



THE ARCHWAY

Newsletter of the Friends of Brandywine Springs

Vol. 30 No. 2 Mary Lou Lawlor & Angela Evans, Editors Summer 2023

"A Day in the Park -1923"

by Mark R. Lawlor

On Saturday, September 16, 2023, Public tours were given to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the closing of the amusement park. From 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, tours were hosted every half hour, with about 12 to 15 people on each tour, totaling about 140 visitors for the day. The event worked out great for all, including perfect weather. Eleven Victorian dressed re-enactors told visitors about different sections of the park.

Some people arrived on the Wilmington and Western 'Doodlebug' train, and others started the free tour at the parking lot. The "Welcome Tent" near the playground was staffed by Mary Lou Cannatelli, who gave some basic starting information. Then on the half hours, the tour was started by 'William Jenks Fell', played by his great-great grandson, Jonathan Hunt (who flew in from San Francisco to do this). He told the visitors about the first and second hotels and the Council Oak, before passing them on to 'Richard Crook', played by Mark Lawlor, at the Dance Hall on the Lake area. He told them how the not so profitable Hotel inspired him to build an amusement park with a trolley line coming in from the city of Wilmington. The visitors then moved on to hear the "Roof Garden Theatre" manager 'Harry Dunbar', played by Klaus Abele, talking about the Roof Garden, the boathouse, and the Chalybeate Spring. He passed them along over the bridge to Bob D'Onofrio at the Pool Hall, who was portraying his own father and grandfather, Frank and Mauro D'Onofrio. Bob also told them about the Fun House and Scenic Railway. Moving down the boardwalk, they were able to look over our group merchandise and books, where Sarah Dougherty sold many 'Council Oak' souvenirs, park prints, and books. Across from there, Abbey White performed free face painting.

As the people continued down the boardwalk, they were treated to Mary Lou Lawlor presenting a Stereo-opticon viewer with 3-D cards, flip card animation booklets, and a real Edison 1915 working cylinder record player, while talking about the bandstand Vaudeville, Opera, plays, etc. They next saw 'Harry Freedman', played by John Bare, talking about the smaller, older roller coaster, the Toboggan Slide - which was clearly marked out for size, shape, and location. 'Harry Freedman' directed them across the bridge to the Movie House, where Tom Gears showed them the 1903 "Lost Movies of Brandywine Springs", which Tom himself discovered a few years ago. This was the first time in over 100 years that those movies had been shown directly in the Movie House, and free popcorn was provided. The visitors then moved on to the carousel, where a full-sized fiberglass carousel tiger stood exactly on the site of the outside row of the Dentzel Carousel, and Wurlitzer Carousel music played. At that point, 'DuShane Cloward', the park assistant manager, played by Don Richard, showed them the Greenbank Mill sheep, along the way to the Entrance Archway, where a 4 foot by 4 foot photo of the archway hung from the white archway posts. 'DuShane' passed the people on to train conductor Ed Lipka, who showed the group photo albums and talked about the trains and trolleys. The visitors then got to look over some 1920's Ford Model T's at the end of their tour.

Many thanks to Don Richard for organizing the event, Angela Evans for being the event photographer, and all the volunteers that helped make this event a success. All the re-enactors had a great time, and many people said we "really brought the park to life", and that we should do this event every year.

See photos on pages 2 through 5

FOBS receives \$500 Grant Award from Bank of America!

FOBS member Lulu Calbazana preformed volunteer work accumulating enough hours to apply for a grant. We thank Lulu for her personal contribution toward getting this grant.



Mary Lou Cannatelli greets visitors arriving for the tour.



Mark Lawlor portrays Richard Crook at the Dance Hall on the Lake area.



"Harry Dunbar" played by Klaus Abele speaks about the Roof Garden, boathouse, and the Chalybeate Spring



William Jenks Fell circa 1870's, property owner, family business owner.



Jonathan Hunt portraying his great-great grandfather, introduces the beginning tour groups to the early park history and the council oak tree.



Sarah Dougherty hosts the souvenir display sales along the boardwalk.



Abby White and her mother Judy White perform Face painting along the boardwalk



John Bare portrays Harry Freedman at the Toboggan Slide rollercoaster.



Mary Lou Lawlor plays music on the 1915 Edison phonograph and shows early picture viewers that led to motion pictures.



Tom Gears shows the "Lost Movies of Brandywine Springs" on the site of the Movie House.



A visitor, Charles Covey, stands with a full size fiberglass carousel tiger at the Dentzel Carousel site.



Frank D'Onofrio, circa 1920
Manager of Pool Hall and other concessions



Bob D'Onofrio represents his father (photo left) and grandfather at the Pool Hall.



Don Richard portrays park assistant 'DuShane Cloward' guiding guests to the Greenbank Mill Sheep and the Entrance Archway



Greenbank Mill & Philips Farm representatives shared the mill history and the process of wool production.



Ed Lipka Train Conductor greets passengers from WWRR discussing trains, trolleys, and park photos.



Don Richard and Christine Madzy stand with Don's 1928 Ford model A automobile.



Entrance Archway photo banner (inset left) hangs from posts marking the original Entrance Archway site

In Memoriam
Inge Fernsler
September 2023
Our condolences to her family

Enjoy viewing color photos by visiting our website: www.fobsde.org

Thank you Angela Evans for the excellent photo coverage of our event!

A Day In the Park

A big thank you to Don Richard for chairing this event and making his vision of highlighting the importance of the history of Brandywine Springs Amusement Park come to life with an historic atmosphere. It was beautiful fall day and the members that dressed up and performed their roles made a positive impression to the public about what FOBS contributes to this New Castle County Park. We got a lot of enthusiastic responses from the tour groups and earned donations with the sales of FOBS souvenirs, Larry Anderson park prints, books, and videos. It was an uplifting experience to feel this amount of public support of our preservation mission.

Welcome New Member
Tim Lennon

FRIENDS OF BRANDYWINE SPRINGS **2023 MEETING DATES**

October 8, November 12, December 3

7:00pm.

The Cedars Methodist Church
 Maple & Harrison Avenues

Back to Nature...



Two small butterflies enjoy the native plant in the park.



Klaus Abele & Bob D'Onfrio



Josh Blay & Tom Gears



A 1928 & a 1930 Ford Model A



Edison Phonograph & Stereo Opticon viewer



Bob D'Onfrio's Pool Hall Display



Greenbank Mill & Philips Farm



WWRR Doodle Bug arriving at the park



Mark Lawlor, Angela Evans, Ed Lipka
In front of the Doodlebug at WWRR.

On May 20, 2023, Wilmington & Western Railroad hosted a special excursion, a history tour of the park. This is the second time they have offered this special history excursion and it sold out! Thank you WWRR and Ed Lipka, Mark Lawlor for giving the tours! Angela Evans provided information about Brandywine Springs at the Train Station.

This & That... Thank you to the WW&RR for providing the Doodle Bug for our event...A special thank you to Greenbank Mill & Phillips Farm for participating in our event...Thank you Mark and Mary Lou Lawlor for promoting the Day in the Park event with advertising efforts... Thank you to Tom Gears for allowing us to install the event announcement sign in his front yard...Thank you to Josh Blay for helping with our event...Thanks to Bob & Dee for bringing their 1930's Ford model A automobile to our event...other Thanks go to Mark Lawlor for keeping the Smyrna rest stop visitors center stocked with brochures...Thank you Sarah Dougherty for maintaining our Facebook page...Thank you to the County Parks Department for allowing us to have this event....Questions, or Suggestions contact Mary Lou Lawlor 302-994-8929 or email mllawlor@verizon.net

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