

CHADDS FORD NAMED FOR FERRY SERVICE OPERATOR

Chadds Ford, one of Delaware county's most historic spots, has an equally historic and interesting name origin. Wallingford's name origin will also be told in this article.

Chadds Ford made famous by the battle of the Brandywine, which took place there on September 11, 1777 was named for a ferry service operated by John Chadds, son of Francis Chadds or Chadsey, who emigrated from Wiltshire in 1689. The elder Chadds settled on a tract that included all of the present village of Chadds Ford.

The ferry service as set up to serve the increasing number of persons who began emigrating westward in the early eighteenth century. Most of the time the travelers were able to cross the Brandywine Creek on foot. However, in rainy weather and in the springtime, the creek became so swollen that it was practically impossible to ford.

Therefore, persons solicited John Chadds to set up a ferry service. The county of Chester made him a loan of 30 pounds to help defray expenses for his "flatt" or "schowe". He operated the ferry from 1737 until his death in 1760. It was then taken over by a negro woman, Hetty Brown. She kept a small store at the Ford and sold cakes and beer to the travelers. Chadds "schowe" was long since worn out and she ferried passengers in a boat which she shoved with a pole.

At the Court of Quarter Sessions, August 30, 1737, rates for Chadds Ford were set. They were as follows:

Horse and rider – four pence.
Single person on foot – three pence (if more than one person – two pence).
Ox, cow or heifer – four pence
One sheep – one pence
One hog – three half-pence
Coach, wagon or cart – one shilling and six pence
Empty wagon or cart - nine pence
Every steed – four pence

Chadds also opened an inn on the road from Philadelphia to Nottingham. It was known as the "Chadds Ford Tavern". After his death, the tavern was operated by a man by the name of Joseph Davis.

The community of Chadds Ford therefore took its name from the Chadsey, or Chadds family and the ferry service known as Chadds Ford. There is some difference of opinion as to the spelling of Chadds. One historian says that the double D spelling is incorrect. All agree, however, that the name was originally Chadsey.

Francis Chadsey, the father of John, originally settled in Chichester. It is believed that he moved to Birmingham in 1696 when his name first appeared on the list of taxables for the township. It is presumed that he located on a tract of 500 acres which now includes the

village of Chadds Ford. This land was originally surveyed to Henry Bernard or Barnet early in March 1624. Later he purchased 111 acres next to his estate, to the southeast, from Edmund Butcher.

Francis Chadds served as a member of the Assembly from Chester County from 1705 to 1707. He is believed about this time to have erected the first corn mill in the state along the Brandywine. The original site was forgotten but in 1860, in making excavations for the foundations of a brick mill built by Caleb Brinton, evidences of the old log building were found.

A short distance west of the Baltimore Central railroad station, a log with an old wrought iron spike was unearthed. This and other traces started the belief that this was the location of Chad's or Chadd's mill.

An old petition, however, produces doubt that Chadds mill was the first in this area. The petition dated May 17, 1689 reads: "Ye Inhabitants of Brandywine River or Creek against ye dam made upon the creek, which hinders ye fish passing up to ye great damage of ye inhabitants." This indicates that there was some sort of mill there before Chadds built his.

John Chadds, the ferryman, married Elizabeth Richardson in 1729. He is believed to have built an old stone house close to a spring near the northern end of Chadd's Ford, the village. In 1829 a bridge was erected and the road crossing the Brandywine was rerouted to the south.

Wallingford, in Nether Providence Township, was named for an English estate. Originally the name was given to the mills along Baltimore Pike now known as the Plush Mill. These were built by an Englishman who named them for the home from which he had emigrated.

When the railroad was put through, the station near the mills was called Wallingford. There was also a station at the point where the railroad crosses Providence Road known as Providence station. Railroad traffic soon showed that the depots were too close together. Therefore, they put one station between the two, and called it Wallingford. This is the location of the present Wallingford station.

There, the residential community of Wallingford took its name from the railroad station, the railroad station took its name from the mills and the mills from the English estate.