

The Brandywine Dispatch

Member Newsletter of the Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates

“Keeping the Story Alive and Interesting”

Summer 2017

Introducing the Cheval de Frise!

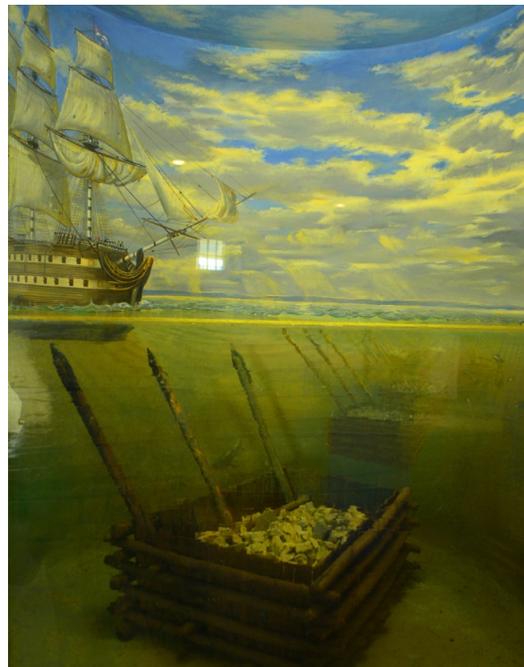
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Greetings from Brandywine!

If you have visited us in the last month or so, you will recall the sizable addition to our museum. As you walk inside, it is hard to miss the near 30 ft. long pike, called a “Cheval de Frise”.

Summoned from the depths of the Delaware Bay in 2012 by Hurricane Sandy, and found by members of Bristol’s Anchor Yacht Club- [the journey of this artifact](#) has been nothing short of amazing. We are excited to announce the Brandywine Battlefield Park has been chosen by PHMC to be the home of this recently discovered artifact!



There are a few different Naval inventions that trace their beginnings back to the Revolutionary War. Most notably is [David Bushnell’s](#) invention of the first submarine in 1775; [the Turtle](#). However a less well known invention, and perhaps a more useful one, was the submerged “Chevaux de Frise” - first designed by [Robert Erskine](#) in 1776.

This submerged weapon is descended from, and the namesake of, a land barricade that was used against cavalry in medieval Europe. During the Revolutionary War, with the same defensive principle in mind, the Continental Army implemented the first underwater version of a Chevaux de Frise. Essentially a submerged barricade of pikes ranging from 30–50 feet in length, the Continentals used these to protect the capital city of Philadelphia from the British fleet. [This Hessian Map](#) from 1777 shows the Chevaux de Frise positions along the Delaware River and outside of Fort Mifflin.

It is definitely worth a trip to see and we do love talking about it. Huzzah!

Jesse Wolfe - Assistant Director of Education





The Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC)

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Submissions are welcome !

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Volunteerism - Many Hands Make Light Work

Have you ever wondered where the phrase many hands make light work, has its origin? After a certain degree of researching, I found that the modern saying was passed down through the generations, from the work of John Heyward (1497-1580). Heyward was an English writer known for his collection of proverbs (Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, 10 ed.1919). Heywood contextualized his saying "Many hands make light warke" (Part II. Chapter5) *.

Hearing or seeing that phrase, I immediately associate it with volunteerism, a very broad concept. Volunteerism, is a deeply rooted concept of our American society. The very origin of our nation was founded on volunteerism. The founders of our nation risked not only their lives and property, but their family lineage when they volunteered themselves into service. On this 240th Anniversary of the Battle of Brandywine and the Philadelphia Campaign, we should be reminded that the stories of the American Revolution and the Battle of Brandywine have been kept alive through the sacrifice's and efforts of volunteers. In the near future Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates will initiate a Volunteer Management Program, the success of which will be measured by the many hands that make light work. At this historic time, a heart-felt thank you is extended to all of our volunteers.

Regards,

Linn (Linnell) Trimbell, President

Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates

**source on file*

Upcoming Events - 2017



[Brandywine 2017 Reenactment-](#)

September 16 & 17. Taking place at
Sandy Hollow 1350 S. New Street,
West Chester, PA

Patriot's Day - November 25 at
Brandywine Battlefield Park

For more information on our programs visit www.brandywinebattlefield.org

When the Other Army Triumphs

By Susan Holloway Scott

Wars are fought by armies, soldiers, and generals, but too often civilians in the path of battles suffer, too.

Earlier this year I wrote about [Gideon Gilpin](#), a Quaker farmer and his young family living near present-day Chadds Ford, PA. In 1777, the Gilpins found themselves in the middle of the Battle of Brandywine, the largest land battle (in number of men) of the American Revolutionary war. As a Friend, Gilpin followed his religious beliefs and refused to choose one side over the other in the conflict, and was distrusted by both the British and Continental Armies. When the battle was done, his farm was destroyed because of his pacifism, and he'd lost all his crops and his livestock as well.

The Gilpin family's nearest neighbors, also Friends, made a different choice. Benjamin Ring was far more prosperous and established than Gideon Gilpin. Not only did he own a 150-acre farm, but also three mills: a fulling mill (for woolen cloth), a tannery, and a sawmill. The Rings' house was nearly double the size of the Gilpin's home, and more elegant, too, with more and larger rooms and handsome woodwork. The Ring family had six children, and the household also included two indentured servants.

But when the Revolution began, Benjamin Ring decided to go against his beliefs as a Friend, and side with the Continental forces. Both he and his two older sons were on the local militia rolls, meaning that they were willing to bear arms. For this, Ring and his sons were read out of their Meeting (banished from their Quaker congregation). When Commander-in-Chief General George Washington and his officers came to reconnoiter the area near the Ring farm in anticipation of a major battle, Ring welcomed them into his home, offered them hospitality, and supplied them with information. Soon after, in early September, 1777, Washington returned with his army, determined to stop General Sir William Howe from taking Philadelphia. The Continental forces numbered about 11,000 men, facing approximately 15,000 British and Hessian soldiers.

The Ring house became the general's headquarters, and Mrs. Ring's parlor was the army's central office and the site of terse Councils of War. The [general's tent](#) was pitched behind the house, and the rest of the army camped nearby. (Among the youngest of the officers: Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton, and the Marquis de Lafayette, recently commissioned as a major general.) For two days and nights, Mrs. Ring cooked for the general and his officers; the receipt (this is a copy, *above right*) for the payment for the six meals for thirty men still exists. On the morning of September 11, 1777, the day-long battle began.



[Continued on page 5](#)

Summer History Camp Wrap-up

Our Summer Camp was a great success this year! Many thanks to Michael Dehaut and the SHC Staff! This year campers enjoyed many different educational activities, as well as the time honored tradition of Capture the Flag. Below are some pictures from the Parent's favorite, Cooking Day!

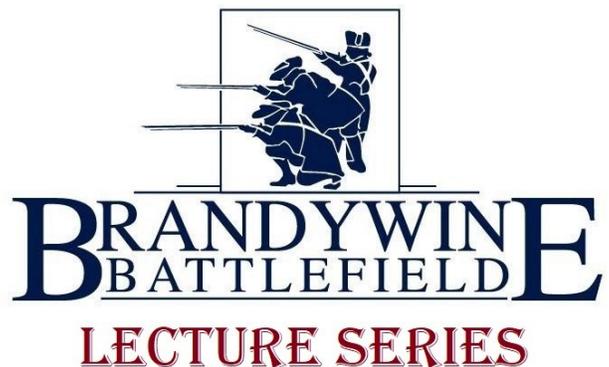


Upcoming Lecture Series

To celebrate the 240th anniversary of the Battle of Brandywine, we began our lecture series on September 10th. To start off the series, we had local historian **Walt Chiquoine** join us and give us an excellent speech on his recent discoveries.

Mr. Chiquoine has conducted ground breaking research surrounding the British movements through Delaware on their march to Kennett Square, where they camped the night before the largest single day battle of the American Revolution. Mr. Chiquoine's research sheds new light on where General Howe really stayed in Hockessin, DE and gives new insight into these often overlooked days leading up to the battle.

Nearly 50 history enthusiasts joined us for our first lecture. We look forward to seeing many more for the upcoming lectures. Stay tuned, details to be announced!



When the Other Army Triumphs cont'd

While Mr. Ring and his older sons were with Washington's troops (and eventually advised the general on the best path for the army's retreat), Mrs. Ring and the younger children remained at the house. As the fighting drew closer, she decided to flee to the safety with her children, loading boxes of valuables and gold into a carriage. But she'd waited too long, and the road was now blocked with soldiers. Abandoning their carriage and belongings, they fled on foot across the fields to the relative safety of the nearby meetinghouse.

Meanwhile, fighting surrounded their now-empty house. The kitchen gardens were rutted and churned, stone walls were pitted by shot, and a cannonball left its mark on one of the gables. But more indignity followed after the Americans retreated, and the British claimed victory. The Ring property was singled out as the home of a traitor who'd supported the rebels. Everything inside it was either stolen or wantonly destroyed. All the farm's livestock was taken or slaughtered, and the orchards and surrounding fields of crops were burned. The contents of the three Ring mills were also destroyed and made unusable.

When the British finally left after three days and the Ring family returned, only the shell of their house remained. The Rings applied to Congress to be compensated for their losses, and were paid in near-worthless Continental bills. More heartbreaking sorrow came when their youngest daughter sickened and died from an illness left by the armies.

Yet Ring family tradition states that Benjamin Ring claimed to have no regrets about having aided Washington and the Continental cause. Standing in the ruins of her home with a dying child, I wonder if Mrs. Ring felt the same.

After the Battle of Brandywine, the house was repaired, and over time served as a tavern, hotel, and tenant farmer's housing. In the early 20thc, it became a tourist attraction as Washington's headquarters, operated by historian, teacher, and preservationist Christian C. Sanderson. In 1931, the house suffered a devastating fire, and fell into overgrown ruins. Eighteen years later, the State of Pennsylvania purchased the property, and rebuilt the house to reflect its appearance in 1777. It is now open to visitors as part of [Brandywine Battlefield Park](#), which this fall will be the center of a [major reenactment](#) of the battle.



All photos ©2017 by Susan Holloway Scott.

To read more interesting articles written by Susan, please visit her blog at:
www.twonerdyhistorygirls.blogspot.com

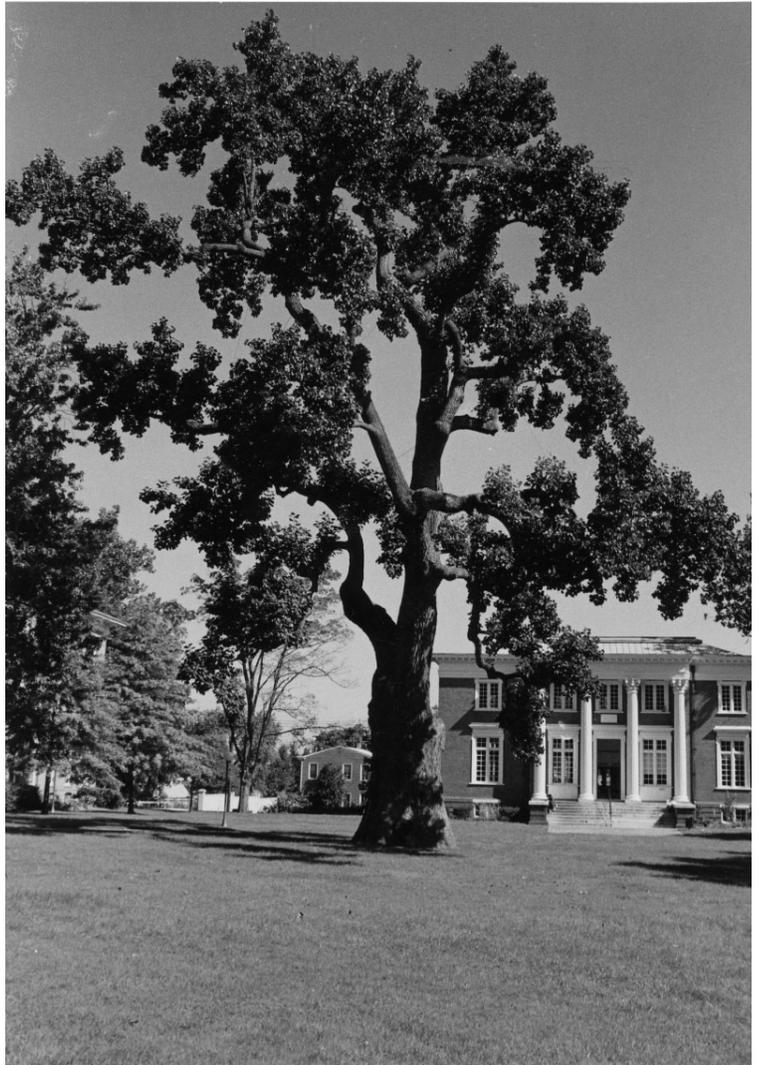
Liberty Tree Descendant Planted

For centuries, the [Annapolis Liberty Tree](#) provided shade—and a connection to American history—on the St. John’s College campus. Now, its prodigy, a clone, stands and grows at Brandywine Battlefield Park outside the Ring House, Washington’s Battlefield Headquarters.

Park officials gathered to plant and dedicate a clone of the last standing Liberty Tree, a 400-year-old tulip poplar felled in 1999, after it was fatally injured that year by Hurricane Floyd. Liberty Trees throughout the Colonial period were first identified in records in 1765 in Boston. They were targeted for extinction by the British forces, as they were a meeting place for colonists to discuss independence. The tulip poplar felled in Annapolis was believed to be the last Liberty Tree standing.

The sapling planted in Brandywine Battlefield Park has the same DNA as the original tree, which was used as a meeting point for Maryland colonists organizing against British rule in the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, according to Steven Fisher, who sits on the board of the [Providence Forum](#), a Pennsylvania nonprofit that saved the remains of the Annapolis tree and helped arrange the planting as a gift to the Park. The retelling of the story of the significance of the Liberty Trees to our history and preserving our history of independence is part of the Providence Forum’s mission.

Annapolis’ tulip poplar was the last remaining of the 13 original Liberty Trees—one in each colony—until the college was forced to chop it down after winds from Hurricane Floyd tore a 15-foot gash into its trunk.



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Liberty Tree cont'd

The tree's offspring planted on the Brandywine Battlefield Park grounds is one of twenty to forty presently growing descendants cloned and then planted from the Annapolis Liberty Tree. Fourteen have already been distributed throughout the United States, and several more are being dedicated this summer.

Some of the Liberty Tree locations are as follows: the site of the American Revolution Center, at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, at the Pennsylvania Capitol grounds in Harrisburg, and many grounds of state capitols and universities, including Jefferson City, Missouri's state capitol. Others were planted at Mount Vernon Estate in Mount Vernon, Virginia; Liberty State Park in Jersey City, New Jersey; Delaware Visitor's Center in Dover, Delaware; Freedom Park in Charlotte, North Carolina; Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, New York; Dalton City Hall in Dalton, Georgia; Columbia State House in Columbia, South Carolina; and Oakland County Courthouse in Pontiac, Michigan. One was planted on the grounds of Connecticut's capitol in Hartford, but it did not survive.

Several saplings were recently presented by STIHL Inc., sponsor of the [2017 STIHL Tour des Trees](#), an annual 500-mile bicycle trip organized to raise money for the TREE Fund, which awards grants supporting tree research and urban forestry. Cyclists participating in the ride, now in its 25th year, attended the dedication and blessed the young tree with good "mojo".

The Providence Forum—which has for its mission "giving voice to America's legacy of faith and freedom" - sponsored the original bud grafting program that has produced all of the Liberty Tree's offspring, including the one planted at our Park.

In remarks at an earlier event during which a Liberty Tree sapling was dedicated on the State House Grounds in Annapolis, Maryland, Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford said the arrival of a Liberty Tree descendant is a way to preserve both Maryland and American history. "It is said that the Declaration of Independence was read under the original Annapolis Liberty Tree, giving it a unique place in our nation's history," Rutherford said in a statement. "The original Annapolis Liberty Tree is a living monument, and through the sapling, the Liberty Tree will live on."

For the Brandywine Battlefield Park, it is a way to mark our commitment to history, a deep commitment to the spirit of America's historical cause for freedom, and for a hopeful future.

Curt Cheyney,
BBPA Board Member



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“Brandywine Battlefield Park serves the educational needs of the public through the preservation of the cultural landscape and the interpretation of the largest single day battle of the American Revolution. The Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates, a non-profit community-based organization, supports and assists the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission by conducting the daily operations of the site.”

Take Notice! Volunteers Wanted:

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at the Brandywine Battlefield Park or know someone who might, please visit our website for more information and to fill out a registration form!

www.brandywinebattlefield.org

Contribution Form

Yes! I would like to offer additional support to the Brandywine Battlefield Park and Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates by making a tax-exempt donation!

Please send form and donation to: BBPA - P.O. Box 202 Chadds Ford, PA 19317

My Contribution is: _____ \$500 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ Other: _____

_____ Check Enclosed

_____ Please Charge my: _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ American Express _____ Discover

Name on Card (Please Print): _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Notes: _____

To make an Online Donation, visit our website: www.brandywinebattlefield.org, and click the “Donate link on the home page. All donations are very much appreciated and go towards bettering educational and interpretational components of the Battlefield Park! Thank you!