

**A Village Walk:**

**History and Architecture**

**in**

**Brandywine Village**

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

A SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR





## A Village Walk:

# HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

IN

## BRANDYWINE VILLAGE

### A Brief History of Brandywine Village

From 1762 when the first millrace was dug along the Brandywine until 1869 when it was annexed to the city, Brandywine Village was but a neighbor to Wilmington. By the turn of the 19th century, four millraces allowed Quaker millers to use the twenty-foot drop the Brandywine makes in its last mile before leveling out to become tidal, linked to the sea via its sister stream, the Christina. A dozen water-powered flour mills operated along the Brandywine at the Village's height, around the end of the 18th century. By the 1880s the mills combined water and steam power; by the 1920s, only steam powered the equipment. Village factories also produced cotton textiles and cigars during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The latter years of the 20th century have been a time of change for Brandywine Village. After manufacturing left the neighborhood, services became the primary industry, both commercial – restaurants, barber shops, day care – and nonprofit – the Wilmington Senior Center, Northeast State Service Center, and the A. I. Du Pont Institute Children's Clinic, as well as several churches. Yet the Village remains a lively community whose residents take a keen interest in seeing it improve and grow.

For information about efforts to revitalize Brandywine Village, contact Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization, Inc., c/o the Wilmington Senior Center, 302-651-3400.



### 1 Brandywine Mills Park

Commercial buildings once occupied the site of Brandywine Mills Park, cleared in the mid 1980s to create the park. A marker sketches a history of the Village, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

*From the Park, walk to the Market Street Bridge.*

### 2 Market Street Bridge

[1929, Harrington Howard & Ash, engineers] -- This reinforced concrete bridge is the sixth to cross the Brandywine River here. The first, a suspension bridge built in 1764, marked Market Street as a gateway into the city.

*From the Bridge, one has a good view of the river as well as of the structures flanking it on both sides.*

### 3 Waterworks Buildings

[1870-1934] -- Facing downstream with the Village on your left, the brick and granite buildings on the south bank are the Wilmington Water Department Pumping Station and Water Treatment Plant. The complex of buildings stands on the foundations of flour mills operated by the Canby and Price families.

### 4 Superfine Lane Condominiums

[1984, Richard Chalfont, builder] -- The condominium buildings on the north bank are named for the grade of flour produced by the Quaker millers whose mills stood on the site. Tatnall and Lea began milling on this side of the Brandywine in the 1760s and the family firm continued until 1923. In 1933, fire destroyed most of the surviving mills.

*Retrace your steps to Brandywine Mills Park*

The tracks crossing Market Street just before the Park are a spur of the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington Railroad that ran up to the Jessup & Moore Paper Mill. In the 19th century, when paper mill workers went by train on summer excursions, often to Atlantic City, trains stopped at this crossing so Villagers could join the outings.

### 5 Lea Mill Buildings

[ca. 1840; 1990] -- The brick buildings between the condominiums and the Park were mill buildings where the flour was sifted, now subdivided for commercial use. The building to the left is original while the building closest to



Market Street, built in 1990, replicates the older architecture.

*Proceed up Market Street away from the bridge. If you cross, be careful – Market Street is quite busy.*

#### **6 1801 Market Street, Lea-Derickson House**

[ca. 1770; rehab 1960s] -- Built of stone extracted when the north millrace was dug, this Georgian house is named from Thomas Lea, who, with his father-in-law Joseph



Tatnall, operated the Tatnall and Lea Flour Mills on the river below and for Swede, Jacob Derickson, a Village millwright who, in the mid-1830s, bought the house as a wedding gift for

his daughter. The Derickson family sold the dwelling in 1963 to Old Brandywine Village, Inc., [OBV] the preservation organization that renovated the property.

The Lea-Derickson House shows successful adaptive reuse of an historic building where a structure has been preserved by finding a new use for it. [See also on Market Street, #1803, #1805, #1807, and the buildings owned by the Wilmington Senior Center in 1900 block.]

#### **7 1803 Market Street, Joseph Tatnall House**

[ca. 1770; rehab 1960s] -- Joseph Tatnall, the English Quaker who built this house, is said to have told George Washington during the American Revolution that, as a Quaker, he could not fight, but that he would support the American effort with flour from the Tatnall mills to feed the troops. In the 1960s, OBV renovated the dwelling and, in 1964, conveyed it to the Wilmington Senior Center which maintains it as a rental property.



#### **8 1805 Market Street, Edward Tatnall House**

[1850; rehab 1960s] -- When Edward Tatnall, son of Joseph Tatnall [1803 Market Street] built 1805 Market Street for his son, Henry Lea Tatnall, he copied the Georgian features of its older neighbors. After Henry married and, in 1856, moved to his bride's family home, his brother, Edward, botanist and author, lived here. Since 1964, the Wilmington Senior Center has owned the house and maintained as a rental property.

#### **9 1807 Market Street, Tatnall-Febiger House**

[Market Street façade, ca. 1805; rehab 1960s] -- Joseph Tatnall built the portion of this house facing Market Street onto an earlier structure that became a rear wing. Tatnall gave the enlarged dwelling to his son Edward when Edward married Margery Paxson in 1809. Later, Edward's daughter, Sarah, and her husband, Christian Febiger, lived in the house. During the 1930s, the dwelling, like many of its neighbors, was subdivided into apartments. After being renovated by OBV, the property was converted to its current commercial use.

#### **10 1901 Market Street, William Lea House**

[ca. 1800, rehab 1960s] -- Although built by Thomas Lea, the house is known by the name of his son, William Lea who lived his entire life here. In 1864, the firm of Tatnall and Lea, started by his father and grandfather, became William Lea & Sons when William brought his sons, Henry and Preston, into the business. Subdivided into apartments during the 1930s, it was restored by OBV and conveyed to the Wilmington Senior Center in 1964. [Open to the public, M-F, 8 a.m. -- 4 p.m., telephone: 302-651-3400].

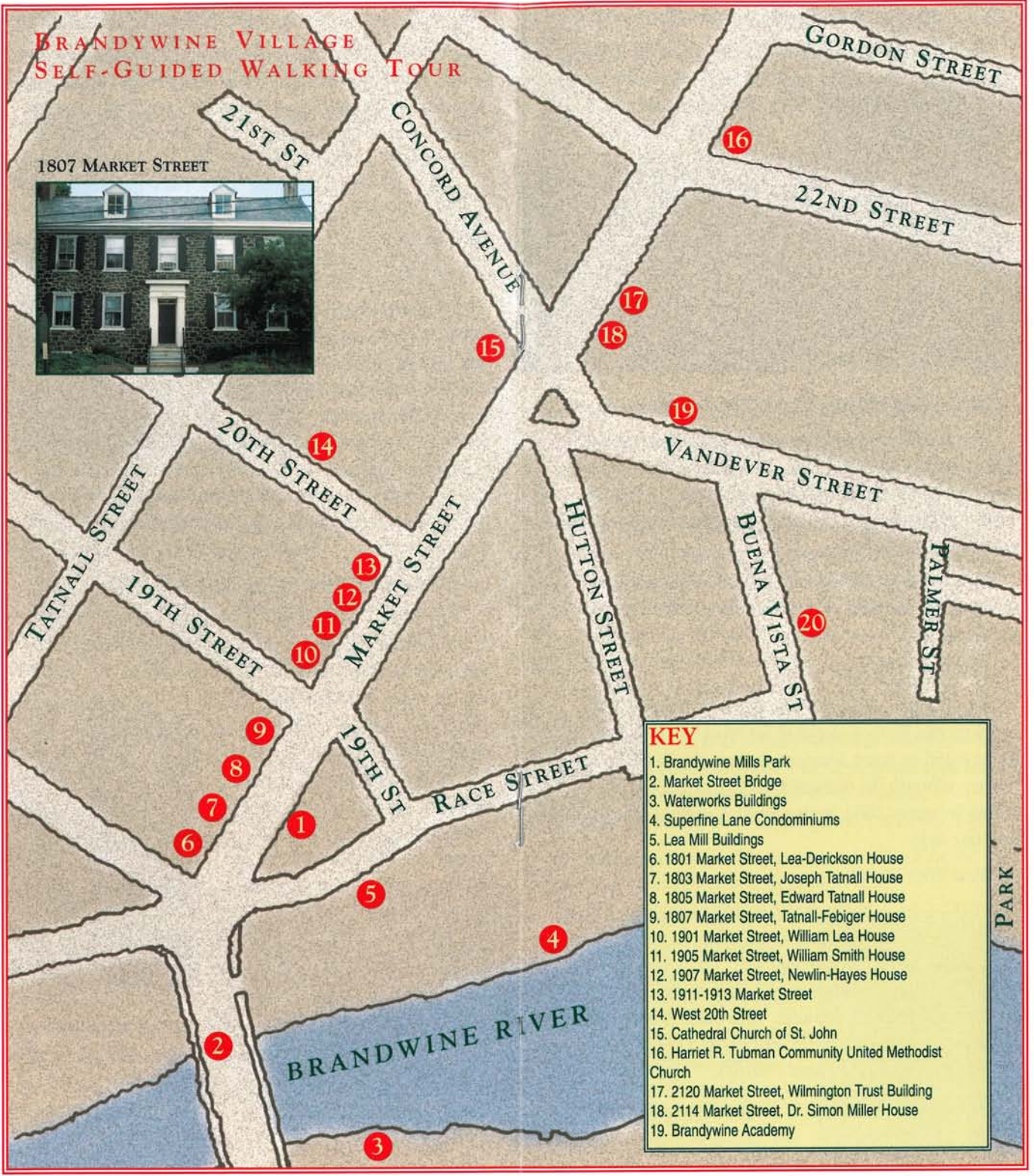


A three-story Victorian house once occupied the narrow space between 1901 and 1905 Market Street. The building was demolished during renovation efforts in the 1960s.



**BRANDYWINE VILLAGE  
SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR**

1807 MARKET STREET



- KEY**
1. Brandywine Mills Park
  2. Market Street Bridge
  3. Waterworks Buildings
  4. Superfine Lane Condominiums
  5. Lea Mill Buildings
  6. 1801 Market Street, Lea-Derickson House
  7. 1803 Market Street, Joseph Tatnall House
  8. 1805 Market Street, Edward Tatnall House
  9. 1807 Market Street, Tatnall-Febiger House
  10. 1901 Market Street, William Lea House
  11. 1905 Market Street, William Smith House
  12. 1907 Market Street, Newlin-Hayes House
  13. 1911-1913 Market Street
  14. West 20th Street
  15. Cathedral Church of St. John
  16. Harriet R. Tubman Community United Methodist Church
  17. 2120 Market Street, Wilmington Trust Building
  18. 2114 Market Street, Dr. Simon Miller House
  19. Brandywine Academy

PARK



### 11 1905 Market Street, William Smith House

[ca. 1800] -- This house takes its name from William Smith, a shoemaker who bought the property in 1801. Smith, who supplied leather belts to the flour mills, is an example of a Villager who was not a miller but whose employment depended on flour milling. A residence and an office over the years, the property is now part of the Wilmington Senior Center.



### 12 1907 Market Street, Newlin-Hayes House

[ca. 1785] -- The Newlin-Hayes House was built by Cyrus Newlin, a Quaker miller. During the 19th century, the property belonged to Joseph Hayes, a cooper; in the 20th century it was put to varied uses, including an auto supply store and a luncheonette.

Built in 1963, 1909 Market Street is an example of a new building designed to fit unobtrusively into an older streetscape.

### 13 1911-1913 Market Street

[ca. 1880s] -- The three-story Italianate commercial buildings that fill the balance of the block are typical of stores found on many American main streets in the late 19th century, although the distinctive cornice of 1911 is missing. Across the street, 2001 Market Street is another building of the same style.

### 14 West 20th Street

[1917, John A. Bader, Home Building Company, builder] -- When trolley service came to the Village in the 1880s, it opened the area to new development. The houses sold for \$3,150 and offered a more middle-class image than the older rowhouses [ca. 1875] opposite. (See *other Home Building Company rowhouses at 24th and Jessup [1912] and in the 100 block of West 19th Street [1916]*).

*Continue to the corner of Market Street and Concord Avenue.*

### 15 Cathedral Church of St. John

[1857, John Notman, architect] -- Alexis I. duPont commissioned the Gothic revival church as a memorial to his brother-in-law, Dr. Alexander Mackie Smith, whose calmness in the face of death had deeply moved duPont. The granite edifice was erected on the site of the Green Tree Inn, once described as a "notorious tavern." [Open to the public, Sunday and weekday worship, telephone: 302-654-6279].



*Continue up Market Street to the 2200 block.*

### 16 Harriet R. Tubman Community United Methodist Church

[1857, originally Brandywine Methodist Episcopal Church; then Brandywine Trinity United Methodist Church] -- In the mid-1850s, residents organized a congregation and began planning for a church. After disappointing fundraising and embezzlement by their first minister, the group put the church up for sale. Help from wealthy members of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church and a successful boat excursion to Cape May that raised \$1,000 enabled the congregation to pay off the mortgage in 1867. In a style typical of mid-nineteenth century Methodist churches – solid, square, and modestly adorned – the church has been home to the current congregation since 1995. [Open by appointment, Sunday worship, telephone: 302-656-2660].

*Retrace your steps along Market Street back in the direction of Brandywine Mills Park.*

### 17 2120 Market Street, Wilmington Trust Building

[1930, L. Waring Wilson, architect] -- The bank at 2120 Market Street was originally the Brandywine Trust and Savings Bank, the only Delaware bank that failed during the Great Depression. Built of granite, it





is the Village's only example of Art Deco architecture. [Open to the public during business hours.]

### 18 2114 Market Street, Dr. Simon Miller House

[ca. 1775-1800] -- The small size of this stone dwelling in comparison to its taller neighbors is a clue to its earlier construction. Occupied from the 1850s until the early 1870s by Dr. Simon Miller who had his practice and his home in the house, the building has had a variety of uses – residence, dressmaker's shop, shoemaker's shop, and interior decorator's shop.

*Continue in the direction of the Park and take the first left onto Vandever Avenue.*

### 19 Brandywine Academy

[1798] -- The Brandywine Academy is one of the first, if not the first, neighborhood institution in the Village. Joseph Tatnall paid to have the cupola and bell added to the building in 1820 and residents rang the Academy bell to welcome Lafayette when he rode through the Village in October 1824.

Founded in 1798 and incorporated in 1815, the Academy had one room on each floor for classes or meetings. In 1829, it was a public school for Brandywine Hundred and in 1839 Methodist women started a Sunday school in the building for children who worked in the mills so they could learn reading and writing on their one free day. Owned by Old Brandywine Village, Inc., it has also served as a place of worship, public library, clubhouse for the Delaware Association of Police, clubhouse for the DAR, a polling place, and location for sessions of the Levy Court.

*Cross Vandever Avenue and walk down Buena Vista Street toward the river.*

### 20 Buena Vista Street

[ca.1875] -- The narrow rowhouses are typical of the dwellings occupied by working families who lived close to the Village's mills. In the late nineteenth century, the street was home to the skilled and unskilled laborers, in the twentieth century to a mix of white collar and laboring people.

*Turn right at Race Street and walk past the condominiums back to the park.*

## NOTES ON ARCHITECTURAL STYLES:

*Georgian [1715-1780]* – characterized by symmetry [central entry door, frequently surmounted by a pediment and flanked by classical pilasters], gabled dormers, classical details, formal appearance.

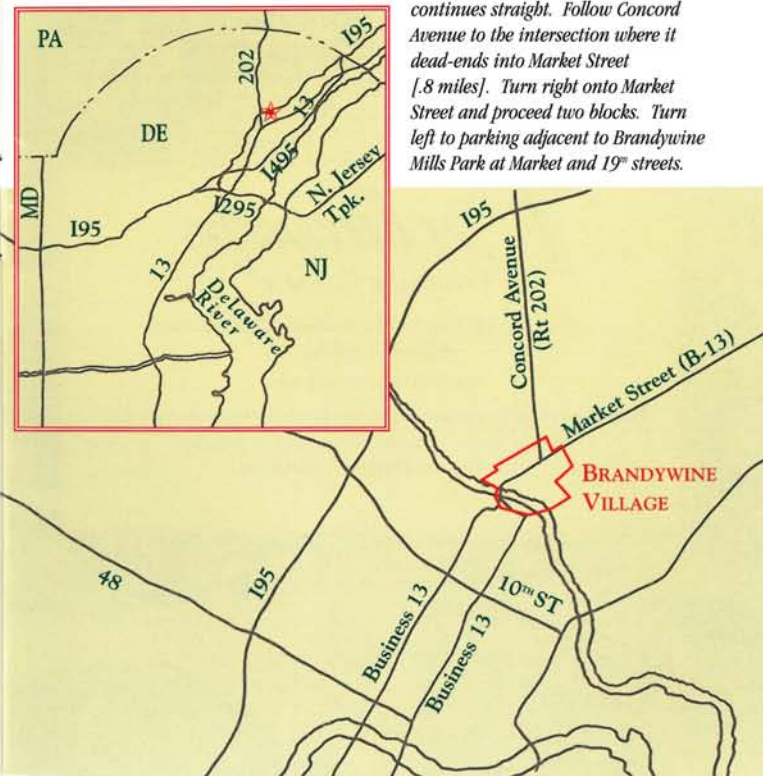
*Rowhouse [1750 to 1920]* – contiguously built houses, narrow [15-20 feet] and deep [30-40 feet], generally plain façade, also known as terraced house.

*Gothic Revival [1830s-1900]* – characteristics include perpendicular appearance with steeply pitched roofs and gables, pointed windows and doors, irregular massing, and, in church architecture, stone construction and flying buttresses.

*Italianate [1840-1880]* – characteristics include wide, overhanging eaves supported with decorative, often ornate brackets, an emphasis on vertical, narrow lines including tall, narrow windows, usually two or three stories.

*Art Deco [1920-1940]* – characterized by angular, linear design with strong vertical emphasis, smooth wall surfaces, stepped façade, decorative elements such as low relief panels with stylized floral or geometric motifs such as zigzags, chevrons, and lozenges.

*From I-95, take exit 8, Route 202 South [Concord Pike/Avenue]. At the second traffic signal, Baynard Boulevard splits off to the right and Concord Avenue continues straight. Follow Concord Avenue to the intersection where it dead-ends into Market Street [.8 miles]. Turn right onto Market Street and proceed two blocks. Turn left to parking adjacent to Brandywine Mills Park at Market and 19<sup>th</sup> streets.*





A WORD OR TWO ABOUT THE TOUR

Not everyone who participated in the history of Brandywine Village could be included in the tour, but every attempt has been made to be representative in the selection of buildings and sites.

This is a residential as well as commercial neighborhood and visitors should respect the privacy of Village residents. Please enjoy your walk but observe the houses from the sidewalk. Those buildings that are open to the public are indicated.

Parking is available in the small park adjacent to the Market Street Bridge. The tour begins here and should take 45 to 60 minutes.

For information about Greater Brandywine Village Revitalization, Inc., call 302-651-3400.

*Delaware*

TOURISM OFFICE

Contact us for more information on Delaware.

800-441-8846

<http://www.state.de.us>

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