



THE ARCHWAY

Newsletter of the Friends of Brandywine Springs

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Sandi Ciosek, Editor

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A STROLL DOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MEMORY LANE

As we complete an archaeological project and eagerly anticipate the next, we tend to forget some of the past projects. The amount of archaeological work we've done in the park is amazing, as is the number of people who have participated over the years — probably 150 or more. Here's a list of the sites and the years they were investigated. Mike Ciosek provides some favorite recollections of each.

DANCE HALL ON THE LAKE (1993): *Mark Lawlor and I cleared and documented the dance hall site before we began our formal archaeological investigations. I made a drawing showing all the pillars and supports.*

ENTRANCE ARCHWAY (1993-1995): *This was the first "official" dig with assistance from the **Archaeological Society of Delaware**. We located the general area from old photographs. Each time we dug, we ran into a hard-packed cinder layer at about the same level below the surface. The archaeologists agreed the cinder layer was consistent with walking paths of the era. When we finally found areas without cinders, we knew that was where the bases of the archway were. The archway actually was made of wood and was anchored to timbers buried in the ground, which we found. We uncovered over 100 light fixtures and have used them on a display board to symbolically re-light the archway when we give our talk.*



The team posed with the exposed foundation of the Katzenjammer

KATZENJAMMER CASTLE (1995-1997): *This was the first dig across Hyde Run, and it was before the bridges were built.*

*So, we had to carry all of our equipment across the creek over a path of strategically placed rocks. Quite a few people got wet feet! **Ann Hedrick** told us she remembered after the park was closed men came in with a team of horses and pulled down the walls. Then they scavenged the intact concrete blocks. We found only one whole concrete block.*

GEO-GRAF UNDERGROUND RADAR SURVEY (1995): **Fred Graf** of **Geo-Graf Inc.** came upon our dig one day and was curious. After we explained what we were doing, he told us he had an underground radar business and volunteered to spend a day surveying underground for us. He began at the movie theater and didn't find anything but did locate the trolley line that ran at the base of the hillside. Later he found indications

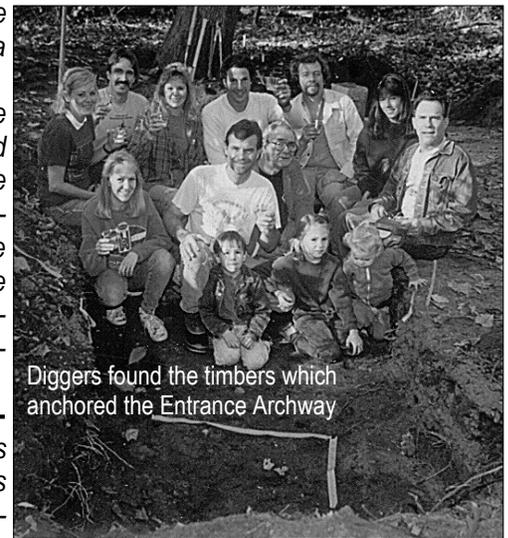
of the second hotel which was underneath the basketball court and what appeared to be foundations of the Yarnall Tavern along Newport Gap Pike.

POOL HALL (1997): *This was a pretty simple, uneventful dig. The footers were very close to the Katzenjammer. Not many artifacts were found. Darned **Bob D'Onofrio** already had all of the pool tables from his dad's pool hall!*

SCENIC RAILWAY (1998-2003): *This was quite a dig. Easily found three of four front footers of the first Scenic Railway. Of course the motor mount was totally visible. Ended up finding only one footer of the second Scenic Railway. Almost lost that one when **Ed Lipka** was digging and didn't realize what he'd found!*

CAROUSEL/CATERPILLAR (2000): *Really didn't do too much here as all of the concrete radii footers were in place and the big concrete section was in the center.*

WATER WORKS (2001-2004): *This was a very interesting dig. We found the actual brick-lined basin but had trouble defining the outside walls. The site was so wet that we had to pump out the water before each dig. We never marked it. The kids had a ball playing with all the frogs at the site.*



Diggers found the timbers which anchored the Entrance Archway



Tim Sheldon rebuilt footers at the Ladies Pavilion with help from Ed Lipka

EXHIBIT HALL (2004-2006): This was another good one. We could see two or three footers on the north-west corner. After a flood, **Lonzy Seymour** discovered the south wall. We stood on the northwest wall and suddenly saw the southwest wall. We dug for the northeast footer, but it was gone.

LADIES PAVILION (2006-2007): Had two sets of footers on this one, the inner ones for the building and the outer ones for the porch. The footers were brick, but the connecting mortar had disintegrated. New Castle County Councilman **Tim Sheldon**, a mason by trade, came out and rebuilt the footers for us. In 2012 **Chris Ellis** installed posts to mark the site as his Eagle Scout project.

MOVIE THEATER (2007): Only had two digs here. Found a sidewalk and one footer wall but nothing else.

POWER HOUSE (2007-2009): Found three boiler mounts and three generator mounts. One generator mount was 4 sq.ft. and in a hole 4 ft. deep. Never marked the site because it's on the other side of Hyde Run.

B&O PAVILION (STATION) (2010-2011): This one was fun. We found many building footers. We knew they were made by B&O people because the concrete tops were loaded with coal flecks. Their coal pile was next to the sand pile so coal dust mixed with

the concrete. We had estimated the pavilion was about 25 ft. by 50 ft. It actually was 50 ft. by 100 ft.

CHALYBEATE SPRING (2011-2016): This was our biggest, most interesting, and most fruitful dig, as evidenced by the way the site looked at the completion of the dig.

RAZZLE DAZZLE (2017-2018): This is our current project, and we haven't had much luck. We'll continue there for the rest of this year.

Artifacts from our digs can be seen in our museum at the **Red Clay Valley Visitors Center & Museum**. There are many more mysteries to be solved in the park. Join us for the fun!



Chalybeate Spring

UPCOMING MEETINGS

7:00 p.m.

The Cedars Methodist Church
Maple & Harrison Avenues, The Cedars

SEPTEMBER 9 - "Attracting Wildlife and Pollinators to Your Garden" - Eileen Boyle - Learn how to bring the joys of nature to your yard.

OCTOBER 14 - Riverview Beach Amusement Park - Carol McKay - Relive the days of the amusement park in Pennsville, NJ.

NOVEMBER 11 - TBA

DECEMBER 9 - Christmas Party

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### ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS

September 8

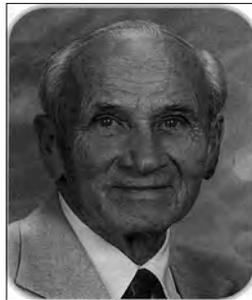
October 13

November 10

Meet in the Brandywine Springs parking lot at 9:00 a.m.

### MEL SCHOENBECK

1928-2018



On August 5, 2018, we lost Mel Schoenbeck at the age of 90. Mel was a charter member of FOBS and had been on the Board of Directors since the group began. Mel was probably our most avid and enthusiastic archaeologist. Usually the oldest digger on site, he was usually the first to start and the last to quit. When health issues forced him to stop digging a couple years ago, he'd ride to the site in Mike's truck, set up

his lawn chair, and consult. He'd take home the artifacts. Terribly corroded, unidentifiable pieces of metal would show up at our next meeting all cleaned up, and Mel would tell us what they were and what they were used for. He took home pounds and pounds of pottery pieces and glass shards, cleaned them, and patiently and painstakingly assembled the pieces into cups, plates, bottles, etc., many of which can be seen in our museum.



Mel is survived by his wife of 61 years, Jean, grandsons Chris and Bryan and their families. We missed Mel during his illness and will continue to miss him. He was an integral part of FOBS. It was a privilege to be his friend and to know such a kind and wonderful gentleman.

(Reprinted from Spring 1998)

## ANCIENT ROMAN COINS FOUND AT BRANDYWINE SPRINGS

Joyce Grobner and Susan Sellers were astonished to find treasure at Brandywine Springs — almost 40 coins, some dating back to the days of Roman emperors! Don't grab your shovels and rush over to the park. This happened on May 1, 1957. Joyce is now Joyce Harris, and Susan became Susan Smith, and both joined FOBS. Joyce and her mother, Edith Grobner, recently reminisced about that special find.

Joyce and Susan were fascinated with tales about the amusement park that was once near their homes. They studied the amusement park chapter of Dr. C.A. Weslager's book *Brandywine Springs—The Rise & Fall of a Delaware Resort* and made many trips to the library to research newspaper files for anything they could find about the amusement park. They played in the park frequently and dreamed of the amusement park days. During one of their adventures, they discovered coins scattered on the ground. The coins weren't like any the girls had ever seen, and some were dated in the 1700s. They found a total of 36 coins, then raced back to Joyce's home to show her parents. "They were always bringing things home from the park", Mrs. Grobner recalls, "so at first I didn't think much of it. Then it started to sink in." Mr. Grobner phoned the police to report the find. The police said the girls could keep the coins if no one claimed them within a specified time. Excitement mounted. Susan, Joyce, her parents and brother returned to the park armed with shovels. But, alas, they found only a few more. All coins were found on the surface.



Morning News Photo  
IS IT FOR REAL?—Susan Sellers (left) asks one of the 31 rare coins the girls found yesterday in Brandywine Springs Park.

When they returned to the Grobner home, there was a commotion. A neighbor had phoned the newspaper and reporters and photographers were already there to interview the girls. The story ran in the newspaper the next morning. By the time Joyce and Susan arrived at school, they were celebrities!

Some of the coins go back to the Roman Empire and are estimated to date from 69 BC to 326 AD. One coin is about the size of a silver dollar, has an emperor's head on one side and a long-cloaked figure with a coiled snake on the reverse. This is Aesculapius, the Greek God of Healing. (In Greece temples were erected to him near healing springs. Kind of ironic to find this coin in Brandywine Springs!) The coin dates to about 200 AD. Other coins are from, 18th century Sicily, 19th century Spain, and early 20th century Germany. There is even a Medieval Italian coin from the 1600s. The only American coin was a "Missouri Sales Tax Receipt". The newspaper ran the feature article and two follow-ups, but no one ever came forth to claim the collection. How the coins came to be in the park is still a mystery today.

Back to 1957. A local coin expert, Charles Buckalew, was kind enough to spend an afternoon with the girls explaining the history of each coin. Susan's dad took the coins to a dealer for appraisal. The dealer told Mr. Sellers the whole collection was worth... \$60! A trip to a dealer in New York City resulted in a similar appraisal. Joyce explains that the coins apparently are fairly common and, therefore, not valuable. The monetary value didn't matter. Joyce says she was happy that the occurrence brought attention to the park and its history because that was very important to her.

*(Ed. Note: Unfortunately Susan passed away in 2005 and Mrs. Grobner, also a FOBS member, passed away in 2007. Joyce and husband, Paul, live in Newark and still are involved with FOBS.)*

*Welcome New Members!*  
*Mary Simons*  
*Donna Francisco*

*In Memoriam*  
**Mimi Jenkins**  
July 28, 2018  
Sincere condolences to the  
Jenkins Family  
(Mimi's late husband, Paul,  
frequented the amusement park  
as a child.)

**ANNUAL PICNIC**  
**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018**  
**Join us for food, fun,**  
**and friendship!**  
**SEE THE ENCLOSED FLYER FOR ALL**  
**THE DETAILS**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE OVERDUE! IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN TO RENEW, A REMINDER NOTICE IS ENCLOSED WITH YOUR NEWSLETTER. PLEASE RETURN ASAP!**

**This & That.....** FOBS has been approached by **Rockwood Museum** about participating in a possible exhibit about amusement parks of yesteryear. This is all very preliminary at this point. We are very interested and will keep you informed... **Bob D'Onofrio** has been appointed to fill the balance of **Mel Schoenbeck's** term on the FOBS Board of Directors.... Work on the **Red Clay Valley Visitors Center & Museum** has been completed to the point where it is now open to the public. Stop by and see the changes!... Painting the exterior of the Visitors Center has been added to the **Wilmington & Western Railroad's** 2019 budget. It was last painted ten years ago.... We have a new volunteer in the Visitors Center. **Mariam Collins** of WWRR is learning the ropes. Stop in and make her welcome... On June 14 **Mike Ciosek** toured **Kendall Sommers** through the park. Kendall has assumed the New Castle County parks responsibilities of **Jon Husband**. They had a successful visit, and we look forward to working with Kendall... **Peter Geldof Jr.**, who was Superintendent of Brandywine Springs State Park in the 1950s, passed away on August 3 at the age of 90.... Have you done the audio tour of the park yet? **Leone Cahill-Krout** developed this audio/hiking tour late last year as an on-site adventure. Take your phone to the park, go to [izi.travel/en](http://izi.travel/en). Go to **EXPLORE** then type in **Brandywine Springs Park**. Follow the prompts and you can take a tour of the park complete with narration... If you have not yet gotten your copy of "The Lost Motion Pictures of Brandywine Springs", stop by the **Wilmington & Western Gift Shop** at Greenbank Station and get one before they're gone. These are the oldest existing motion pictures filmed in Delaware and show the park in its heyday, including the rides, trolley, Baby Day parade, and much more. Cost is \$25 and is well worth it!... **David Doody** gave a very interesting presentation at the June 10 meeting about old party bottles with lots of samples on display. David promised to come back next year and give another talk on antique bottles... **Angela Evans** is at it again! She discovered a small sign in the background of one of the park photos that says something about a wave ride. She's currently researching, and we'll let you know what she finds... I'd like to thank all of you who gave extra donations in addition to your membership dues. We collected \$530 in donations! Thank you!!... *Questions, comments, suggestions, contact Sandi at (302) 994-0536 or [MikeCiosek@comcast.net](mailto:MikeCiosek@comcast.net).*

**FRIENDS OF BRANDYWINE SPRINGS, INC.**  
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 Bonnie Ardis                      Scott Palmer  
 Sarah Dougherty                Bob D'Onofrio  
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 Website: [www.fobsde.org](http://www.fobsde.org)

**SEE ENCLOSED FLYER FOR DETAILS!  
 ANNUAL PICNIC  
 SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29**

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