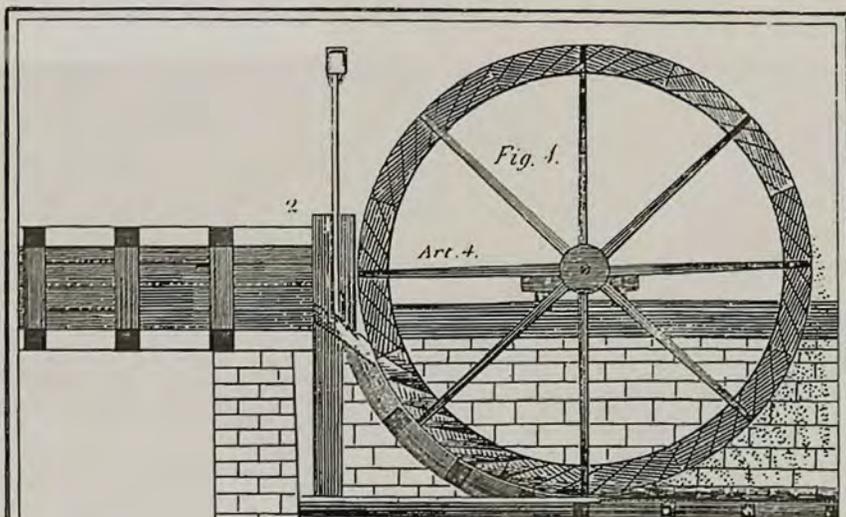
In 1760 Daniel Byrne and William Moore, men of whom little is known, proposed to build a mill powered by an overshot wheel at the place where a small ferry took people across the Brandywine, now the foot of French Street. This was the first mill to be built downstream from the rapids in the navigable portion of the river. Byrne and Moore needed a long millrace that would reach upstream far enough to raise the elevation of the race water to a height sufficient to turn an overshot wheel. It was therefore necessary for them to call upon the sheriff of New Castle County to work out an equitable agreement with the owners of mills and lands along the proposed race. Byrne and Moore were required to guarantee that their race would supply a flow sufficient to turn an overshot wheel at another tidewater mill that Thomas Shipley was about to erect, provided that Shipley paid a portion of the expenses of building and maintaining the new race. Other property owners, including Timothy Stidham and the Vandevors, received cash payments or indemnities for the use of their land.⁶ At the same time William Marshall, another miller, built a new dam for the long race farther upstream from the old West Street dam at a point just south of Rattlesnake Run. In December 1762 the long race was dug and four overshot mills were under construction at tidewater.⁶ The construction of the upper dam and



Brandywine Mill Seats Company Map, 1822.

long race along the south bank of the Brandywine was a significant step toward more complete use of the stream's waterpower potential. Later a short race designed to turn breast wheels was dug from the lower dam near West Street to tidewater. With this development the process of power creation on the south bank was complete.

By the 1760s overland travel had matured to the point where a bridge was needed near the mills to connect Wilmington with



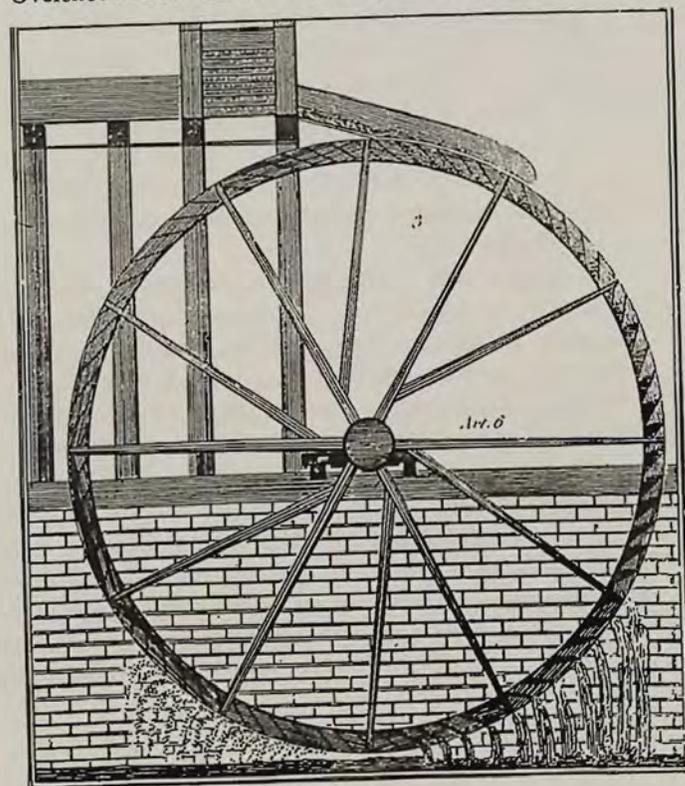
Breast wheel. From Oliver Evans, *The Young Millwright's and Miller's Guide*, 1795.

the farms of northeastern New Castle County and with Philadelphia. In August 1760 county officials decided to build a bridge forty feet wide across the Brandywine at tidewater. It is likely that when completed the bridge was less than this width, however, because carriages continued to cross the river by ferryboat. The construction of the bridge was timed to be completed before the new tidewater mills began grinding, so that the bridge builders would not interfere with the water supply to the mills.⁷ Another important consideration in the construction of the bridge was its location just upstream from tidewater. An older rude bridge located downstream from the mills was demolished to make way for sloops to sail up the Brandywine to the mills. By placing the new bridge immediately above the tidewater mills, the county ensured the navigability of the Brandywine directly to the mill seats. The bridge was sturdy; it was supported by three stone pillars each about six feet thick.⁸ Its construction altered the location of the main post road by a quarter mile or so from the old ford upstream to its new point of contact with the bridge. The new post road or King's Highway followed the course of modern-day King Street through Wilmington, passed over the

Brandywine Bridge, and proceeded northward along the present-day course of North Market Street.

With the completion of the bridge two Brandywine millers, William and James Marshall, proposed to construct a long race on the north bank. Already a bolting mill which sifted the ground meal was operating on the north side, but millers had heretofore bypassed this bank because large rock formations posed engineering difficulties to digging a long race. An indenture made in 1769 by which the Marshalls agreed to recompense Tobias Vandever and the other landowners on the north bank states that the new race would be constructed so as to turn overshot wheels for four mills below the bridge. They planned to build only two mills for themselves.⁹

Overshot wheel. From Evans, *Young Millwright's ... Guide*, 1795.



The Marshalls soon recognized that their capital resources were inadequate to complete their ambitious plan. In 1770 they transferred the project to Joseph Tatnall, a relative with more considerable means who was destined to be one of the most important millers ever to operate along the Brandywine. Joseph Tatnall was the son of Edward Tatnall, who had come to America in 1725 with his mother, Ann Tatnall. Edward married Elizabeth Pennock, the daughter of Irish Quakers. Among their children were Joseph and Mary Tatnall, who married William Marshall, thus making Joseph Tatnall and Marshall brothers-in-law. Tatnall sold his shares in mills on the south side to raise the funds with which he pushed the north race to completion. By 1772 four mills were grinding at the tidewater on the north bank. Tatnall owned two of these and had an interest in the third.¹⁰ His principal partner was Thomas Lea, who married Tatnall's daughter Sarah. Another of his daughters, Margaret, married James Price, who was also an investor in the merchant mills. With the completion of the bridge and the north race, a new residential community began to develop on the north bank. Joseph Tatnall bought land there from Tobias Vandever and was among the first to build a home in this little hamlet that was soon to be known as Brandywine Village. The house, now 1803 Market Street, was constructed of Brandywine granite probably taken from the excavations for the north race. Next door James Marshall built a similar house, now 1801 Market Street, which later became the home of Thomas Lea.

The merchant millers were concerned with shipping as well as with the production of power and the grinding of grain. Beginning with Oliver Canby, millers bought both river sloops and shares in ocean vessels. Several millers owned shares in the brig *Nancy*, which made a number of voyages to the West Indies and Portugal with cargoes of flour and barrel staves in the years just before the Revolution. The *Nancy* returned carrying rum, sugar, molasses, coffee, and chocolate, items sold by commission merchants in Philadelphia on behalf of the brig's owners.¹¹ Like other eighteenth-century merchants, the Brandywine millers were represented by agents called factors who resided in the port cities with which they had trade connections. It was the factor's job to dispose of the incoming cargo at the best possible price and to



Joseph Tatnall (1740-1813).
From J. T. Scharf,
History of Delaware, 1888.

select the cargo and destination for the ship's voyage. Through these business relationships the merchants and millers on the Christina and the Brandywine were connected with the greater network of British imperial and other world markets.

The Revolutionary War caused a lengthy interruption in these mercantile patterns. When the war began the British stationed the man-of-war H.M.S. *Roebuck* in Delaware Bay to prevent Philadelphia and Wilmington merchants from carrying on overseas trade. Cut off from outside markets, the merchant millers were challenged by the task of distributing flour to the American army and people in a highly inflationary economy.

In its early stages the war was concentrated in Boston and then New York. It was not until the summer of 1777 that the British invaded Delaware and Pennsylvania, when a force of 17,000 commanded by General Sir William Howe sailed from its base

in Manhattan to the Chesapeake Bay and thence to the Elk River in Maryland. There the soldiers disembarked and began an overland march to Philadelphia. General Washington, eager to recoup his army's losses in the battles of Long Island and White Plains the previous year, shadowed the British movements, intent on attacking the enemy at some vulnerable place before Howe could reach his objective. On September 10 the Americans positioned themselves along the Brandywine about ten miles north of Wilmington at Chadds Ford, where Howe's forces would cross the river.

In the tense days that preceded the battle, Washington stationed his troops in the vicinity of Wilmington. General Anthony Wayne made his headquarters in the Joseph Tatnall house, and Washington and his staff attended meetings there.¹² It was probably at this time that Washington and Lafayette first met Joseph Tatnall. They seldom ever visited the region again without paying their respects to this Quaker miller, who is said to have promised the Virginia general, "I cannot fight for thee, but I can and will feed thee." Washington, recognizing the military significance of the mills, ordered the "runners" or upper millstones removed and carted to hiding places in Chester County where they would be safe from the British.

Noise of the battle at Chadds Ford carried downriver and was audible at Brandywine Village, where the residents of Wilmington and the Village waited anxiously for some sign of the outcome. Refugees from the battlefield limped into town with tales of the American defeat, soon followed by a contingent from Howe's army sent to occupy Wilmington and to secure whatever wheat and flour were stored there. The Tatnall house then became the lodgings for several British officers, who according to family tradition allowed the Tatnalls only one sleeping room on the ground floor but were otherwise polite and considerate.¹³

No doubt recalling the American attacks on British outposts at Princeton and Trenton the previous winter, the King's troops did not remain long in Wilmington, and in December 1777 the town was reclaimed by an American unit commanded by General William Smallwood. Washington ordered Smallwood to restore one of the mills to provide wheat for the army but cautioned him to supervise the operation closely and to be on the alert for British

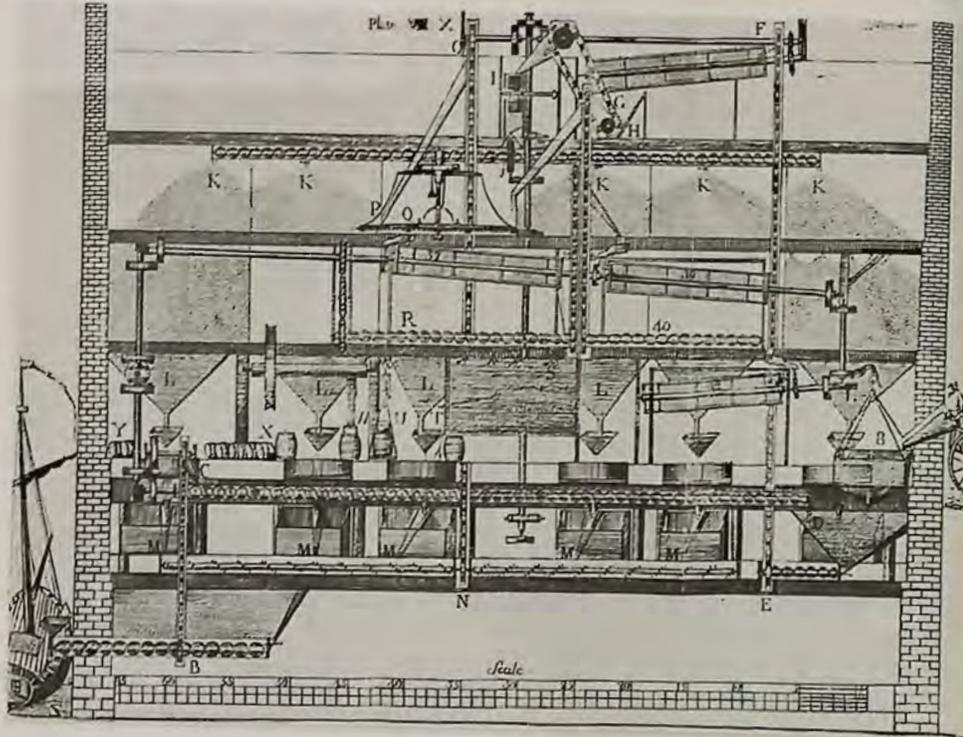
raids.¹⁴ In the spring of 1778 Howe abandoned Philadelphia and marched overland back to New York, thus ending the only interval in the war in which the mills and the village were the object of contention. For the remainder of the conflict the Brandywine millers provided flour to local inhabitants and contracted with Robert Morris, the premier merchant of Philadelphia, to supply the American army.

In the postwar period the Brandywine mills reached the peak of their importance. Obstacles to the free flow of trade that had marked the war years disappeared; the millers purchased grain from a wide area including Maryland, Delaware, Southern New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Brandywine superfine was the most sought-after flour in the American market. In addition to these trade advantages the millers had leashed the Brandywine by the most efficient means known in the late eighteenth century, and they were among the first to adopt Oliver Evans' improved system for the operation of gristmills.

Oliver Evans, a mechanic and inventor from Newport, Delaware, developed his milling improvements in the 1780s. Evans'

Oliver Evans (1755-1819).
Engraving by W. G. Jackman.





Plan for an Automated Mill. Evans, *Young Millwright's . . . Guide*, 1807.

achievement was not the creation of complex machinery but rather the ingenious adaptation of a number of simple devices that, taken together, speeded up the milling process, reduced the number of people needed to run a mill, and increased the amount of high-quality flour that could be extracted from a given quantity of wheat. Evans revolutionized the milling process by rationally organizing the locations of the consecutive operations and by adopting automatic means of conveying the grain from one process to another. A continuous canvas belt with small buckets attached lifted the grain vertically, while a wooden version of the Archimedean screw carried the grain horizontally. All these devices were powered by the same waterwheel that turned the millstones. Another innovation, the hopper boy, was a circular rake that spread and thus cooled the ground grain before it was run through the bolting screen.

Evans first experimented with his ideas by adapting them to a mill on the Red Clay Creek southwest of Wilmington in the early 1780s. Word of his inventions brought to the scene several Brandywine millers, who must have been impressed to see the mill operating without any human aid while Evans worked in a nearby field.¹⁵ Joseph Tatnall and the other merchant millers automated the operations of their own mills sometime about 1790, and Tatnall agreed to endorse the machinery in *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide*, Evans' treatise on his system. His milling inventions failed to bring much recompense to Evans, for the inventor discovered to his profound disappointment that millwrights could easily follow the directions given in the guide without paying the inventor a cent.

The new machinery rattling and banging away, night and day, fascinated visitors to the Village in the 1790s and early nineteenth century. In his celebrated *Travels Through the United States*, made in 1795–96, the Duc de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt recorded a good deal of information about the operations of the mills at Brandywine Bridge. He noted that

all the operations of the mills are performed by water, from the unloading of the sloops which bring the corn, to the complete finishing of the flour. Thus the sacks are hoisted into the granary, the flour is sifted, is ground, and bolted, without the least manual labor.

He discovered that the millers imported special silk bolting cloth from Holland woven in such a way that it could not stretch.

The proprietor of the mill which I particularly examined is a Quaker, of the name of Tatnall. His son-in-law, Thomas Lea, took upon himself the trouble of shewing me the whole of it. He is also a Quaker, about thirty years of age; he is a handsome, cheerful, active man. Like a true American patriot, he persuades himself, that nowhere is any undertaking executed so well, or with so much ingenuity as in America. . . . [Thomas Lea] is in partnership with his father-in-law: their mill is not employed for the public, but solely for their own private service. . . . They purchase their corn in Virginia, Maryland, and in the state of New York, which is brought from thence in two of their own ships; they convert it into flour; and the same sloops carry it back again to Philadelphia, where it is sold for exportation. They grind about one hundred thousand bushels of corn yearly.

La Rochefoucault further noted that Tatnall and Lea employed

six men to load the flour into barrels. Twenty-four additional employees manned the sloops and made the barrels. All these men were white, most of them immigrants from England and Ireland.¹⁶

Another contemporary traveler, William Winterbotham, was also impressed with the convenient location of the mills, their grinding capacity, and the absence of heavy physical labor in the movement of the grain through the milling process. He claimed that there were twelve mills at Brandywine Bridge capable of grinding 400,000 bushels per year but that due to unstable market conditions they usually ground only 290,000 to 300,000 bushels. Each mill contained two pairs of millstones, and, he said, "In consequence of the machines introduced by the ingenious Mr. Oliver Evans, three quarters of the manual labour before found necessary is now sufficient for every purpose." He ascertained that the mills

give employment to about two hundred persons, viz., about forty to tend the mills, from fifty to seventy coopers, to make casks for the flour, a sufficient number to man twelve sloops of about thirty tons each. . . . The vessels are unloaded with astonishing expedition. There have been instances of one thousand bushels being carried to the height of four stories in four hours. It is frequently the case, that vessels with one thousand bushels of wheat come up with flood tide, unlade, and go away the succeeding ebb, with three hundred barrels of flour on board. . . . The transportation of flour from these mills to the port of Wilmington does not require half an hour; and it is frequently the case, that a cargo is taken from the mills and delivered at Philadelphia the same day.¹⁷

The products of flour milling were not of uniform quality. The whitest, lightest, and finest flour to fall through the bolting cloth was called superfine; below it were a series of gradations. The term "middlings" was used to describe the coarser flour. Below middlings came "ship stuff," a combination of coarse flour and bran, and "shorts," or bran. Every miller tried to maximize the percentage of superfine, the most profitable flour. In Oliver Evans' system of milling the middlings were reground to extract more superfine from each bushel of wheat. Evans found that he could obtain an average of 64 percent superfine with his process, about 3 to 4 percent more than in the pre-Evans mill.¹⁸ Winterbotham records that "in the fall of 1789, and spring of 1790, there were made at the Brandywine mills fifty thousand barrels of superfine



Cooper Shop exhibit, Hagley Museum.

flour, one thousand three hundred and fifty-four ditto of common, four hundred ditto middlings, as many of ship stuff and two thousand ditto corn meal."¹⁹

As the two late eighteenth-century accounts make clear, more workmen were employed as boatmen or as coopers than in the milling processes. The art of manufacturing watertight wooden barrels from staves and hoops was essential to the operation of gristmills, especially merchant mills that exported flour overseas. Barrels were the only containers then available in quantity that could ensure the preservation of this perishable commodity. Coopering was a trade that was taught through apprenticeship and required a great deal of skill, experience, and judgment in

the shaping and aging of wood. The coopers in the vicinity of Brandywine Village worked in small shops of only a few workers. Although they were often employed exclusively by a specific miller, they were paid on a piece-rate basis. According to La Rochefoucault, in the mid-1790s they earned about a dollar a day. Their monetary remuneration was considerably higher than that of mill workers, who made only six to eight dollars a month; but whereas the mill hand received board and clothing from his employer, the cooper was independent and had to provide for his food and clothing from his earnings.¹⁹

Another activity related to the work of the mills was shipbuilding. This industry flourished along the banks of the Christina and on the Brandywine downstream from the mills. Shipbuilding firms, like cooper shops, were generally small, employing only a few workers. The bulk of the shipbuilder's commissions was for oceangoing vessels—brigs, barks, and schooners—and for grain-carrying river sloops which averaged 40 to 50 tons.²⁰ Sloops of six-foot draft could be moored alongside the mills, but vessels of greater draft could navigate in the Brandywine farther downstream.

During the second two-thirds of the eighteenth century an important center for the collection, milling, and distribution of grain developed at Wilmington and the adjacent community of Brandywine Village. This activity spawned a succession of related industries, especially coopering and shipbuilding. A number of individuals pioneered in the dramatic transformation of the area. William Shipley, Oliver Canby, Joseph Tatnall, and Oliver Evans are only the most important of those whose efforts created the new economy. In the following section we shall pursue the careers of the descendants of these early merchant millers in the rapidly changing economy of nineteenth-century America.

CHAPTER 2

The Millers' World

JOSEPH TATNALL was a local hero, friend of Washington and Lafayette, donar of the large clock and bells in the cupola of Wilmington's town hall, and paterfamilias of the Brandywine Village milling community. When he died in 1813, he left an estate valued at \$239,796.25.¹ The men who now assumed leadership in the mills—Tatnall's sons-in-law, Thomas Lea and James Price; his son, Edward Tatnall; and a more distant relative, James Canby, grandson of Oliver—inherited a prosperous, well-established industry.

The new generation proved as eager as those before to improve the mills. They seized upon new opportunities for trade made possible by national independence and the new federal government. Theirs was an age that witnessed remarkable national economic growth and physical expansion spurred by developments in transportation and in credit accumulation. First turnpikes and then canals knit the country's economy together, making it possible for new farms west of the Appalachians to become participants in national trade. Banks chartered by the federal government and the various states funded these and other large capital projects. In addition the beginnings of the industrial revolution were felt in America as the factory system, pioneered in textile manufacture in England, was transferred to America. All these developments had important repercussions along the Brandywine.

The Brandywine Village millers were in the forefront of local

efforts to expand trade. At the turn of the century American merchants adopted toll roads, called turnpikes, as a means to reach the hinterlands beyond their various cities. Turnpike companies were chartered by state governments to build improved roads, usually with gravel beds and bridges over minor streams. In the 1790s Philadelphia merchants built the Lancaster Pike, America's first turnpike, to facilitate trade between the Pennsylvania metropolis and the state's most promising agricultural region. The idea quickly spread to other towns and cities. Between 1808 and 1815 the merchants and millers of Wilmington initiated a series of five improved toll roads radiating out from the town like the spokes of a wheel. Three of these, the Lancaster, Kennett, and Concord pikes, reached into the farmlands of southeastern Pennsylvania, while the other two improved the overland routes connecting Wilmington with Philadelphia and Baltimore.²

Another important innovation of the early republican period designed to quicken economic development was banking institutions. The first bank chartered by the State of Delaware was the Bank of Delaware, established in Wilmington in 1796. Brandywine millers were prominent among its principal officers and stockholders. Joseph Tatnall, acknowledged leader among the millers, was elected the first president of the bank; he served until 1802, when he was succeeded by his son-in-law Thomas Lea.³ Other banks, the Bank of Wilmington and Brandywine and the Farmers Bank, followed soon after. These institutions provided an organized and regulated means by which merchants, millers, and others in business could secure loans to undertake new enterprises or to improve established ones.

The course of commercial development was not always a smooth one. The Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the War of 1812 brought both peaks and valleys to American business. By 1815, when the long period of wars came to an end, American business entered a new era of growth characterized by intense commercial competition among coastal cities for the trade of the rapidly expanding western farms in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys and Great Lakes region. These were the years when Americans were dazzled by New York's successful construction of the Erie Canal which connected New York City with immensely large and productive farmlands in the Old Northwest. In the

early nineteenth century, Philadelphia faced serious problems in the contest for the control of western trade. To the north, New York City challenged the Quaker City as North America's premier port and master of the trade of the western frontier. To the south the rival town of Baltimore cut into Philadelphia's control over nearby territories in the Pennsylvania city's own backyard, the Susquehanna River valley. Baltimore was not only considerably closer to southern and West Indian markets than was Philadelphia, but the Maryland city could compete with Philadelphia in the lucrative wheat and flour trade that formed the bulk of this commerce. After the Revolution many Maryland and Virginia farmers abandoned soil-depleting tobacco in favor of wheat. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, much of this crop was being marketed in Baltimore, where fifty merchant mills were using Oliver Evans' improvements.

The story of the Brandywine mills in this period was intimately connected with these shifts in wheatlands and markets. The relative decline of Philadelphia as a flour shipping port and the simultaneous rise of Baltimore and New York was unwelcome to the Brandywine millers. Not only was it more difficult for them to secure supplies of wheat but they also found themselves selling in a more competitive market. The millers of this generation could hardly rest on the accomplishments of their fathers who had built the dams, races, and mills that they were now called upon to operate.

James Canby, born in 1781 to Samuel, the son of Oliver Canby, and Frances Lea Canby, was perhaps the most important Brandywine Village businessman of the early nineteenth century, and his career reflects the competitive pace of business in that age. He was reared in a house at 14th Street facing Brandywine Walk, now Market Street. His father, Samuel, built the house about 1790 when the Canbys outgrew Oliver's original house, Ingleside. Samuel was devoted to the Society of Friends, and his home was the frequent stopping-off place for itinerant Quaker preachers. Elias Hicks, the controversial evangelist, visited him often on his trips to Wilmington. Hicks's call for a return to primitive Quaker practices split the Society. In Wilmington, as in other places, those Quakers who could not accept the Hicksite teaching broke with the meeting and built a new Orthodox Friends meetinghouse in

1827. As his diaries show, these troubles upset Samuel Canby a great deal, causing him bad dreams.⁴ His son, James, was less inclined to center his life around religion but rather concentrated on business affairs. Henry Seidel Canby described his great-grandfather James as "a Friend all his life, dressed simply though not in exactly plain clothing, but he was not, I am sure, a Quaker inside. The fenced-in plot of Quakerism was too narrow for his worldly abilities. . . . And it was probably too narrow for his tastes."⁵

The scope of James Canby's business affairs is indicative of the economic expansion in his generation. In addition to the merchant mills on the south bank that he inherited from his father and grandfather, Canby was a banker who served as president of the Bank of Wilmington and Brandywine and was an early enthusiast for railroads. In the mid-1830s business leaders in Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore proposed to connect the three cities by rail. The project was a promoter's dream because the proponents of the plan in each of the cities envisioned that the railroad would surely increase their own commerce at the

Samuel Canby House, 14th and Market Streets. Demolished ca. 1937. Mid-nineteenth-century photograph.



James Canby (1781–1858). From Canby, *Family History*.

expense of the other two. Wilmingtonians believed that the railroad would widen their city's hinterland by bringing wheat from Maryland farms to the banks of the Brandywine for milling. Consequently, the Brandywine millers were among the railroad's best friends in Wilmington. James Canby in particular took a leading role in organizing a company called the Wilmington and Susquehanna Railroad and securing a charter to lay track through Delaware. This company was later merged with its sister firms in Pennsylvania and Maryland to form the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad.

Unfortunately, unlike his religious father, James Canby did not keep a diary, for it would be most interesting to view these interstate business negotiations through his eyes. But the historian is in some luck because James's son Edmund Canby was a faithful recorder of his own and his father's activities from the 1820s



James Price residence, 16th and French streets. In 1928 when Frank R. Zebly took this photograph, the house had long since been converted into many small apartments and was known locally as the Hundred House because so many people lived there.



Edmund Canby residence, *above*, 1305 Market Street, built in 1826. Photograph by Frank R. Zebly, 1931. George Gray House, *below*, 1307 Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware (News-Journal Company.)

through the 1840s. Edmund's diaries constitute the most complete record we have from any period of life at Brandywine Village, and it is particularly informative to have such a source for these years of transition in the local milling industry.

Edmund Canby was married to Mary Price, the daughter of the miller James Price and his wife, Margaret Tatnall Starr. The Price family lived in a large home at 16th and Walnut streets that Margaret had inherited from her father, Joseph Tatnall.⁶ There the Prices reared four children, three sons in addition to Mary: Joseph T., John H., and James E. Price. In the decade 1826-1836 James Price built a row of regency-style houses for his children on the west side of Market Street between 13th and 14th streets. Joseph lived at 1301, John at 1303, and James at 1307. James Canby built the house at 1305 Market Street for his son Edmund



on the occasion of his marriage to the daughter of his friend James Price. All these handsome homes have been demolished, most recently the house at 1307 Market Street, known in its latter days as the Judge Gray House because U.S. Senator George Gray lived there at the turn of the century.⁷

In contrast to his father and other ancestors, Edmund was not a particularly ambitious person. He suffered from asthma and seems to have regulated his life around the demands of the disability. During most of his life he managed the family mills, and his diaries reflect the miller's world. Edmund's greatest concerns were for the price and quality of the coming wheat crop, the price of flour in the world market, and the continual problems of fire, flood, ice, and drought which threatened the mills themselves.

In the wheat-growing season Edmund spent a great deal of time riding out into the surrounding farm district to inspect the quality of the new crop. The Canbys were also eager for intelligence about grain from other parts of the United States and Europe. As in any speculative enterprise they were at pains to hold off making purchases until the crop began coming on the market in quantity, in hopes of lower prices. In some years poor harvests in the United States drove prices so high that Europeans exported wheat to the American mills.⁸ By the mid 1830s Edmund

South Race at Van Buren Street Bridge in the 1930s.
Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.



Looking upstream toward Market Street Bridge, mid-nineteenth century.

was making regular trips to New York, a city that he considered "dirty," to purchase western wheat. He also sometimes sent the company schooner to Chesapeake ports in Virginia and Maryland to bring back grain.⁹ In general the price of grain went down in the fall when western farmers and dealers who had been holding back all summer rushed crops to market via the Erie Canal just ahead of freezing weather. By the mid-1830s the Canbys were marketing much of their flour through New York rather than Philadelphia, which had ceased to be an important center for the flour trade.¹⁰

Maintaining the mills and selling the flour were also fraught with difficulties. Fire was a continual hazard because the grinding process heated up the highly flammable grain. In 1819 the Villagers witnessed a spectacular fire when "Tommy" Lea's mill on the north bank went up in flames, destroying 3,000 bushels of wheat and 4,000 bushels of corn. The total damages came to \$18,000.¹¹ Water could also be destructive. In 1822 chunks of ice carried along by floodwaters swept away the Brandywine bridge and the head gates of the south millrace. The water level rose to two feet above the first-floor level in the mills and nearly destroyed the dams.¹² A similar disaster struck on January 26, 1839, "a day" Edmund Canby recorded, "not soon forgotten by all that live on or near the Brandywine." Again the bridge fell



Land side of the Price & Phillips Mill, ca. 1880. (Courtesy of John R. Hoffecker.)

when its abutments gave way, and the races and dams were greatly damaged. "We got all our flour up," Canby says, but "*all* our neighbours had considerable meal and flour on their lower floors which will be much injured."¹³ It took several months to clean out the mills and repair the damage, but the millers were lucky in one respect, for the price of flour was low at the time and so they did not suffer great losses from the imposed idleness.¹⁴

The weather could be uncooperative in other respects; sometimes maddening droughts or early freezes would occur at the very moment when market conditions made it particularly lucrative to grind and sell flour. In the very summer before the flood of 1839, Edmund noted that the drought was "rather provoking" because flour prices were rising.¹⁵ Another problem was getting the flour to market in the winter. The Canbys kept their ships in readiness to sail southward as soon as ice melted on the Brandywine, in hopes of stealing a march on millers farther north. In 1836, an unusually poor year for domestic wheat, the Canbys

took advantage of a December thaw to load their sloop with wheat because "we think it best to sell the grain, it pays us better than grinding it."¹⁶

Throughout these years the Brandywine mills continued to be profitable, but the millers believed themselves to be struggling against increasingly difficult odds. Not only were the mills of Baltimore and Richmond bidding against them in the Maryland and Virginia wheat market and outproducing them but, more importantly, a new center of milling had arisen in western New York at Rochester, which proudly called itself the Flour City.¹⁷ In the course of the 1830s Edmund Canby grew increasingly pessimistic about the future of the Brandywine mills. In April 1833, during a scarce season in wheat, he confided to his diary that "I feel quite discouraged at times, and ready to turn farmer."¹⁸ The following year he sold his horses and carriage because of the hard times,¹⁹ and in 1835 he wrote that his future in milling offered "a dull prospect with a family growing up . . . eventually if our business cannot support us, we must try a new business and a new country."²⁰ Two months later he complained that wheat was dear yet flour cheap; "every day seems to illustrate the fact that millering as a regular business is done for *here*."²¹

James Canby proposed to infuse new life into the mills through the creation of a manufacturing company that would employ the waterpower of the existing mills in some way other than flour milling. In 1836 the Delaware Legislature passed his bill to incorporate the Brandywine Manufacturing and Banking Company. The charter permitted the company's banking function to subsidize a proposed railroad linking the PW&B at Wilmington with the Pennsylvania border via the Brandywine.²² Edmund had visions of a dramatic improvement in both family and community affairs. "This is the dawn of a bright day for Wilmington and ten years will, I hope, see us a second Lowell!"²³ He predicted that the population of Wilmington would double in the next decade and that "Eventually all the water power on the seaboard must be applied to *manufacturing* and the supplies of flour come from the interior and western parts of our country."²⁴ The sanguine hopes of the Canbys were soon disappointed, however. The year 1836 proved to be a poor one in which to launch a new company; the famous bank war was in progress, and President

Northside mills. Mid-nineteenth-century watercolor, original owned by Mrs. Peter Allison. (Courtesy of Robert L. Raley.)



Jackson's specie circular compounded the monetary confusion. Public confidence was at a low ebb, and indeed a severe depression began the next year. The Canbys laid the blame upon Jackson, whom they both loathed.

The failure of the company to find subscribers for its stock was a severe disappointment.²⁵ Convinced that milling had a bleak future, James Canby continued to seek out other investment opportunities, especially in land speculation. In 1842 he found himself in straitened circumstances because his speculations had proved less profitable than he had hoped, and he decided to sell the mills. As usual his son has left us an analysis of the reasons which lay behind this move.

We have this day decided to close our business as *millers* [he wrote]. . . . A variety of causes induce this step—for a number of years our business has been a poor one and to tell the truth our "speculations" in grain and flour, predicted generally on "English news," have resulted in loss. . . . In addition to this, father's outlay in Baltimore property, Western lands re[cently] has been large, so that in these times of *trouble* we find it a most anxious and unpleasant business. It will, therefore, be a great relief to our minds even at *some sacrifice* to know we are out of debt.²⁰

Oliver Canby's house, Ingleside, was sold at auction to James E. Price, Edmund's brother-in-law, who in turn sold it to the newly

appointed Episcopal bishop of the new diocese of Delaware, the Rt. Rev. Alfred Lee. Price and Jacob Starr bought the Canbys' three mills.²⁷ Edmund, who had hoped to become a farmer, instead accepted a post at the Farmers Bank.²⁸

While the Canbys were abandoning their ancestral mills on the south bank, others among the old milling families maintained the industry. On the north bank Thomas Lea continued the business of his father-in-law, Joseph Tatnall, and in turn passed the firm of Tatnall & Lea on to his son, William Lea. In 1864 William altered the style of the company to William Lea & Sons when he brought his sons, Henry, then twenty-five, and Preston, twenty-three, into the family business. The Leas adapted to the changes in the national wheat and flour market by building up a new product, kiln-dried corn. Cornmeal had always been a favorite item in trade with the West Indies, but in colonial times it was difficult to ship because the meal often spoiled. In the first decade of the nineteenth century Tatnall and Lea began experimenting to find some means of drying the corn before it was ground. They discovered that they could prevent spoilage if the corn was heated in a drying house or kiln by placing the grain on brick floors that were heated by flues. The process proved to be a practical success, and thereafter the firm's specialty was its "kiln-dried corn."²⁰ The 1850 census revealed that Tatnall & Lea was pro-

The William Lea & Sons Company, ▶ showing, from top to bottom, a view of the mills ca. 1860, the modern mill buildings in 1887, and the mill at New Castle. A. J. Clement, *Wilmington, Delaware*, 1888.



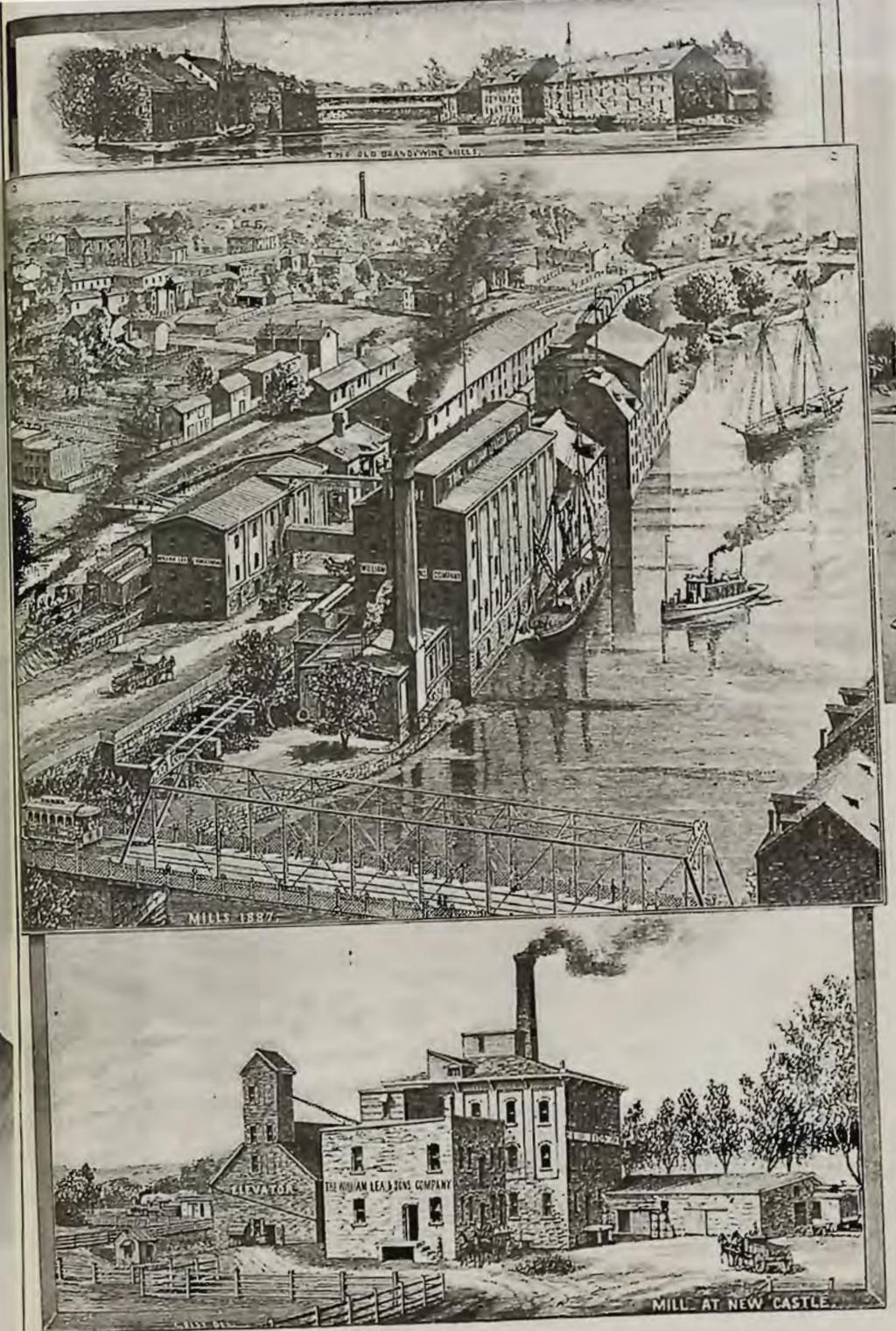
◀ William Lea (1805-1876).
Preston Lea Collection.



Henry Lea (1839-1888).
Preston Lea Collection.



Preston Lea (1841-1916), Governor
of Delaware, 1905-1909. Preston Lea
Collection.



cessing nearly as much corn as wheat,³⁰ and by 1880 William Lea & Sons reported that they had ground 100,000 bushels of wheat that produced 20,000 barrels of wheat flour, while their corn mills had produced 21,600,000 pounds of meal from 400,000 bushels of corn.³¹

In 1880–82, shortly after William Lea's death, his sons reorganized the firm to make it more competitive with the big midwestern mills such as the Pillsbury Company, the pioneer in the use of the gradual reduction process of milling. This process employed a series of iron rollers in place of the old stone mill-wheels. Instead of grinding the grain in one motion, the roller process worked more gradually and thoroughly to remove the outer layers of shell on the wheat kernel. In 1880 the Leas built a new mill at New Castle, Delaware. This mill, powered by a Corliss steam engine, made use of fourteen rollers and two sets of millstones as well as many other improved machines for cleaning and bolting the grain. The building was located directly on a railroad siding and was designed so that the grain was dumped from railroad cars onto a conveyor that moved it into the mill.³²

In 1882 the company was incorporated with stock valued at \$200,000, of which Henry and Preston Lea owned ninety-nine percent. Preston Lea, the president of the firm, moved quickly to improve the Brandywine mills. Within six years the company erected two large mill buildings on the Brandywine powered by a combination of water turbines and steam engines. The "A" mill built in 1881–82 was five stories high and equipped with twenty-three sets of rollers and five pairs of millstones to grind flour. Nearby were two other five-story buildings, the corn mill for grinding meal and the "B" mill that made use of eleven sets of rollers for turning out more specialized corn-based products such as hominy, grits, and corn flour.³³ Adjacent warehouse buildings were erected, and the company worked out an arrangement with the PW&B Railroad to provide a spur so that the mills could receive shipments of grain from the great midwestern corn and wheat belts.

The resilience provided by these extensive improvements carried William Lea & Sons into the twentieth century. But by the time of Preston Lea's death in 1916 the business had begun to deteriorate. In 1894 the "A" mill had burned in a spectacular



The "A" Mill, ca. 1890.

fire, but the building was rebuilt at some loss to the company.³⁴ In 1901 the Lea Milling Company had been formed to lease some of the mills. By 1922 the firm had ceased using the water power of the Brandywine, for in that year the company sold its water rights to the city of Wilmington for \$110,000. The city incorporated the north race into Brandywine Park and began filling it in.³⁵ One year later the firm was dissolved and Preston Lea's widow sold the mill property to a local real estate speculator, who rented out the buildings to small manufacturing firms.³⁶ In May 1933, fire destroyed the "B" mill, then being used as a furniture warehouse. Every piece of fire equipment in the city was called out but proved inadequate to the conflagration, which caused an estimated \$120,000 in damage.³⁷



The Lea Mills, in 1932. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.

The history of the mills on the south bank followed a somewhat different pattern. In 1827 the city of Wilmington purchased the second mill downstream from the bridge for \$28,000 for the purpose of erecting a water pump there. For some years the growing city's water supply from wells and springs had been inadequate, and the burgesses had reluctantly accepted the necessity for the city to pump water from the Brandywine to supply the need. A steam pump was installed in the mill, and pipes were laid up Brandywine Walk, now Market Street, to a reservoir at the top of the hill which forms the watershed between the Brandywine and Christina rivers. From there gravity carried the water to the homes and cisterns below. In the course of the century, as the need for water continued to mount, the city's water commissioners made improvements in the "city mill" and took an increasing interest in the maintenance of the south bank's long race.

Meanwhile the sons of James Price, James E., John H., and Joseph T., together with Isaac Starr, continued to operate grist-



Fire at the Lea Mills, May 20, 1933. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.

mills on the south bank until 1880, when several of the mills were destroyed by fire. The blaze, which was described by the *Every Evening* as "one of the greatest sights that the people of Wilmington ever had an opportunity of witnessing," began in a corn kiln; 25,000 bushels of corn, 15,000 bushels of wheat, plus nearly 2,000 barrels of flour and meal were destroyed, a loss of \$60,000. The newspaper reporter who covered the story was more concerned with aesthetics than economics, however. He compared the scene to a Turner painting and said that "viewed from the north side of the Brandywine it was something that to the uninterested spectator would be a joy forever. The situation of the mill immediately on the water's edge added greatly to the magnificence of the scene."³⁸ Following this dramatic event, milling ceased on the south bank except for the small Price and Phillips mill, the second building below the bridge. Benjamin Price continued to operate this mill until 1890, when the expansion of the water department forced him to retire.³⁰

In the years that followed, the city water department gained



Price Mills on the south side in the 1870s. The more modern building with the smokestack is the City of Wilmington's water pumping station.

exclusive control over the south race which it maintains to the present day as the means of channeling water from the Brandywine into the waterworks. In the first decade of the twentieth century the water department acquired all the land on the south bank where the mills had once stood and erected a series of buildings, including a new pumping station and filtration plant. These concrete buildings were designed in the imposing Roman style inspired by Chicago's World's Fair. From Market Street Bridge on the north bank one can still see the granite underpinnings of the waterworks buildings on the Brandywine side, the foundations of the old mills that they replaced.

CHAPTER 3

The Village

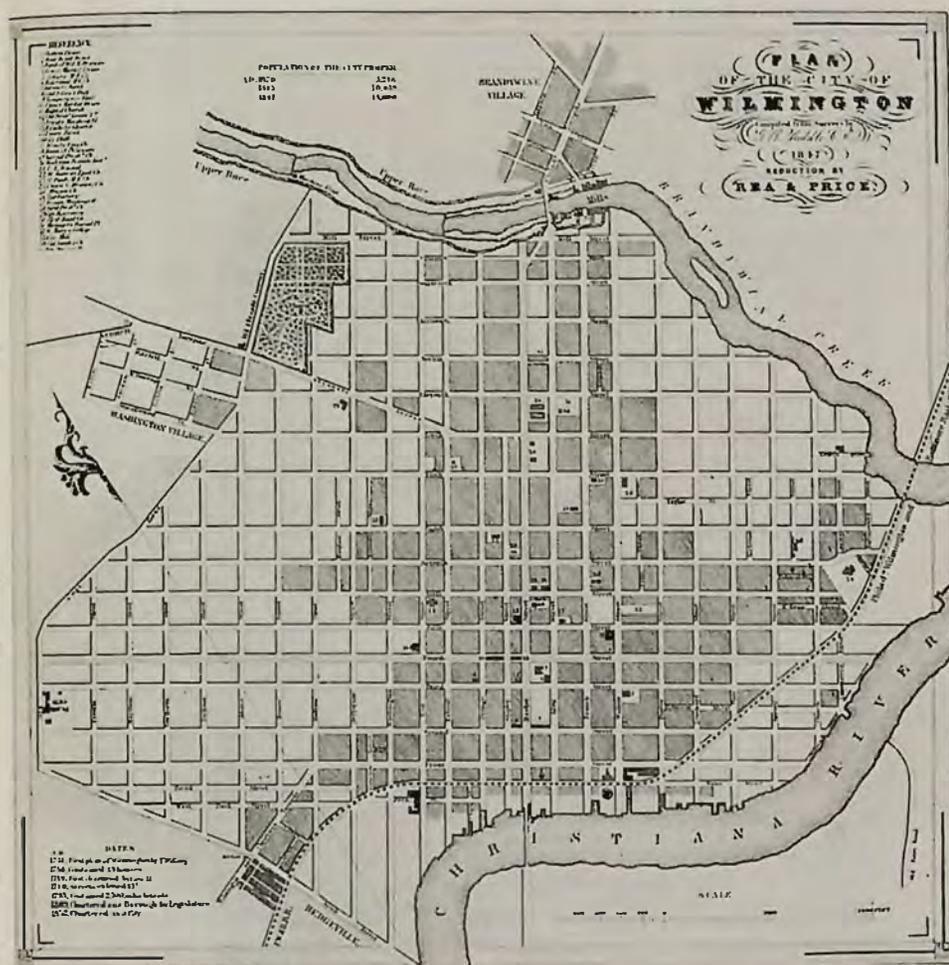
WHEN Hezekiah Niles featured Wilmington in an October 1815 issue of his famous *National Register*, he reported that the population of the city was 4,416 and that 300 additional people lived in nearby Brandywine Village. The Village included about fifty houses and twenty-two cooper shops.¹ At that time the boundaries of Wilmington extended northward to the Brandywine. The town's population was concentrated on the Christina side of the hill that separates the two rivers; therefore the homes and shops clustered near the mills on the south bank of the Brandywine, although officially part of Wilmington, were connected more intimately with the unincorporated Village across the bridge. Hence the term Brandywine Village in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was ambiguous. Sometimes it was used to refer to the milling community on both banks, while more particularly it designated the area on the north bank which was not a part of Wilmington. The Village was never incorporated as a self-governing community. Prior to its absorption into Wilmington in 1869 it was merely a part of Brandywine Hundred, its only officer of government a resident justice of the peace.

The inhabitants of the Village in these early days for the most part followed three interrelated trades: milling, shipbuilding and navigation, and coopering. In 1814 an enterprising printer in Wilmington published the town's first directory, which listed in alphabetical order the names and occupations of all the residents

of Wilmington. At the rear of that volume was a similar listing for the Village. The list included 113 heads of households, 65 on the north side, 47 on the south side, and 1 undesignated. Of these, 32 were coopers, 22 were millers, 6 were carpenters and millwrights, 5 each were blacksmiths and watermen and 4 each were shipbuilders, machine makers, laborers, and shoemakers or cordwainers, who, in addition to making footgear, supplied leather belting for the mills. The community also contained a teacher, two innkeepers, and a butcher, tailor, huckster, cabinet maker, and lumber merchant.² The Village was oriented toward residential and manufacturing activities; retailing played a very small role, since most people did their shopping at the legally sanctioned markets in Wilmington on Market Street and 2nd Street.

Although the families of the merchant millers, Canbys, Leas, Tatnalls, and Prices, were the most wealthy and powerful residents of the Village, the more numerous coopers exercised considerable influence over life in the little community. They were an independent lot, working with only a few apprentices or helpers in their shops scattered throughout the Village. They did not make particularly desirable neighbors, for behind each cooper's shop was a "sink hole" in which they soaked hoops in an evil-smelling solution. In the coopers' shops and yards there accumulated an endless supply of chips and shavings which the proprietors willingly gave away or sold at a small price to residents for firewood.³ The singing sound of the coopers' adzes working the hoops down over the barrels mingled with the constant rattles and bangs emanating from the mills nearby.

Some coopers spent their free time at the Green Tree Tavern, a two-story shingle-roofed inn built in Revolutionary times at the junction of the Concord and Philadelphia pikes. There was a walled court in the tavern yard where the men played handball and shuffleboard. Albert Thatcher, a shipbuilder, recalling life in Brandywine Village in his youth for an *Every Evening* reporter in 1894, said of the coopers, "Unfortunately they would drink too much on Saturday nights and get into disputes with the Brandywine Hundred folks." If the fighting got too rough, accounts had to be settled at the home of Squire Elliott, the justice of the peace who lived on the Philadelphia Pike opposite the Tatnall and Lea houses.⁴



Plan of the City of Wilmington, 1847. Compiled from surveys by G. R. Riddle, C. E.

Another eighteenth-century hostelry, the Village Inn, stood in the bed of present-day 22nd Street on the west side of Market Street. According to local legend, on the day of the Battle of the Brandywine the innkeeper prepared a feast to serve to American

officers and was rudely surprised when the victorious British descended on his establishment and consumed the meal. The inn was converted into a residence in the 1880s. When it was demolished in 1931 to make way for a street extension, the workmen uncovered a log structure at the southern end, which suggests that part of the building may have predated the establishment of Brandywine Village.⁵

Shipyards were located on the north bank below the mill sites. These yards specialized in sloops, barks, and schooners. Thatcher remembered that Jonathan Zebley, whose yard Thatcher bought in 1848, built a bark that went around the Horn to California before the gold rush. Another shipbuilder, a Negro, built the only brig ever constructed on the Brandywine. Behind the shipyards at the bend in the river there was a quarry. In the 1830s, Thatcher said, two men named Gillis developed the quarry to supply stone for the Delaware Breakwater, a federal government project. The government paid for the stone by ship weight, a poor policy since the Gillises consistently cheated by letting water into the hold before weighing the stone.⁶

Unfortunately, little information has survived concerning the lives of the men who were employed as workmen in the mills. Samuel Canby and his grandson Edmund rarely mentioned their workers, and when they did it was usually because a man had been injured or was in some way a problem for them. Samuel, for instance, noting the death of James Smith, a cooper who had done much work for him, recorded that "he had for some years past given way to a free use of ardent spirits and sank under its effects."⁷ In 1837 Edmund mentioned that an accident in the mill tore the hand off one of his workers.⁸ At the death of his miller, John Zebley, in 1842 he reflected that "for probably 40 years he was a drinking and profane man—some months since, he joined the 'Temperance Society' and totally abstained—quite lately his *heart* seemed touched, and he became quite a zealous Methodist, and I trust not *too late*."⁹

To judge from Edmund Canby's diaries, the merchant millers lived comfortable lives and had both the wealth and the leisure to enjoy plentiful and healthful recreation. In addition to his frequent horseback rides Edmund was ardently fond of sleighing, a sport which was much more practical in Wilmington winters

in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth. His father, James Canby, took an annual summer vacation at Cape May, New Jersey, where Edmund, too, often spent time. In the fall, hunting parties were organized on the farms of friends and relatives.¹⁰ The Canbys employed several servants to assist with the house-keeping, but there are few references to the women of the family participating in these pleasures.¹¹

The character of Brandywine Village underwent dramatic changes in the course of the nineteenth century as a result of the growth and expansion of Wilmington and the addition of more labor-intensive industrialization in the Village itself. Milling, especially by the Oliver Evans system, used few hands, and this explains why the mills, although much more lucrative than the cooper shops, employed fewer workers. In the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, however, cotton manufacturing, an industry that required a large work force, was introduced into the Village.

Cotton factories had begun to appear upstream on the Brandywine at Hagley, Henry Clay, Rockland, and Kentmere during the Napoleonic Wars, but it was not until 1828 that the water power near Brandywine Bridge was first used in textile manufacture. In that year the borough of Wilmington leased the unused portion of its water pumping mill to Rodgers and Reeves, who installed cotton spinning equipment there. Little is known of these entrepreneurs except that they were machine makers by trade. Under their arrangement with the town burgesses the power generated at the mill was used to operate the spinning machinery by day and the water pump by night. Their undertaking was poorly timed—textiles were cheap in the late 1820s—and the partnership failed.

Thomas Garrett, the Quaker iron merchant and noted abolitionist, and Jacob Pusey, a cotton manufacturer on Red Clay Creek, bought out the lease in 1831. Calling their firm the Wilmington Cotton Factory, Garrett and Pusey manufactured 128,000 pounds of cotton annually, which they sold in Philadelphia. The factory employed nine men, twelve women, and thirty-one children. In 1837, after several apparently successful years, the partners gave up their lease and sold the machinery. A notice appearing in the *Delaware State Journal* announced:

FOR SALE:

The machinery of the Wilmington Cotton factory, with the lease of the Mill and water power, which will expire 16th day of 10th month, 1840. This factory is decidedly the best located in the State, being on the Brandywine within the city limits, on the tide water, with a thick population around it, so as to insure a supply of small hands at all times, and is now in successful operation, with 14 carding engines, a speeder, 1656 spindles, with all the necessary machinery for spinning; the yarns from this factory are known as those of Garrett & Pusey, and considered equal to any in the market.¹²

Another more successful cotton factory was established on the north side of the Brandywine in the 1850s. This mill was located on Vandever's Lane east of the Philadelphia Pike. Its proprietor was Daniel Lammot, already the successful owner of the Lenni Cotton Mills on Chester Creek. Lammot, descendant of French Huguenots who had fled to America, was a Philadelphian whose initial interest in Wilmington was doubtless related to business

and personal ties with local families. In 1824 his eldest daughter, Margaretta Elizabeth, married Alfred Victor du Pont, first son of Eleuthère Irénée du Pont and his successor as president of the Du Pont Powder Company. Another daughter, Eleanora Adelaide, married Edward W. Gilpin, a Wilmington lawyer, the descendant of Brandywine papermill owners and a future Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court. Two of Lammot's granddaughters also married du Ponts.¹³ Because the mills were located more than a block from the Brandywine, it has been conjectured that they were powered by steam engines. In 1855 the mills were enlarged and named the Eagle Mills, and a 200-horsepower engine was installed to drive the 8,000 spindles, 200 looms, and other dyeing and finishing equipment.¹⁴ In the 1850s Lammot's mills specialized in heavy cotton goods, mattress ticking and awnings. According to an article that appeared in the May 28, 1858, *Delaware State Journal*, the Eagle Mills' ticking won first prize in competition against English manufacturers at the World's Industrial Exhibition held in New York City.¹⁵

The advent of cotton manufacturing altered the size and composition of the Village's population. In 1860 a census taker recorded that Lammot employed 235 workers in all, 109 males and 126 females. His mills, capitalized at \$140,000, turned out 1,750,000 yards of material valued at \$260,000. In the same year the Tatnall and Lea Flour Mills, capitalized at \$100,000, employed only 18 male workers to manufacture \$305,600 worth of flour and meal.¹⁶ These figures demonstrate more clearly than words what is meant by the statement that the cotton industry was labor-intensive compared to milling. Lammot's mill was the focal point for the construction of several rows of narrow two-story brick buildings that housed the mill hands. The largest group known as Shanghai Row, consisted of thirty dwellings crammed into one block of present-day 22nd Street directly behind the mill.¹⁷ Other rows were built on Lammot and Carter streets which opened on the north side of Vandever's Lane. Several block-long streets were also filled in with houses between the lane and the Brandywine. These included Hutton and Buena Vista streets, Palmer's Row, and Mabel Street. By 1857 the Wilmington City Directory reported that the population of Brandywine Village had

Bird's-eye view of Brandywine Village. Detail from 1874 lithograph of Wilmington by H. H. Bailey & Co.





"Shanghai Row," 22nd Street between Market and Lammot streets, 1973. Built for cotton mill workers, originally of brick, many have had cosmetic attention in the twentieth century. Photograph by Charles A. Foote.

risen to include 379 white males, 425 white females, 36 black males, and 40 black females, for a total of 880 persons.¹⁸

The Villagers were never an autonomous community. From the beginning they shopped in Wilmington and attended church there. Their first neighborhood institution was a school, the Brandywine Academy, founded in 1798 on land donated by John Dickinson, a Revolutionary leader and one-time chief executive of Delaware, and John Welsh, a Brandywine Hundred farmer. In February 1797, patrons of the proposed school called a meeting for the purpose of raising funds to build a schoolhouse. The seventy-nine people who responded to the call donated \$443.13 toward the project.¹⁰ Assured of local support by this demonstration, the friends of the school went ahead and erected a small but handsome two-story building of Brandywine granite. Each floor consisted of a single room suitable for instruction or for public meetings. In 1815 the school was incorporated as the Brandywine

Academy; among the seven trustees were James Price and Thomas Lea, plus a blacksmith, a shipbuilder, and a snuff mill owner. The act of incorporation specified that the school was to be open to the sons of all free white inhabitants of the Village and vicinity willing to pay \$100 total or \$5 annually for the maintenance of the school.²⁰ Like many private academies of that period, schoolmasters did not stay for long and the school underwent a metamorphosis every time a new master came on the scene. Regrettably, our sources are mute concerning the life of the boys and masters at the school. It would be interesting to know what percentage

Brandywine Academy, 1799. Late-nineteenth-century photograph.



of the boys of Brandywine Village had the opportunity to go there, or, of those who did have the privilege of an academy education, how many chose their neighborhood school over the rival academies in Wilmington. In 1829 Delaware adopted a new free-school law, under which communities were encouraged to open public schools by the promise of matching state funds. The Academy then became a public schoolhouse for Brandywine Hundred. After the Village was annexed to Wilmington, the city built public school No. 12 nearby on 22nd Street. The Academy building was subsequently used as a private kindergarten and from 1915 to 1943 as a branch of the Wilmington Institute Free Library.²¹

Although it is hard to determine the impact of the Brandywine Academy as an educational institution, it is clear that the Academy building was very important to the growth of community spirit in the Village. Its two rooms were in frequent use for public meetings, lodge meetings, and other social activities. The temperance meetings that Edmund Canby's miller, John Zebley, attended with such good results were doubtless held at the Academy. To nascent religious societies the Academy was a godsend. The Mormons held meetings there in the 1840s, as did the millennial sect called Millerites, who predicted on the basis of calculations derived from the Bible that the end of the world would come in 1843. The Academy was the first meeting place of two congregations that established churches in the Village during the 1850s.

In 1839 two women from Asbury Methodist Church, the first Methodist congregation in Wilmington, located at 3rd and Walnut streets, established a Sunday school in the Academy for the children of Brandywine Village. Sunday schools were very important institutions in the days before widespread opportunities for public education, because in many cases they offered a child's only chance to learn to read and write. This was particularly the case for those children who worked in the cotton mills six days each week from sunrise to sunset. The Methodists followed up their appeal to young people with a series of evening prayer meetings designed to attract the adult mill hands, many of whom were unchurched.

In 1856 these meetings held in an Academy room "dimly-

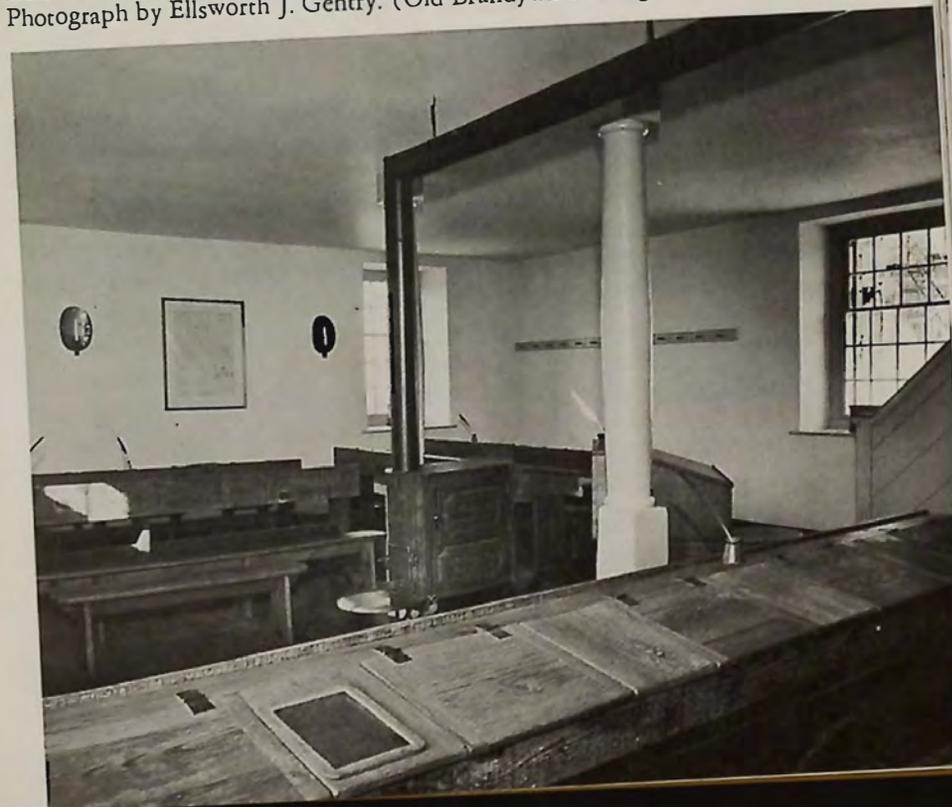
lighted" by "smoky tallow candle[s]" were swept into a full-fledged revival.²² The major result of the enthusiasm was the determination to build a Methodist church in Brandywine Village.

In early November 1857, a notice was posted on the door of the Academy which read:

A meeting will be held by the members of the Religious Society usually worshipping at the Academy on Thursday the 19th day of November A.D. 1857 at 7 o'clock P.M. for the purpose of electing Trustees in order that said society may become incorporated Pursuant to the statute of the State of Delaware in that behalf.

Fifteen persons, twelve men and three women, attended the organizational meeting. By marching their names with those in the Wilmington City Directory for 1857, it is clear that most were skilled workmen, several of them carpenters and coopers, plus a miller, a stone dresser, and a blacksmith.²³ Trustees were elected, and the congregation began soliciting funds to erect a church. Even before the church was formally organized, the congregation purchased a lot from Joseph Tatnall on the Philadelphia

Restored schoolroom, ground floor, Brandywine Academy.
Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)



Pike and began constructing a simple rectangular edifice, 40 by 65 feet, of stuccoed stone.

From the beginning the maintenance of the church proved to be a struggle for its not-very-wealthy congregation. Not only did their initial efforts at fund raising produce disappointing results but in addition it was discovered that their first minister had embezzled nearly \$1,000. In 1864 the church faced its most serious crisis when the man who held the mortgage demanded to be paid immediately. The trustees solicited their congregation and the Wilmington Methodist churches for aid. Many in the congregation went without new clothes for several years in order to aid their church. They were so pessimistic about the predicament that the church was advertised for sale. Then at the last minute three well-to-do parishioners of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church met with the trustees in an ice cream parlor and agreed to assume responsibility for the debt. With this crisis behind them a new longer-range means of raising money was suggested by John Gouley, a basket maker. Gouley organized a steamer excursion to Cape May for residents of Brandywine Village. The trip brought in a profit of \$1,000. Building on this, the trustees successfully paid off the mortgage in 1867, just one decade after the church had been founded.²⁴

The size of the congregation fluctuated during the late nineteenth century from about 75 to 150, with an average figure of about 80. Membership jumped in 1868 and 1884, thanks to successful revivals in those years. The revival of 1884 was led by a dynamic new minister, E. L. Hubbard, who had a tent erected on a vacant lot at 24th and Market streets to hold the crowds which attended nightly. Hubbard's enthusiasm was contagious; during his pastorate the Brandywine Methodists enlarged their building, established a mission church at Edge Moor on the Delaware River for the families of the Edge Moor Bridge Company employees, and conducted a successful campaign against saloons in the Village. By 1889 the church proudly boasted that over 1,330 souls had received Christ at the church, the membership stood at an all-time high of 319, and the Sunday school program was reaching 750 children.²⁵

Another church, St. John's Episcopal, dates from the same period. In the early 1850s, Charles Breck, rector of Trinity Prot-



Brandywine Methodist Church, 1857. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

estant Episcopal Church, then located on the northeast corner of Fifth and King streets, began holding weekly worship services in private homes in Brandywine Village and later in the Academy. The attendance was sufficiently encouraging to prompt the organization of a new parish in 1855. Among the lay leaders in this effort were several members of the Elliott family, who had farms just north of the Village; Amor Harvey, partner in a steam engine company and a resident of the Village; and Bauduy Simmons, a lumber dealer. The most enthusiastic advocate of the plan was Alexis I. du Pont, youngest son of E. I. du Pont and senior warden of the vestry at Trinity. Encouraged by the Rev. Mr. Breck and by the generosity of du Pont, the Episcopalians in the Village elected a vestry.

Plans for the erection of a church were left largely in the hands of du Pont, a recent convert to high church Anglicanism. Having reached adulthood without being baptized, he had married Joanna Smith of Philadelphia, a remarkably pious young woman. The

St. John's Church, 1858,
John Notman, architect.
Undated photograph.



accidental death of du Pont's friend and brother-in-law, Dr. Thomas Mackie Smith, was apparently the deciding factor in his decision to become an active Episcopalian. He was much influenced by the medieval mystique of the high churchmen. The decision to begin a new parish in the Village was, in part at least, prompted by du Pont's desire to build a proper Gothic revival church in the Wilmington area. He selected as the site for the church the property of the Green Tree Tavern which came up for sale in May 1856. It pleased his sense of symbolism to replace the old inn, which he regarded as a den of iniquity, with a sacred edifice. The property

was, however, also desirable on other counts, for it was large, on high ground, and straddled the most important crossroads in the Village.

John Notman, a Scottish-born architect of Philadelphia noted for his work in the Gothic revival style, was retained to furnish plans for a simple yet historically accurate English country church. Using the nearby Brandywine granite as his medium, Notman planned a cruciform church in what architects of the time called the "early middle pointed" style, capped by a tower and spire. The cornerstone was laid in June 1857; three months later Alexis I. du Pont was dead, the victim of a powder-yard explosion. In

November 1858 Bishop Alfred Lee presided at the consecration service for St. John's, a church that du Pont had largely paid for and which remains a monument to his religious zeal.²⁶

Even before the completion of the church building, the vestry of St. John's organized a Sunday school with classes for both white and black Village children. In 1865 the parish inaugurated a night school for adult factory workers which was an immediate success, enrolling about fifty workers.²⁷ The congregation grew with the community, reaching over a hundred communicants by the early 1870s.²⁸

As these additions to the Village quickened its social life and community spirit, Wilmington too was growing. In 1860 the city's population reached 21,508, and it continued to expand to 30,841 by the end of the following decade.²⁹ In 1864 a private company led by a local real estate promoter, Joshua T. Heald, built Wilmington's first horse-car line which ran from the PW&B Railroad station on Front Street up Market to 10th and out Delaware Avenue. The Wilmington City Railway opened the Delaware Avenue region to residential settlement and brought the city ever closer to the Village.

By the late 1860s there was a growing sentiment in favor of extending the city boundaries across the Brandywine. The Villagers had more to gain than to lose from such a prospect. Not only would inclusion in the city bring them the benefits of police protection and better public schools but it would also help Joseph Tatnall, William Lea, and other large landowners to divide their extensive properties and sell them as residential lots. If any of these arguments played a role in the annexation of the Village it has gone unrecorded, however. The state legislators' prime consideration was apparently political.

Wilmington emerged from the Civil War with a strong Republican Party; the rest of Delaware, especially below the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, was Democratic. In 1868, when the Republicans gained control of the city by a slim margin, the Democrats in the state legislature decided to create a new ward, the ninth in the city, in Brandywine Village. They hoped that the large percentage of working-class people in the Village would swing the ward into the Democratic column and help to keep the city from the Republicans.³⁰ Both parties watched closely the

results of the first "9 wards" election in September 1869. True to their predictions the Ninth Ward went Democrat, but its support proved inadequate to save the city from a GOP majority. One year later in a very close election for the U.S. Congress the Ninth voted Republican, but generally speaking it stayed Democratic in its early years.³¹ No one guessed then that in the first half of the twentieth century it would be one of the most consistently Republican wards in Wilmington.

The Ninth Ward included a larger area than can properly be called Brandywine Village. From its southern boundary along the Brandywine, the ward ran eastward to the Delaware River and north to a line along the present course of 29th Street and west along the course that became in the eighties the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The population figure given

for the Ninth Ward in 1870 and subsequent U.S. Census compilations included other population centers outside the immediate vicinity of Brandywine Village. The figures do show a most significant aspect of the Village's history nonetheless because they demonstrate the absorption of the Village into the city growing up around it.

Population of Ninth Ward from U.S. Census

1870	1,416
1880	2,272
1890	4,624
1900	7,304
1910	10,601
1920	18,726

The return sheets used in computing the 1870 census reveal another important dimension of the Ninth Ward just after its annexation. The thirty-six pages of the Ninth Ward schedules list the names, occupations, color, and nativity of the ward's residents but not, unfortunately, their addresses. The census takers visited 256 homes and recorded 272 families. Assuming that their definition of "homes" was a residence of several rooms, this means that very few Ninth Ward families were doubled up, living in only part of a residence. The census listed 176 blacks, 120 Irish-born, and 40 persons from England or Scotland. The vast majority of residents were American-born, from Delaware or nearby states. Only 11 mill workers were listed and 18 coopers. By contrast, 91 cotton mill workers, 44 of them female, were included, by far the largest single occupational category.³² Most of these people must have been among the 74 females over fifteen years of age listed among the employees of Daniel Lamot's factory, which also employed 27 children among its total work force of 144.³³ Factory labor had clearly become the predominant occupation of the Village, replacing the handicrafts of the early nineteenth century, a shift that was reflected in the economies of all American cities.

In the years after 1870, those who owned large pieces of land adjacent to the Village—Joseph Tatnall, William Lea, John H. Price, William Thatcher, Isaac J. Cloud, and Benjamin Elliott—divided their tracts into a grid using the Philadelphia Pike, renamed North Market Street after annexation, and Vandever Avenue as

Brandywine Village, 1868. Detail from *Pomeroy and Beer's New Topographical Atlas of the State of Delaware, 1868.*





Brandywine Village, 1887, showing lot divisions.
Atlas of the City of Wilmington, Delaware, and Vicinity, 1887.

the points of departure to conform to the pattern of the older sections of Wilmington. Concord Avenue, the third major artery of the Village, cut across the grid, producing some spark of variety in an otherwise monotonous plan of development. G. W. Baist's *Atlas of the City of Wilmington* published in 1887 shows that movement into the Ninth Ward was slow; few of the projected streets were more than lines on a map.³⁴

To hasten land sales, residents of the ward urged the Wilmington City Railway to extend a line up North Market Street to the city's northern limit. The railway company was not eager to expand, however, because it had only recently begun to show a profit and was not interested in assuming a substantial debt in order to build a line into an as yet poorly developed section of the city.³⁵ In November 1886, therefore, the major property owners met and decided to build their own trolley line. This action posed a serious threat to the existing trolley company, and in

January 1887 the Wilmington City Railway Company announced its intention to construct the desired line.³⁶

The trolley company rose to the occasion with greater enthusiasm than their earlier position would have led the public to expect. Instead of merely extending the horse-car line from 10th and Market streets northward, they decided to invest in a system of electric trolleys, then a very new technology. In February 1888 the line was completed from 10th and Market streets to the Riverview Cemetery at the city line. The first trial run of an electric-powered car over the track aroused great interest among Wilmingtonians, and especially among the Villagers. Officials of the trolley company, together with invited guests, including members of the press, boarded the trolley and set out on their adventurous ride. As an *Every Evening* reporter described the occasion, "The electric car suddenly glided off and its occupants found

Electric trolley on the North Market Street line, ca. 1890. The car is headed north on Market Street between 10th and 11th streets.



themselves sailing down the declivity towards Brandywine Village with an ease of locomotion that cannot be described as anything else than delightful." Amid frightened horses the car sped through the Village where "numbers of villagers, mechanics, blacksmiths and carpenters in their aprons rushed to the curbstone cheering and otherwise demonstrating their approval of the new mode of travel." The car completed the one-and-three-quarter-mile route to the city line in nine minutes.³⁷ The *Every Evening* was ecstatic at this demonstration of local initiative. "Wilmington for once," it announced, "will be abreast of its neighbors in enterprise."³⁸

In the years that followed, residential development along the North Market Street route increased more rapidly, thanks to the trolley. Real estate developers tempted center-city dwellers with advertisements that pleaded, "Don't raise your children in a boardinghouse," and described the healthfulness of the new area in fulsome phrases.³⁹ In 1892 the Wilmington City Railway extended the line to Shellpot Creek, where they opened an amusement park complete with a dancing pavilion, restaurant, and picnic grounds, together with a variety of rides, concerts, and shows.⁴⁰ In that same year the Levy Court of New Castle County agreed to build a bridge over the Brandywine at Washington Street.⁴¹ With the construction of this bridge, Samuel Baynard, a Wilmington jeweler and sometime Republican politician, planned an upper-income housing development in the Ninth Ward along a new avenue that he named Baynard Boulevard. The boulevard became the focus of new housing in the first decade of the twentieth century following the installation of a trolley line.

While the boulevard, north of the old village, was being hailed as a new center for the fashionable, the area to the southeast of Market Street followed in the pattern of low-income housing that had characterized that section since the days of Lammot's cotton mill. In 1903 the Pennsylvania Railroad, which had bought out the old PW&B, announced plans to erect a major repair facility at Todd's Cut in the northeastern section of the Ninth Ward. Its decision sparked a lively building boom of working-class housing in the area along and around Vandever Avenue. The laying of city sewers and water pipes throughout the ward at about this same time, together with the extension of a new trolley line into the northeast area, attracted many families of railroad employees



Middle-class house construction in the Ninth Ward on Concord Avenue, ca. 1912. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.

to new housing there. In 1901 the Wilmington City Railway Company built a large power plant on the north side of the Brandywine on the site of the old mills, designed to supply power for the company's growing trolley network. The building with its tall smokestacks was a symbolic landmark of twentieth-century industry on the Brandywine.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Brandywine Village had lost much of its identity as a distinctive community. The old stone residences built by eighteenth-century millers on a country stream were now surrounded by the brick row houses and shops of a city. Through the eyes of a trolley rider, the Village was a quaint entryway separating the center of town from the block upon block of homes to the north.

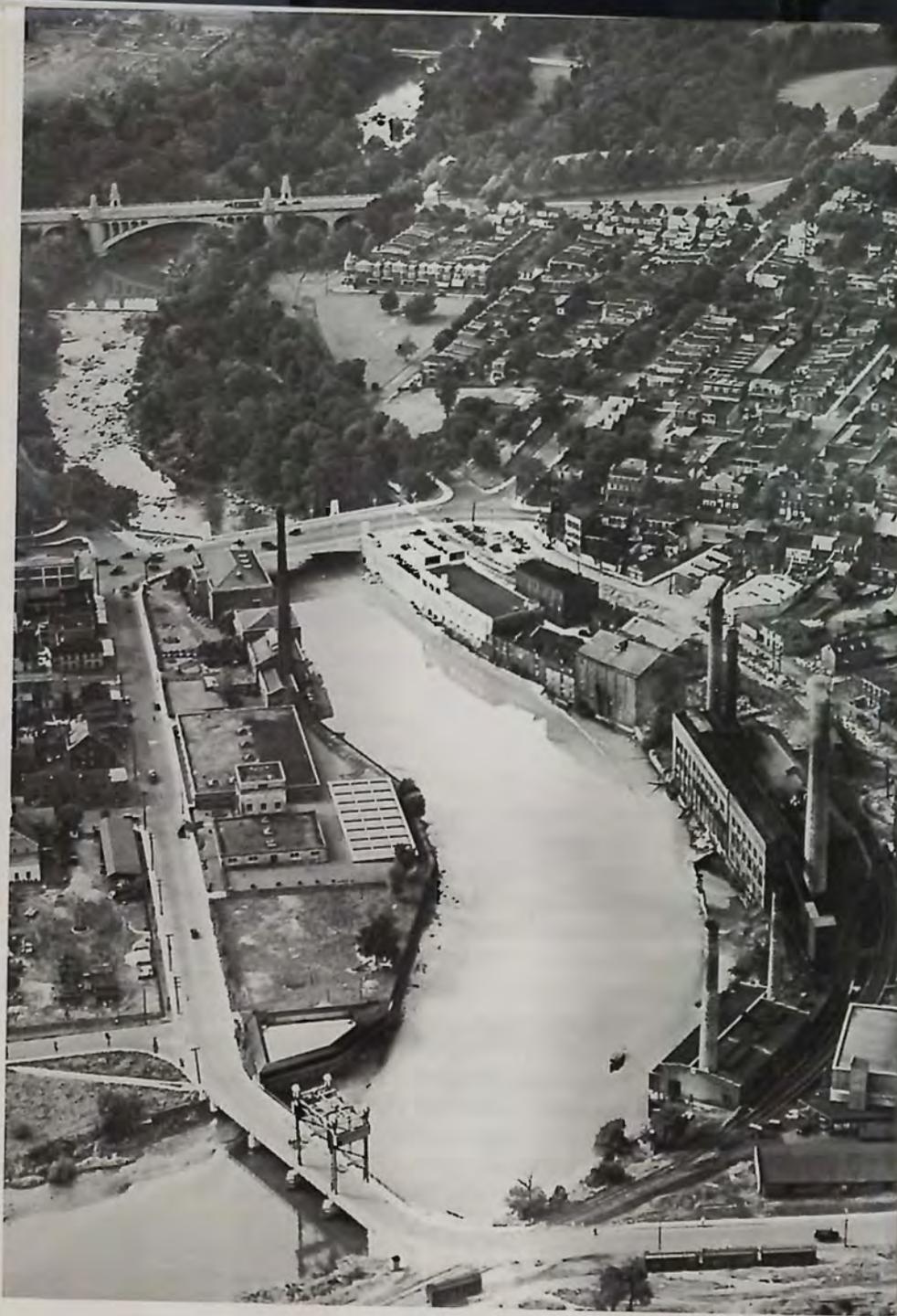
CHAPTER 4

The Heritage

BY THE EARLY 1960s Wilmington had undergone a metamorphosis similar to that of many American cities. The suburbs were attracting middle-class families away from urban residential districts such as the Ninth Ward, and the patronage of stores in the central business district was being eroded by the construction of suburban shopping centers. Efforts at urban renewal near the city's core increased the impression that downtown Wilmington consisted of a few large office buildings surrounded by parking lots where stores and houses used to stand.

The population of the Ninth Ward in 1960 was 27,218 and undergoing rapid change which produced social instability. In that year the section of the city north of the Brandywine was still predominantly white, but it was in the early stages of a dramatic shift as many blacks from urban renewal areas farther downtown and from the South began seeking homes near the Village. Between 1960 and 1970, while the ward as a whole gained only 326 people, the number of black residents rose from 5,229 to 14,273 and that of whites declined from 21,966 to 13,157.¹ Thoughtful people hoped that the old Ninth could be stabilized as an integrated community, but to hold its remaining white population it would have to offer some attractions that were not readily available in the suburbs.

At this juncture in Wilmington's history a small group of concerned citizens, including a few architects and historians, became



Aerial view of Market Street Bridge, ca. 1930. The Delaware Power and Light Company plant flanked by smokestacks is near the center. Dallin Collection.



Looking up North Market Street from 18th Street, 1970. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

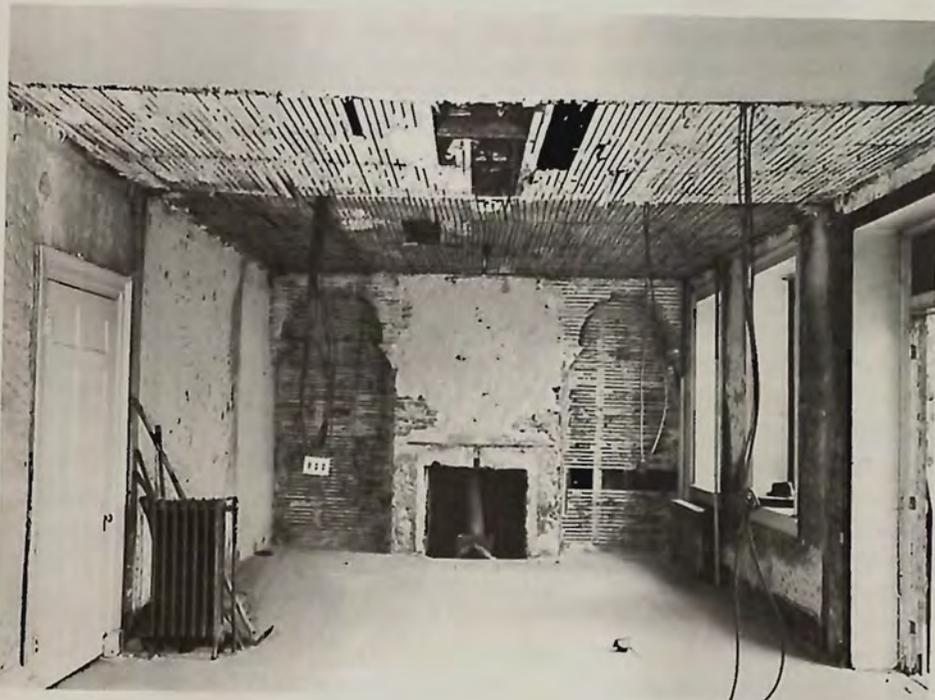
alarmed at the prospect of losing the several remaining structures in what had been Old Brandywine Village. The group invited members from a variety of local organizations to attend a meeting in the spring of 1962 for the purpose of exploring ways in which the erosion of the physical and social landscape could be reversed. Those at the meeting included representatives of the Delaware Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Colonial Dames, the Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, the Greater Wilmington Development Council, and the Junior League of Wilmington. The immediate cause for concern was the possibility that the house at 1801 Market Street, built by James Marshall, ca. 1770, and later the home of Thomas Lea, might be sold to developers who would raze it and erect a commercial building in its place. Those attending recognized that "mere expressions of sympathy and alarm" were inadequate and, as "there is no single institution or organization with sufficient means and interest to save this area from further deterioration and economic exploitation," they resolved to mount a concerted effort to save the house and to work for the preservation and restoration of other historic buildings throughout the Village community.² Later that year Old Brandywine Village, Inc., was created as a nonprofit corporation. The corporation took an option on 1801 Market Street, known as the Lea-Derickson house, and began soliciting contributions for the purchase of the property.

In March 1963 Old Brandywine Village (O.B.V.) bought the Lea-Derickson house for \$60,000 and began the process of resto-

ration. The organization did not wish to turn the house into a museum but rather to find an institutional tenant that would be in sympathy with its aims. The plan was to restore the building's exterior to its original appearance and to restore the interior to the extent of removing nineteenth- and twentieth-century accretions while modifying features to fit the needs of modern tenants.³ The first step toward discovering the building's original appearance was to remove the heavy growth of ivy that covered the front of the house. When this was done, restoration architects Robert L. Raley and Albert Kruse, both directors of O.B.V., discovered that the classical revival frame on the front door covered a simpler frame that they identified as the original. Inside they located the original stairway in a rear addition to the house and restored it to its place in the entrance hall. Another important restoration project involved the removal of nineteenth-century plaster work and a marble mantelpiece in the front parlor and the installation of a mantel representative of the type used in Quaker homes of the late eighteenth century. Old windows and doors were reopened and newer window and door openings closed up. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century additions on the rear of the house were removed and new plumbing, heating, and electrical work was installed. Meanwhile the Archaeological Society of Delaware conducted a dig around the house that revealed the age of various portions of the building and uncovered a variety of small artifacts from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: a pewter spoon, pewter buttons, potsherds, and an inkwell.⁴

While this project was under way, O.B.V., Inc., put on an intensive campaign to locate a suitable tenant for the Lea-Derickson house. They approached various organizations, but from the first, O.B.V.'s officers hoped to convince the Junior League to lease the property. After considerable correspondence and negotiations, the League agreed and moved its headquarters into the restored house.

In November 1963, as work on the Lea-Derickson house reached completion, Wilmington's mayor, John E. Babiarez, announced the city's gift of the Academy building to O.B.V., Inc., which had offered to restore the building and lease it to some preservation-minded society.⁵ The restoration of the building's exterior involved the removal of stucco from sidewalls and the



The front parlor at 1801 Market Street before restoration, *above*, showing Victorian marble fireplace. Photograph by Sanborn Studio. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.) The front parlor during restoration in 1963, *below*. Photograph by Sanborn Studio. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

demolition of a three-story late-nineteenth-century house which stood next door. The O.B.V. group decided to recreate an early nineteenth-century schoolroom on the first floor to be used as a public museum. The project attracted the support of the Caesar Rodney Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which agreed to lease the upper floor for meetings and to maintain the museum below.

The preservationists' initial successes, well publicized in the local press and adequately supported by private donations and by the cooperation of other local organizations, ensured that their ultimate objective—the improvement of the entire Brandywine Village area—was not beyond their means. In April 1963 the Delaware Power and Light Company, successor to the Wilmington City Railway Company, announced that it would donate its old power plant on the Brandywine, unused since 1957, to O.B.V., Inc., for the purpose of creating a riverside park. The factory structure was demolished and, in a spectacular demonstration of the

The restored parlor. The design for the paneling was determined by studying that of the Thomas Shipley house and the remaining panels from an upstairs bedroom at 1801 Market Street. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)



controlled use of dynamite, the 190-foot smokestack was exploded. With this plot of land now in their possession, O.B.V., Inc., hoped to interest city officials in extending Brandywine Park below Market Street Bridge. When the city was slow to act on this proposal because of budgetary considerations, the organization went ahead to develop a small part of its one-and-one-third acres of land as a playground for both young children and teen-agers. The creation of this small park was important for two reasons: in addition to fulfilling O.B.V.'s purpose of upgrading the appearance of the Village, and particularly enhancing the setting for its historic buildings, the park was also a facility that directly benefited the residents of the Village area. An as yet unrealized further development of parkland along the Brandywine might be the conversion of the one remaining Lea mill building into a community center.

The directors of O.B.V. turned their attention once more to the row of stone houses on Market Street. Although the house at 1801 Market was out of danger, the remaining group of five buildings, most of them long since converted into apartments, were likely to be sold and demolished at any time. In 1969 real estate brokers reported that the Tatnall houses at 1803 and 1805 Market Street might be torn down to make way for a high-rise apartment building.⁶ The directors bought these endangered buildings and subsequently acquired all but one of the other historic houses on the west side of the 1800 and 1900 blocks. As funds permit they continue to restore their outward appearance and resell them to groups that can be relied upon to maintain the objectives of preservation. Sometimes restoration requires the removal of buildings that are out of character. A late-nineteenth-century brick dwelling was demolished at 1903 Market Street to improve the appearance of the stone houses on either side. When O.B.V. became interested in the William Lea house at 1901 Market Street, the architects removed a row of dormer windows and a small second-story window that had been constructed in the nineteenth century. The organization then played an intermediary role in the sale of the building to the Senior Center, a Community Chest agency that provides recreation for older people. At 1907 Market Street, the Newlin-Hayes house, O.B.V. undertook a more extensive restoration project. There a storefront that had been

attached to the house had to be removed before it could be reconverted to its original appearance. At the time of writing O.B.V. plans to undertake extensive renovations to the Joseph Tatnall house, 1803 Market Street, and to the Edward Tatnall house next door, now used as apartments, removing the turn-of-the-century front porches and the third floor sections that have been added which distort the original appearance of the roof lines. As these projects are completed, O.B.V. will continue its policy of selling the houses to persons or organizations that are willing to maintain the properties in their restored condition. When this goal has been reached, O.B.V., Inc., will go out of business, its task, seemingly so formidable just a decade ago, accomplished.

This remarkable, privately supported effort at the restoration and reinvigoration of a historic neighborhood has sparked interest in the history of the Village, its houses, and those who have lived in them. Architects, archaeologists, and historians have all contributed to our expanding knowledge of the community's past. We have already traced the history of the Village in its economic and social setting. There follows a short history of each of the major extant buildings in the Village that can be used as a guide for a tour of Old Brandywine Village, beginning at the bridge and proceeding north on the west side of Market Street.

Market Street Bridge

The present six-lane concrete bridge constructed in 1928 is the sixth on this site. The first, a wooden structure supported on three stone pillars, was built in the 1760s. It was destroyed by a freshet in 1810 and replaced by a chain suspension bridge supported on tall uprights on either shore that lasted only twelve years, until the flood of 1822. The third bridge, a double-barreled covered bridge,⁷ was carried away by the floods of 1839 when its stone abutments gave way under battering by chunks of ice. Between 1839 and 1887 a wooden covered bridge resting on stone piers crossed the stream. The covered portion of the bridge was reserved for vehicular traffic while unsheltered pedestrian walkways extended on either side. Being the first bridge to be erected there with no supports resting in the riverbed, it was also the first not to succumb to floods.



The covered bridge (1839-1887), *above*. (Wilmington Institute Free Library.)
The steel bridge (1887-1928), *below*. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.

Mary Hawley Tatnall, who spent her childhood at 1805 Market Street during the 1870s, wrote that this fourth bridge saw constant use by heavy wagons bringing grain to the mills and taking bales of paper from Jessup and Moore's paper mill upstream to the railroad terminal. Another common sight was that of cattle being driven over the bridge by men on horseback to slaughterhouses in Wilmington. Miss Tatnall noted that the odd angle that the bridge made with North Market Street, combined with its enclosed structure, rendered it particularly dangerous for little children; "we were taught always to look ahead carefully before entering the bridge." Once when a circus parade was crossing the

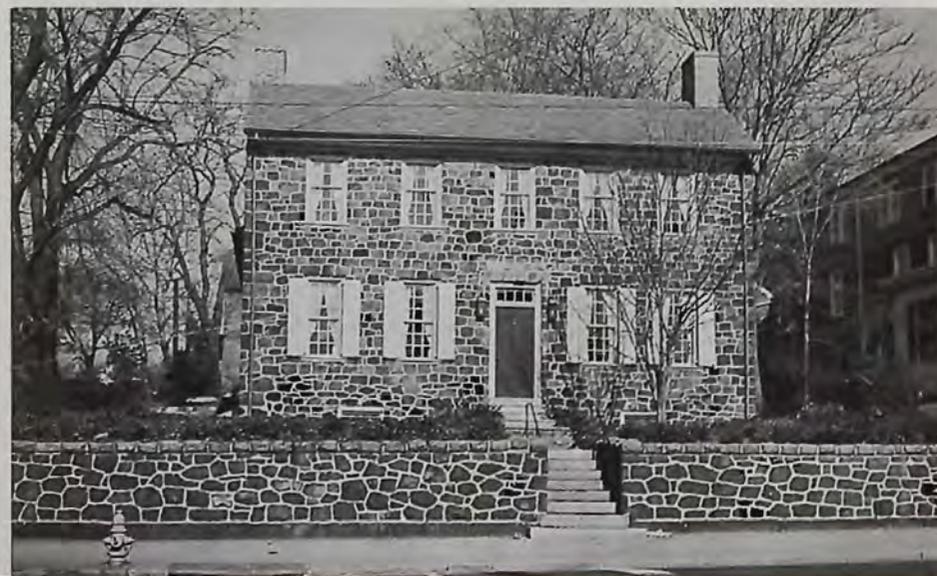
bridge an elephant tested the structure with its foot and refused to proceed. After some delay someone thought to take the beast to the PW&B Railroad bridge downstream, where it crossed uncomplainingly and the circus caravan went on its way.⁸

The covered bridge was torn down in 1887 and replaced by a steel one that was safer both in terms of the weight it could accommodate and the visibility it permitted. The steel bridge, however, proved to be too narrow in the automobile age and so was torn down in 1928 to make way for the current structure.

Lea-Derickson House, 1801 Market Street

This house, the first to be restored by Old Brandywine Village, Inc., in 1962-63, is currently the home of Wilmington's Junior League. James Marshall built the house ca. 1770, when he and his brother were engaged in digging the north race, using stone dug out of the bed of the race. The general plan of the house, with its two large front rooms, was an extravagant use of front lot space that would not have been duplicated in a city house in Philadelphia or even Wilmington, where land costs were much greater. In this regard the house is similar to the two Canby houses on the south bank and the Thomas Shipley house, a brick dwelling also on the south bank, built between 1759 and 1788 and demolished in 1957. As in the Shipley house, which was closely studied

1801 Market Street following restoration in 1970. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)



before demolition, 1801 Market has fireplaces on either end and extensive interior wood paneling.

When the Marshalls proved unable to complete the race because of insufficient capital, James sold his house to Samuel Morton, another merchant miller, who in turn sold the property to Thomas Lea; the date is not known, but it may have coincided with Lea's marriage to Joseph Tatnall's daughter Sarah in 1785. Lea built another house, now 1901 Market Street, in 1801 but did not sell his first house until 1819, when his mill burned and he had need of ready capital in order to rebuild.

In the mid-1830s Jacob Derickson, the other man whose name has become attached to the house, bought the property. A well-to-do millwright in the Village, he bought the property as a wedding gift for his daughter Martha at the time of her marriage to Amor Hollingsworth Harvey, an executive in a Wilmington steam engine firm.⁹ He died in the house in 1887, just as demolition of the wooden covered bridge was about to commence; in order to accommodate the funeral procession, the flooring of the old bridge was left intact until the hearse had crossed, and then workmen immediately fell to ripping up the boards.¹⁰ Harvey left no sons, but his daughter, Sarah Derickson Harvey, married her cousin Jacob Derickson, and through her the house remained in the family until the time of its sale to O.B.V., Inc., in 1963.

The Thomas Shipley house, 16th and French streets, Wilmington, Delaware, in 1932. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.



The Joseph Tatnall House, 1803 Market Street

This house, undoubtedly the most interesting in the Village from a historical point of view, was constructed ca. 1770¹¹ for Joseph Tatnall when he took over the mill and race construction operations on the north bank. It has undergone numerous remodelings since its original construction. Tatnall's descendants added a railing on the roof and a more elaborate doorframe, probably in the 1840s, in the regency style that was then popular. At the turn of the century more extensive changes were made. A Queen Anne porch was attached to the front of the house, the dormer windows were replaced by additions on both front and back that greatly enlarged the third floor, and an extension was put on the rear.

Tatnall lived in the house for over forty years. Before the Battle of the Brandywine, the house served as a headquarters for General Anthony Wayne and others on Washington's staff, and following the battle it was a dormitory for British officers during the Brandywine campaign in 1777. Both Washington and Lafayette were guests there on several occasions. In 1824, on a tour of the United States, General Lafayette made a point of stopping at the Tatnall house to inquire about the family. Washington also recalled Tatnall's hospitality during the war and called upon him there when he was President. Quaker austerity did not prevent Joseph Tatnall from furnishing his home in style. An inventory of his estate lists considerable furniture, including highboys, featherbeds, and a mahogany clock valued at \$60. He also owned several rugs, considerable amounts of china and linens, and a carriage worth \$100.¹²

After Tatnall's death in 1813 his second wife, Sara Rodman Paxson Tatnall, remained in the house for several years before moving to Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The next owner, Edward Tatnall, Joseph's son, leased the property to Joseph Bancroft in the mid-1820s for three years; Bancroft had just migrated from England and was then managing a cotton mill at Rockland prior to the formation of his own textile firm in 1831. In 1841 Edward's son Joseph, who married Sarah Richardson, moved into the house and lived there until his death in 1895.¹³ It was this second Joseph Tatnall who modernized the house by adding the balustrade and other regency features. The 1860 census, which listed Joseph



1803 and 1805 Market Street in 1970. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

Tatnall as a miller and farmer, recorded that his household consisted of his wife, Sarah, their nine children, and three domestic servants.¹⁴ When Edward Tatnall died in 1856, Joseph inherited the house and a farm adjoining the Village.¹⁵

Edward Tatnall House, 1805 Market Street

Joseph Tatnall's son Edward built this house ca. 1850 to a design in conformity with his father's house (then occupied by his son Joseph) next door. He probably built the house for his son Henry Lea Tatnall, because in his will written in 1850 Edward bequeaths to Henry a large lot behind Brandywine Village, including the reservoir that served the Village, and a house "which is

Bounded on the South by the Philadelphia Road, on the West by the messuage and lot occupied by my son Joseph and devised to him, on the North by the South side of the Lane leading from Tatnall Street Westwardly to the mill race, and on the East by the mansion and lot where I reside, and is devised to my son Edward."¹⁶

Henry Lea Tatnall entered the mills as a young man of seventeen but, like Edmund Canby before him, discovered that milling did not suit his lungs. At the suggestion of a physician he signed on a Wilmington schooner bound for the West Indies with a consignment of flour. While on board he became fascinated with an old sailor's fiddle and decided against his Quaker scruples to take up the instrument. Henry's taste for music presaged other artistic interests which led to his being proclaimed the father of Wilmington art. Back in Wilmington he began designing ships, painting, writing musical pieces, and playing in amateur orchestras. He married Caroline Gibbons in 1851 and after a short attempt at farming returned to Wilmington as a partner in a lumber business. In 1869 Henry moved his family to Vernon Place, the Gibbons house on Delaware Avenue, where he lived until his death in 1885.¹⁷

The house at 1805 Market Street then became the residence of Henry's brother Edward Tatnall (1818-1898), the noted botanist and author of the *Catalogue of the Phaenogamons and Filicoid Plants of New Castle County, Delaware*, published in 1860. Edward founded the Wawaset Nursery near Brandywine Village. The botanist's daughter, Mary Hawley Tatnall, wrote "Memories of an Old Georgian House in Delaware," in 1952, which recorded her childhood in the big stone house at 1805 Market Street during the late nineteenth century. Her father, she said, kept a telescope on the roof along the balustraded walkway. The interior walls of the house were white plaster with a washable "marble" finish in the Quaker fashion of plainness. These walls were scrubbed annually by a strong black woman who specialized in this heavy housework, for which she was paid 15 cents an hour. The house contained forty closets and thirty windows. The floors were covered with woolen carpets in the winter and matings in summer. There were two kitchens, the out kitchen or washhouse containing a cauldron which was used for rendering

lard and boiling clothes. "Outside the out kitchen was a wide bricked space under a large grape arbor, where the women washed in hot weather. The stone steps went up from there to the terraced flower and vegetable gardens, the fruit trees, and croquet ground." The outhouse was on the third terrace, hid in a maze of vines and flowers. The basement, which had a granite floor, was used for storing coal and for cooling fruits and making wine. There was also a windowless room where hams and dried beef were hung.¹⁸ This house, like 1803 next door, is now owned by O.B.V., Inc., and is to be restored to its original appearance.

Tatnall-Febiger House, 1807 Market Street

The rear section of this house, facing 19th Street, has been dated to 1735. Joseph Tatnall's father, Edward, a carpenter, lived there in the 1780s but the house predates that period, for it was probably the plantation house of the Vandever farm. Joseph Tatnall added the front portion facing Market Street, ca. 1807, for his son, Edward, who lived there most of his life. After Edward's death the house came into the possession of his daughter Sarah and her husband, Christian Febiger (1817-1892). Febiger was at various times a teller in the Union Bank, an associate in the Lea Mills, and president of the Board of Directors of the Delaware Railroad. A lieutenant colonel in the Union Army during the Civil War, he was active in Republican politics in the postwar years. He represented the Ninth Ward in city council in 1869-1875 and served as chief of the Wilmington water commission. In his spare time he studied science and was an amateur photographer.¹⁹ It was his influence in the city council on behalf of his landowning Tatnall relatives which guaranteed that lots in the Ninth Ward would follow the grid pattern. In 1874 he intervened to get North Washington Street turned to parallel Market Street through the Tatnall properties rather than following a straight course in the direction of the present-day Baynard Boulevard.²⁰

The house has for many years been used as attorneys' offices. In 1959 a granddaughter of Christian Febiger, Mrs. Charles A. Fife, who was born there, revisited the house and described the experience in a letter. "I stopped at 1807 Market and asked to



1807 Market Street in 1970. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

see the house, telling them I had lived in it as a child!" She was surprised to find the large rooms she remembered from her childhood "cut up into small lawyers' offices. . . . The spring house has gone entirely, a large wing is built out from the house where it was, the large hill with a door in it which was the ice house has also gone, the out house toilets, green house and garden have all disappeared—In what was a large vegetable garden with fruit trees and the old barn are now rows of houses."²¹

William Lea House, 1901 Market Street

Thomas Lea, Joseph Tatnall's business partner and son-in-law, built this house ca. 1800 while he was living at 1801 Market Street. His son William was born here in 1805. William Lea, the last important merchant miller on the Brandywine, lived his entire life at 1901 Market Street. He reared six children and



1901, 1903, and 1905 Market Street in 1931.
 Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.

died there in 1876. The 1860 census returns list three domestic servants, all female, among his household.²² His widow, Jane, continued to occupy the house until her death in 1890, when it became the property of their son Preston. The house remained in the Lea family until 1930, when it was sold and converted into apartments.²³ In 1963 O.B.V., Inc., was instrumental in restoring the exterior of the house and bringing the property to the attention of the Senior Center as a desirable location for their headquarters.

*William Smith and Newlin-Hayes Houses,
 1905 and 1907 Market Street*

Since these two houses share a common wall, they can best be treated together; 1905 is set back farther than 1907, and there



1901 and 1905 Market Street in 1970 following the removal of the Victorian row house at 1903 Market. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

is an arched alley between the two houses. Research into deed records reveals that the Newlin-Hayes house (1907 Market) was built sometime between 1783 and 1787.²⁴ Its neighbor was built later, probably during the first decade of the nineteenth century, for William Smith, a cordwainer or, in modern parlance, a shoemaker. (The term cordwainer comes from Cordoba, Spain, which gave its name to cordovan, a soft fine-grained leather used in shoe uppers.) Smith bought the property at 1905 Market Street from Joseph Smithel, a grocer, in 1801. The deed specifies the northern property line as an "adjoining alley," which would indicate that some sort of structure, perhaps an outbuilding, stood on the property which was separated by an alley from the Newlin-Hayes house next door.²⁵

Evidence from deeds and architectural analysis suggests that the house at 1907 Market Street was built by Cyrus Newlin



1907 Market Street, *above*, before the removal of the early twentieth-century storefront, February 1972. Photograph by Pat Crowe. (News-Journal Company.)
1905 and 1907 Market Street, *below*, in process of restoration. Photograph by Charles A. Foote.

(1747-1824), a Quaker miller who was married to Sarah Shipley, a granddaughter of William Shipley. Newlin sold both properties to Smithel in 1795. The house came into the possession of John Hayes (1767-1842), a master cooper, in 1803 and remained in the Hayes family for most of the nineteenth century. Early in the present century the house was converted into a commercial establishment with the addition of a storefront. Since becoming the property of O.B.V., the front has been removed to reveal the masonry wall intact behind it.

Cathedral Church of St. John, Protestant Episcopal

For a more detailed description of this property, see Chapter 3. The church was built in 1857 on the site of the Green Tree Inn, the architect, John Notman of Philadelphia, being a leading figure in the American Gothic revival. This church was designed in a moderately High Church manner to resemble an English country parish church of the early Gothic period. The church follows a cruciform plan. Originally the chancel and transepts were of equal length, but the chancel was extended in 1921 at the time when St. Mary's Chapel and the offices facing on Concord Avenue were constructed. A major feature is the stone tower capped by a wooden broach spire covered first with multicolored slate and now with aluminum. The most significant nineteenth-century feature in the interior is the beamed ceiling, which is supported by five notched wooden arches rising from hammer beams. On the wall of the north transept are plaques commemorating Alexis I. and Joanna Smith du Pont, who contributed a large share of the building fund.

Brandywine Methodist Church

On the east side of Market Street at 22nd Street is Brandywine Methodist Church, designed in the classical style and built of stuccoed brick. The building has been enlarged several times, and a Sunday school chapel was constructed behind the church on 22nd Street in 1889-90. See Chapter 3 for a brief history of the church.

Brandywine Academy

On Vandever Avenue, a few steps east of Market Street, stands the Brandywine Academy, a two-story stone structure built in 1798. Part of the Old Brandywine Village redevelopment, it is currently the home of the Caesar Rodney Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. The belfry, designed by Benjamin Ferris, the Quaker real estate agent and historian, was constructed ca. 1820. It is likely that Ferris used the cupola on Old Swedes (Holy Trinity) Church as his model, since there is a strong resemblance between the two and Ferris is known to have sketched the latter building at about the same time.²⁶ The first floor has been restored as an early nineteenth-century schoolroom. For a more complete history of this building and its role in the development of the Village, see Chapter 3.

The Future of Brandywine Village

An important element in O.B.V.'s successful preservation and restoration of colonial and federal period buildings in Brandy-

Belfry for Brandywine schoolhouse. Architectural drawing by Benjamin Ferris, ca. 1820 (Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection.)



The Brandywine Academy and Cathedral Church of St. John in 1970. Photograph by Ellsworth J. Gentry. (Old Brandywine Village, Inc.)

wine Village has been the organization's conception of its goals and priorities. In one sense the architects, historians, and philanthropists who have charted its course set themselves a monumental task—the restoration of all the remaining historic buildings as an anchor for community stabilization. This proved to be possible for a number of reasons: strong financial support from wealthy civic-minded persons, encouragement and cooperation from officials of the City of Wilmington, and active involvement by professionally trained personnel. Another significant reason for its success, however, lies in the way in which O.B.V.'s leaders have

conceived of their purpose and role in the Village. They recognized that restoration could not take place in a vacuum, nor should it lead to a static, museumlike community. A statement of O.B.V.'s goals sums up the organization's view that

historic preservation does not always mean the creation of museums, and the citizens interested in Brandywine Village do not envision its future in this light. For almost three hundred years it has been the site of homes and shops—both a residential and a commercial community. So it should remain.

Time has brought numerous intrusions which have changed the appearance of the Village and dissipated much of its charm. Yet enough remains to recapture much of the appeal of the earlier Village and to make it a more attractive place to work—an important community asset.

In this effort O.B.V., Inc., has demonstrated that the aims of preservation can harmonize with and enhance a living community. The handsome, austere restored buildings set the tone for the neighborhood by creating an aesthetic awareness of the relationship of buildings to one another and encouraging a community's pride in its history and its architectural heritage.

Old millstone along the south race in 1940. Photograph by Frank R. Zebley.



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