



# THE ARCHWAY

*Newsletter of the Friends of Brandywine Springs*  
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## 1891 Homes in the Park Proposal

By Mark Lawlor

Our FOBS member Jonathan Hunt, of the Fell Family, has found an old undated map in the family collection, and a related letter from William Jenks Fell in the Fell - Hagley Collection. The map shows proposed lots for “Summer Country Homes” on the site of the upper half of Brandywine Springs Park, covering what is now the parking lot and ball fields. The letter is dated Philadelphia, April 4, 1891, on William Jenks Fell letterhead, and reads, in part “[To] F.M. Coker [?], Atlanta, Geo., Would you be so good as to give me the name of a reliable ... Real Estate Broker in your city- I am the holder of the Brandywine Springs property near Wilmington, Delaware, which in Ante-bellum times was greatly frequented by the very best people of the South. I have had plotted the large lawn and lands adjacent to the hotel into Villa lots and wish to market them as sites for Summer Country homes to the very best of Southern Society, making it a southern destination.”

Parts of the map are hard to read, such as the words “Linden Ave.” and “Rodney Ave.” on the left, “Chalybeate Spring”, and “Hyde Run- rough, rocky, and romantic”. Faulkland Road is called Faulk Road. The map shows a small dam near the future (1898) lake, a “Summer House” (gazebo) uphill from the future (1901) Entrance Archway (near lot 77), and a boathouse on Red Clay Creek at the same location as the present Adirondack chairs. The hotel (at present basketball court) shows the ‘annex’ addition on the west end, and a structure called ‘reservoir’ where the parking lot entrance is now. The present playground would be near lots 6 and 7.

At this date, in 1891, Richard Crook was in his fifth year of leasing the hotel, and he was just starting his amusement park concept. It seems Mr. Crook must have convinced Mr. Fell to give him another chance, and this development idea was abandoned.

**See Map on Page 2**

### A DAY IN THE PARK

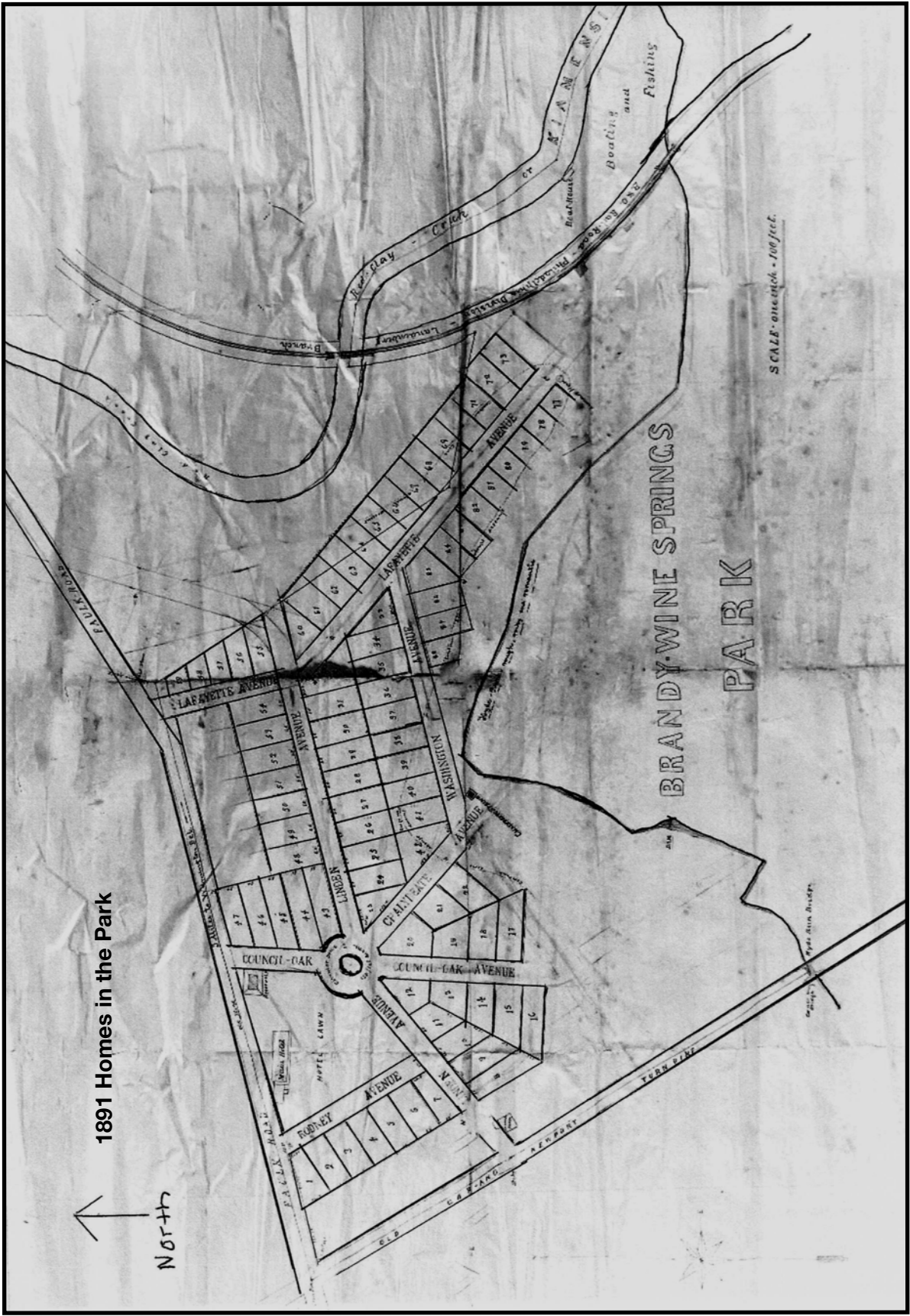
Don Richard is chairing a committee to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the closing of the amusement park. Period dressed guides will take guests on a guided tour of the amusement park site. He is coordinating with WWRR, Greenbank Mill, and Auburn Heights to help create a 1900's atmosphere as well as other attractions that are in the process of being developed such as “the Lost Motion Pictures of Brandywine Springs” and period music!

This **free** public event will be on **Saturday September 16, 2023** with a rain date of **Saturday September 23, 2023**. To volunteer for this event please contact Don Richard 302-463-5488 or email [donjrichard@aol.com](mailto:donjrichard@aol.com)



**Red Clay Valley Clean Up** was on March 25th, 2023! Many thanks to the volunteers who came out on a rainy day!! Brenda Abele, John Lagana, Klaus Abele, Ed Lipka, and Don Richard

Photo by Angela Evans



1891 Homes in the Park

North

SCALE - one inch = 100 feet.

BRANDYWINE SPRINGS  
PARK

**Welcome New Member**

**Ralph Dominica**

**FRIENDS OF BRANDYWINE SPRINGS  
2023 MEETING DATES**

June 11	September 10
July 9	October 8
August 13	November 12
	December 3

7:00 pm.  
The Cedars Methodist Church  
Maple & Harrison Avenues

**Wilmington & Western Railroad's  
Special Excursion History Tour**

On May 20, 2023, Ed Lipka and Mark Lawlor will be tour guides for a walking tour of the Amusement Park site. Riders will disembark from the doodle bug at the entrance archway site and will hear the history of the park. This is the second time WWRR has offered this excursion and it is a sold out event!



At the April 2023 meeting, Diane Franklin received her Certificate of Appreciation for her 29 years as FOBS Treasurer. We are forever thankful for her dedication and service.  
In this photo - Steve Franklin, Mark Lawlor, Diane Franklin, Ed Lipka, and David Doody.  
Photo by Mark Lou Lawlor

***In Memoriam***  
***Caroline DiBattista***  
***December 19, 2022***



New view of the second hotel that shows the dirt lane along the front. This view also shows an unidentified structure above the third floor mansard roof and many windows and doors closed.  
Undated photo recently acquired by Rich Gillis.

**Back to Nature...**



**A Greater Yellowlegs studies his reflection in Lake Washington...**  
Photo by Angela Evans

***This & That....*** Many Thanks to John Lagana for assisting at the visitor center!... There is a meeting May 19, 2023 with the County to discuss the walking trail improvement plan... Park brochures are now in the Smyrna Visitor Center arranged by Mark and Mary Lou Lawlor... Wilmington & Western Railroad placed #9 in the USA Today's 10 Best Train Rides, being the only train to win in the Tri-state area!!

*Editors Note... In the last newsletter the article entitled "Ground Penetrating Radar Study finds First Hotel" was written by Mark Lawlor. Comments, Questions, or Suggestions contact Mary Lou Lawlor 302-994-8929 or email [mllawlor@verizon.net](mailto:mllawlor@verizon.net)*

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