

Town Tours & Village Walks

Untold Stories

SUMMER 2025

Town Tours & Village Walks is a series of free summer strolls through historic neighborhoods, hamlets, and villages to learn about their role in Chester County, both in the past and today!

Each tour is designed to inform, entertain, and increase awareness of Chester County's rich heritage and historic landscape. A number of our sites offer a good selection of restaurants and shops to enjoy after your tour.

This summer you can explore Chester County's heritage on Thursday evenings, June 12th–August 21st.

Kickoff celebration

The kickoff celebration will be June 12th at the Church of the Holy Trinity, followed by a tour.

Tour times

Tours generally last 50 minutes and begin at 5:30 pm with the last tour leaving at 7:00 pm.

★ Juneteenth JUNE 19 THURSDAY

Juneteenth, a federal and state holiday, commemorates the ending of slavery in the United States. We invite you to connect with these Juneteenth celebrations in Chester County.

Chester County History Center

Chester County's premier history destination will be honoring Juneteenth 2025 through several programs. Check out the offerings on their website: <https://mycchc.org/juneteenth/>

Chester County Cultural Alliance [CCCA]

CCCA is a Chester County program through Chester County Community Foundation, working to strengthen connections within the county's art and cultural sector. Juneteenth programs in Coatesville, Phoenixville, Kennett Square, and West Chester are coordinated with CCCA. Note that some activities are scheduled for the weekend of June 21-22. To find out more about what is scheduled for Juneteenth 2025, please check the CCAC website: <https://www.culturechesco.org/juneteenth>

Valley Forge Park Alliance

The Alliance will sponsor a free lecture titled "Uncovering the Secrets of the Underground Railroad at Valley Forge." The lecture will be at Penn State Great Valley, May 7th, at 7:00 pm. Information on the lecture can be found here: <https://vfparkalliance.org/speaker-series-2023-2024/>



Plans are underway to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026!
america250chesco.org

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For more information



Chester County Planning Commission
chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours
ccplanning@chesco.org
610-344-6285

Please note



Sites are handicapped limited access—please contact the Chester County Planning Commission for specific needs.



As an attendee of this event, you agree to the release of photos that may be taken and used on our website, social media sites, and publications.



Rain or shine. Schedule changes or cancellation due to severe weather will be posted by 2:00 pm at: chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours

Supported by

- Chester County Board of Commissioners
- Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau
- Chester County Historic Preservation Network
- Chester County History Center
- Chester County Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is pleased to support the 2025 Town Tours & Village Walks and thanks the many partners and volunteers who make the program an annual success, as we welcome this summer's participants in learning about the county's heritage.

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601 Westtown Road, Suite 270
West Chester, PA 19380
chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours



How We APPRECIATE

GOAL: Preserve the historic resources and landscapes that define our cultural heritage to inspire the future through tangible connections to our shared past.



• FREE TOURS •

Untold Stories

Chester County, Pennsylvania

chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours

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JUNE 12 THURSDAY 5:30 kickoff, followed by tour

Welcome thee to the kickoff celebration!
West Chester Borough



Come join us for the 31st Town Tours and Village Walks 2025 kickoff, as we explore some of West Chester’s “Untold Stories” at the Church of the Holy Trinity, 212 S. High St. The doors open at 5:00 pm with the formal program starting at 5:30 pm. Tours will highlight various stories including the Marquis de Lafayette in West Chester, “Buffalo Bill,” lily smuggling, the Shadd family, “The Invisible Man,” the Director of the IRS and other assorted tales. As always, West Chester neighborhoods offer lots of historic architecture to view and learn about. Music provided by the Lenape Brass.

Parking: Garage at 20 S. High Street, metered street parking, metered lots at 200 W. Miner and 100 S. High Streets.

★


JUNE 19 THURSDAY

Juneteenth - For details on programs and events, see back of brochure.

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JUNE 26 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Untold and Under-told Stories of Coatesville




Join us in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Art Deco Movement - Coatesville Style. Featured on a walking tour of the city’s Historic District will be a variety of stops pointing out this unique and disappearing architecture. We will be emphasizing unique stories of the area that may be unknown or only partially known to the tour participants. Hear stories of local people you may never have heard of and share time with local authors as well as several pop-up displays.

Parking: Lukens Executive Building, 50 South First Avenue, Coatesville

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JULY 10 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Warwick County Park



The forests of Warwick County Park, between Coventry Forge and Warwick Furnace, were once used for making charcoal that fueled the iron industry through the 18th and 19th centuries. Some of the people involved in these sites are household names today, while others are not as well known. Join us to learn about the people, the occupations, seeing where charcoal was made, and how resources were used to build an industry that built a nation.

Parking: Warwick County Park, Main Parking Lot, 191 County Park Road

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JULY 17 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Valley Forge National Historical Park




Join us at Valley Forge National Historical Park as we explore some of the lesser-known buildings, monuments, and stories. We start at the Washington Memorial Chapel, an Episcopal congregation whose building is full of references to Washington, the Revolutionary War, and the Valley Forge encampment. We will see historic Maurice Stephens House. Owned by the National Park Service, the non-profit Valley Forge Park Alliance is restoring the 1816 structure as a coffee house and to provide visitor services. Finally, the walk will end at the Patriots of African Descent Memorial, a relatively recent addition to the Historical Park.

Parking: Memorial Chapel Parking Lot, Route 23

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SATURDAY JULY 26 see details below

Lafayette Day: Thornbury Farm (AM)
Downtown West Chester (PM)



The Marquis de Lafayette, a French aristocrat and military officer, volunteered and served in the Continental Army under George Washington. Wounded at the Battle of Brandywine, Lafayette helped to secure France as an ally. Following a brief return to France in 1799, Lafayette returned and served until the end of the American Revolution. For the 50th anniversary of America’s independence, Lafayette returned in 1824. Touring through Chester County, Lafayette returned to the Brandywine Battlefield. Today, we celebrate that return.

Morning: Join us at 10:00 am for the start of the program at Thornbury Farm. After opening ceremonies join us for a walk, about a half mile, to Birmingham Hill where Lafayette was wounded.

Parking: Thornbury Farm, 1256 Thornbury Road

Afternoon: Join us in downtown West Chester, at 2:00 pm, for the Lafayette memorial parade. It starts at the corner of High and Miner Streets and ends at Marshall Square Park, where Lafayette spoke to an adoring crowd.

Parking: Parking garages in downtown West Chester and street parking [limited] around Marshall Square Park.



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JULY 31 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Barnard Station, Pocopson Township

Barnard Station represents 19th century efforts throughout Pennsylvania and the United States to end slavery and uphold the community’s values & beliefs to help secure “the Blessings of Liberty” for all people.

Friends of Barnard Station, a nonprofit formed in 2020, worked dutifully to provide access to the interior, highlight the family’s history and legacy, and create a heritage center to connect to the house’s unique history.

You will tour Barnard Station’s interior, currently undergoing restoration. Learn about 19th century Pocopson Township, its free Black population, agricultural highlights, and the Barnard Family’s anti-slavery activism.

Parking: Use 664 South Wawaset Rd, West Chester - Pocopson Township Office, our shared driveway.

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AUGUST 7 THURSDAY

Oxford Region Self-Guided Driving Tour



The Oxford Area Historical Association invites you on a journey of the small villages in the Oxford region, such as Homeville, Russellville, Tweedale, Hopewell, and Lewisville. These historic villages highlight the agricultural and scenic resources that characterize the area. Established by William Penn in 1682, Chester County includes Nottingham Township, first surveyed in 1702 and later divided into East and West Nottingham in 1715. Elk and Oxford Townships were formed from this land in the mid-1800s. Early settlers were primarily English, Scottish, and Irish, with some Swedes, reflected in local place names like Christine Road, named for the Queen of Sweden. The land’s cultivation and the establishment of taverns led to the creation of place names that continue to be used in the area today.

Driving tour start: Oxford Area Historical Association, 119 S. 5th St., Oxford

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AUGUST 14 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site



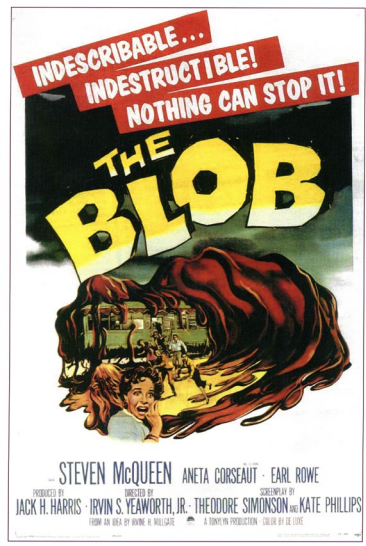
Join us for a walk through the heart of Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site. For the decades the furnace operated, many people provided the labor and materials for its operation. We will focus the tour on the lesser known people that called the Furnace their job and home. We will look at Colliers that made the charcoal, the drovers that shipped raw materials and finished goods, the school that served the village, and the families that lived there.

Parking: Hopewell Furnace Visitor Center, 2 Mark Bird Lane, Elverson

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AUGUST 21 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Historic Yellow Springs, W. Pikeland Township



DID YOU KNOW vaccinations were given to Revolutionary War soldiers at Yellow Springs?

DID YOU KNOW patient John Knight was wrapped in spring water soaked sheets as part of his spa treatment?

DID YOU KNOW deceased PA Orphan School children are buried at the Vincent Baptist Church cemetery on Art School Road?

DID YOU KNOW an English landscape gardener designed the Water Meadow pathways?

DID YOU KNOW Burt Bacharach wrote music for THE BLOB, Steve McQueen raced his Corvette through our country roads and Patty Duke, Lee Meriwether and Robert Lansing starred in movies made here by Good News Productions?

Join us and learn so many “untold stories” from over 300 years of history at Yellow Springs.

Parking: 1701 Art School Road, Chester Springs