



Plans are underway to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026!
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Town Tours & Village Walks

Celebrating Success in Historic Preservation

SUMMER 2024

Town Tours & Village Walks is a series of free summer strolls through historic neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, and farms 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 6th–August 15th.

Kickoff celebration

The kickoff celebration will be June 6th at the Chester County History Center, 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.

Our history

Founded in 1682 by William Penn, Chester County enjoyed fertile soil, moderate climate, abundant natural resources, and access to nearby markets. Here the early settlers quickly realized the quality of the rich soils and the abundant creeks, tributaries and their considerable slope, could power numerous mills which became the early centers of trade. Slowly trails were formalized into dirt roads leading to Philadelphia and vital market and cultural centers. These roads also connected trade centers located at mills and furnaces, as well as cultural and social destinations of taverns and sacred places. The names of the majority of roads throughout the county still reflect their original destination of an early business, meetinghouse, or tavern. Crucial to economic vitality, villages developed starting in the late 18th century, at the crossroads of early roads and destinations. As technology spurred innovation in the 19th century, canal, railroad and industrial villages grew into towns. By the early 19th century, our boroughs and the City of Coatesville were well on their way to becoming the cultural and economic centers we know today.

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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 2024 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.



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.

Town Tours & Village Walks SUMMER 2024

- Chester County Board of Commissioners
- Chester County Conference & Visitors Bureau
- Chester County Historic Preservation Network
- Chester County History Center
- Chester County Planning Commission
 601 Westtown Road, Suite 270
 West Chester, PA 19380
chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours



• FREE TOURS •

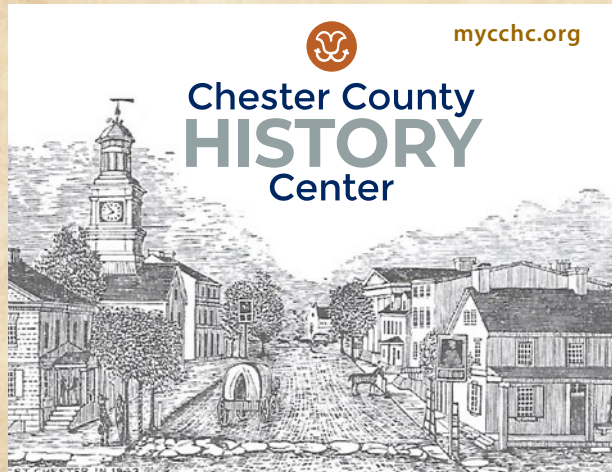
30th YEAR!

*Celebrating Success in
 Historic
 Preservation
 Chester County, Pennsylvania*

chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours

1 JUNE 6 THURSDAY 5:30 kickoff, followed by tour

**Welcome thee to the kickoff celebration!
West Chester Borough**



Come join the 30th Town Tours kickoff and the borough's 225th anniversary at the Chester County History Center, 225 N. High St. Explore the original part of historic West Chester as we trace the borough's evolution from the Quaker farming village of Turk's Head to Chester County's county seat, to the "Athens of Pennsylvania," to a 19th century "walking town," to a modern residential, business and educational community. Learn about West Chester's people and architecture. West Chester welcomes thee!

Parking & Registration: Garage at 14 E. Chestnut Street, metered street parking, metered lot at Chestnut & Church. The doors open at 5:00 to register for a tour. The kickoff starts at 5:30, and is immediately followed by the tour.

2 JUNE 13 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Coventryville, South Coventry Township



Coventryville, founded in 1717 by Samuel Nutt, was the site of Coventry Forge, the first iron forge in Chester County. As industry grew, the village flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries. Rebecca Grace, Samuel Nutt's stepdaughter, inherited one-half interest in Coventry Forge after her husband died when she was just twenty. Rebecca is also credited with bringing "Methodism" to Coventryville by welcoming circuit riders in her home. Join us to learn more about historic Coventryville and celebrate Coventryville United Methodist Church's 250th anniversary!

Parking & Registration
1521 Old Ridge Road, Pottstown

3 JUNE 20 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Main Street at Exton, West Whiteland Township



Main Street at Exton / Ashbridge Mansion / Indian Run Farm is the ancestral homestead of West Whiteland's founding Thomas family. The farmland has recently been redeveloped for residential and retail use. Main Street integrated historic resources successfully by creating new purposes for old structures, making them economically viable. Our tour celebrates that adaptive reuse occurs when historic elements are integrated into the modern purpose rather than as "accessory" buildings that contribute little function to the new development.

Parking & Registration
Navigate to 259 Indian Run Street, Exton, which is a four-story apartment building. A parking lot and the Ashbridge Mansion are behind the apartments. Parking is also available at Walmart and the former Sam's Club site. The tour will begin at the mansion.

4 JUNE 27 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Upland Farm, Upper Uwchlan Township



The township preserved 56 acres of Upland Farm as a park with hiking trails and adaptively reused the historic farmhouse, barn, and corncrib. Both floors of the historic barn and two of the first-floor rooms in the historic farmhouse will be open. The 1815 barn, an adaptive reuse, is a meeting place and event space for township and private events. The farmhouse is preservation in progress. Work on two of the first-floor rooms is substantially completed. These two rooms are used by the Historical Commission as a meeting place, archives, library, museum, and lecture space. Please help us celebrate the preservation and adaptive reuse of Upland Farm!

Parking & Registration
Upland Farm Park, 301 Pottstown Pike, Chester Springs

5 JULY 11 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Highland Orchards, West Bradford Township



The tour of Highland Orchards will be fashioned after a school field trip, as it sponsors many schoolchildren throughout the year. As we all know, viewsheds, farms, and large parcels of land throughout Chester County have disappeared over the last few decades. With real estate development pressure higher than ever, the owners have resisted and found ways to continue farming into the future just as the family has done since the 1940s.

Parking & Registration
1000 Marshallton Thorndale Road, West Chester.

6 JULY 18 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

White Horse Village, East Whiteland Township



The Village of White Horse (to be differentiated from the village of the same name in adjacent Willistown Township) was settled in the early 18th century. The village was associated with the 1777 Philadelphia Campaign as a prime military and supply center and was two miles from Washington's headquarters at Malin Hall. Swedesford Road, combined with Lancaster Road and Conestoga Road, was a vital link between Philadelphia and Lancaster throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Parking & Registration
Park at 969 (Home of the Sparrow) or 967 (adapted barn) E. Swedesford Road, Exton. Volunteers will direct parking. The tour will start in the area of these two buildings.

7 JULY 25 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Baird House, Uwchlan Township



This property dates from 1735 with a log house that still remains inside, existing alongside its earlier additions. The grounds contain connecting ponds, outbuildings, log house replica, gardens, and Veterans Memorial including a sculpture signifying the march of Revolutionary War soldiers up Ship Road (part of the earliest surveyed road in the township in 1712) to Lionville after the Battle of the Clouds, on September 16, 1777.

Parking & Registration
715 N. Ship Road, Exton

8 AUGUST 1 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

**Baptist Church in the Great Valley,
Tredyffrin Township**



The Baptist Church in the Great Valley was founded in 1711 by Welsh settlers. Visitors may tour the 1805 structure, as well as learn the stories of three noteworthy burial ground residents. Reverend David Jones (d. 1820) was chaplain to General Anthony Wayne and narrowly escaped from the Paoli Massacre. In addition to his military and chaplain duties, Jones served as an occasional courier for Wayne. Reverend Leonard Fletcher (d. 1859) was leader of the anti-slavery Chester County Wilberforce Society. His advocacy of abolition split the church and led to loss of his pastorate. Phillis Burr (d. 1872) was one of 200 Africans rescued from slavery in 1800 when the U.S. warship Ganges encountered two American vessels carrying slaves to Havana.

Parking & Registration
945 N. Valley Forge Road, Devon

9 AUGUST 8 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

**Village walk at Coventry Woods,
North Coventry Township**



We will go back in time and experience the Lenni-Lenape presence in Chester County with displays, demonstrations, and speakers. At the next stop you will learn about the importance of the early iron industry in northern Chester County. At the third stop you will learn about "Free Love Valley" and the Battleaxe Movement plus the axe murder of Hannah Shingle. Lastly, you will learn about the history of the Hopewell Big Woods, Camp Fernbrook, and today's Coventry Woods.

Parking & Registration
1954 St. Peter's Road, Pottstown

10 AUGUST 15 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

Yellow Springs, West Pikeland Township



Much to celebrate in 2024! While Yellow Springs has existed for over 300 years, this year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our founding organization and our continuous participation in Town Tours and Village Walks since its beginning in 1994. Historic Yellow Springs was formed in 1974 to preserve the quiet rural atmosphere with its 140 acres of unspoiled natural environment, its center for history and the arts, and the preservation of its historic structures. Join us as costumed characters from our past Town Tours and Village Walks enlighten you on the eras of history evident here and how we continue to promote the preservation goals of our founders.

Parking & Registration
1701 Art School Road, Chester Springs. Follow signs to park at the Chester Springs Library. Doors open at 5:30.