

Let our distelfink be your guide in an exploration of Berks County's rich cultural heritage.

Welcome to Berks County, Pennsylvania. This brochure is your guide to our rich heritage. Use it to chart your trip back more than 250 years through our storied history.

Berks County has always been a place of innovation and ingenuity, reflected in our industrial heritage. Explore the museums dedicated not only to the machine, but also to the skilled men and women who built and operated them.

Learn about our people. Berks County heritage features a blending of many cultures from the Europeans who settled the Oley Valley in colonial times to today's new immigrants. All made Berks County their home and influenced its development.

Along the way you'll hear some familiar names, names like Daniel Boone, the frontiersman, whose family comes from Berks County, alongside some not too familiar names like Weiser and Duryea.

Find out how Berks County products and Berks County personalities helped foster the westward expansion and helped win wars. Berks County truly did influence the nation.

To make your trip to our past easier and more rewarding we've divided the heritage features into attractions, resources and events. Sites are open to the public with regular hours and provide some type of interpretation and visitor amenities. Resources are places to explore your own ties to Berks County's history, places like archives, historical societies, and libraries. Events bring our history to life.

As you discover our heritage you're bound to discover something about your own.

Enjoy the journey!



[www.berksmuseums.org](http://www.berksmuseums.org)

The Berks County Museum Council is supported in part by a grant from the Berks County Commissioners.

*Note: Every attempt has been made to ensure that the information contained in this brochure is accurate and up-to-date. Please call to verify hours of operation.*

# Berks County Museum Council



## Heritage Sites

### American Museum of Veterinary Medicine

Attention animal lovers! Explore the rich heritage of veterinary medicine—past, present and future—and its role in animal and human welfare. Exhibits feature veterinary instruments 150 years old to present; US Army Veterinary Corp World War I uniform and field equipment; Racehorse Barbaro video; rare books dating to 1550; ASPCA Roger Caras Library. 5003 Main Street, Birdsboro. Hours: Sat 10am–3pm, or by appointment. 610-898-0659 www.amvm.org Email: amvm@dejazzd.com

### Bahr's Mill \*

This National Register mill features operational belt driven 1870's woodworking machinery. Open Summer weekends. Bahr's Mill Preservation Society, 85 Sawmill Road, Boyertown 610-367-7266 www.mysite.verizon.net/bahrsmill Email: BahrsMill@verizon.net

### The Berks County Heritage Center \*

Hear the story of transportation's key role in Berks County history at the Gruber Wagon Works, a National Historic Landmark and the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center on the Union and Schuylkill canals. Open for guided tours May 1 through October and on Summer holidays. Hours: Tue–Sat 10am–4pm, Noon–5pm. 1102 Red Bridge Road, Reading 610-374-8839 www.countyofberks.com/parks Email: parks@countyofberks.com



BOYERTOWN HISTORIC VEHICLE

### The Boyertown Museum of Historic Vehicles \*

Pennsylvania's transportation history museum. Exhibits feature horse drawn and motorized vehicles including electric and steam powered vehicles, rare Pennsylvania cars, motorcycles and trucks. Gift shops. Hours: 9am–4pm except Mondays year around. 85 S. Walnut Street, Boyertown 610-367-2090 www.boyertownmuseum.org E-mail: mail@boyertownmuseum.org

### Central Pennsylvania African American Museum \*

One of its kind in the Reading and Berks County Area. The museum contains documents that describe the history and culture of the African Americans in the new world and in the region. Experience the Underground Railroad Movement with your tour. Guided tours: Wed and Fri 10:30am–1:30pm; Sat 1pm–4pm or by appointment. 119 N. 10th Street, Reading, 19601 610-371-8713 www.cpafricanamericanmuseum.org

### Centre Park Historic District \*

One of Reading's first "suburbs," contains 840 properties of Victorian and early 20th century architecture. Annual events include Christmas House Tour, Garden Tour, Arts & Antiques Fair. 610-375-7860 www.centrepark.org

### Conrad Weiser Homestead \*

The Olmsted brothers designed the 26 acre park setting for Weiser's 18th century Homestead. Hours: Wed–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun. Noon–5pm and some holidays.



BERKS COUNTY HERITAGE CENTER

Grounds free. 28 Weiser Lane, Womelsdorf 610-589-2934 Administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. www.conradweiserhomestead.org

### Daniel Boone Homestead \*

The 1730 homestead of Boone's parents interprets both the early Boones and the saga of other settlers of the region contrasting lifestyles in rural Pennsylvania. Hours: Tue–Sat 9am–5pm, Sun Noon–5pm. 400 Daniel Boone Road, Birdsboro 610-582-4900 Administered by

the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. www.danielboonehomestead.org E-mail: jlewers@state.pa.us

### Historic Joanna Furnace \*

Built in 1791 this iron plantation is being rediscovered under the direction of the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association. Events during 2008 include Hay Creek Festival, Sept 5–7, Apple Festival, Oct. 11, Christmas at Joanna, evenings Dec 5–7, and Furnace Operation Days, mornings on the 3rd Saturday of each month, April–October. See website for details 610-286-0388 www.haycreek.org

### Historical Society of Berks County \*

The history of Berks County from Lenni Lenape Indians to the present. Hands-on-history room for children. Changing exhibits. Research library. Hours: Tue–Sat 9am–4pm. 940 Centre Avenue, Reading 610-375-4375 www.berkshistory.org Email: history@berkshistory.org

### Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site \*

The finest example of an iron plantation in America. A national park in Berks and Chester counties. Exhibits feature 5,000 year old process of iron making complete with products dating to the 18th century. Living history and craft demonstrations. Apple picking. Audio visual programming. Grounds open 9am–5pm daily. Visitor Center and exhibits open Wed–Sun (call for holiday closings). 2 Mark Bird Lane, Elverson. 610-582-8773 www.nps.gov/hofu Email: hofu\_superintendent@nps.gov

### Italian American Cultural Center of Pennsylvania

Located in the Dr. Frank A. Franco Library at Alvernia College, the Center sponsors programs, films, Italian Language classes, and bus trips for anyone seeking to understand Italian American culture and traditions. Its library includes books, periodicals, videos CDs, maps, language study materials and is open to the public. Open seven days. Call 610-796-8223 for College library hours. For information call 610-796-3000 or online at www.Alvernia.edu/library/iacc.

### The Mid Atlantic Air Museum \*

The museum tells the story of aviation by preserving, restoring and operating historic aircraft. The collection includes military trainers, transports and bombers, helicopters, experimental types, classic airliners, antique and classic general aviation types. See a P-61 "Black Widow" nightfighter, one of only four in existence. Open daily except major holidays 9:30am–4pm. 11 Museum Drive, Reading 610-372-7333 www.maam.org E-mail maam@maam.org



BAHR'S MILL

### Nicholas Stoltzfus House

Nicholas Stoltzfus (d.1774) and his son Christian purchased the property in 1771 then became part of the Maiden Creek Amish district from which Christian took his family to Lancaster County in 1800. About 1 million living descendants may have an interest in this house that Henry Jennsen called the first built along the Tulpehocken Creek. 1700 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing Open auction day, second Saturday of May, or by appointment: 610-373-6206 E-mail: psku@aol.com or Skauff5096@aol.com



AMITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Old Dry Road Farm

Designed for students, the farm is a living history and educational center on 200 acres of farmland. Students experience 18th and 19th century farm life. Write for tour and activities info to P.O. Box 163, Wernersville, PA 19565 610-678-1226

### Pagoda

Reading's world famous landmark, overlooking the city, is now open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 11am–4pm. Visit the Pagoda Café and the 4th floor volunteer Gift Shop overflowing with souvenirs. Located on scenic Skyline Drive, atop Mt. Penn, Reading 610-655-2584

### Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center

The center offers a one room school, two log cabins and a 19th century farmstead. It brings history to life in the form of interpretive events held throughout the year including Easter on the Farm, Children's Cultural Camp, Heritage Harvest Fescht and Christmas on the Farm. 22 Luckenbill Road, Kutztown 610 683-1589 www.kutztown.edu/community/pgchc Email: heritage@kutztown.edu

### Reading Area Fire Fighters Museum

This historic 1854 National Register firehouse at 5th and Laurel streets houses the Reading Area Fire Fighters Museum. Hours by appointment. 501 S. 5th Street, Reading. 610-375-2066 or 610-372-5721 Email: keprat1@comcast.net

### Reading Company Technical & Historical Society

The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum features exhibits, "The Reading Railroad Shaped Communities," informative video, historic rail cars and locomotives, museum store. 500 South Third Street, Hamburg 610-562-5513 for hours www.readingrailroad.org Email: museum@readingrailroad.org

### The Reading Public Museum \*

Established in 1904, it is home to one of the greatest collections of art, science and civilization of any regional museum. Call or check website for planetarium show schedule. Open Tue, Thurs–Sat., 11am–5pm, Wed, 11am–8pm and Sun, 12–5pm. 500 Museum Road, Reading 610-371-5850 www.readingpublicmuseum.org

### Tulpehocken Settlement Historical Society

Founded 1970 to preserve and promote the history, culture, and genealogy of the Tulpehocken region of Berks County. The Society's building has both a museum showcasing artifacts of the area and the Brecht Genealogical Library containing over 3000 books and papers pertaining to the area. Located at 116 N. Front St., Womelsdorf. Open 1pm–4pm. Closed Wednesdays and Saturdays from November through April 610-589-2527 www.tshs1970@comcast.net



HEIDELBERG HERITAGE SOCIETY

## Heritage Resources

### Albany Township Historical Society

The mission of the Society is to honor, collect, preserve and interpret the rich cultural heritage of the township. Monthly meetings are at 7:30pm on the 3rd Monday of the month in Kempton. 610-756-6144 www.albanyths.org.

### Amity Historical Society

Serving Amity, Exeter, Union, and Robeson townships, the Society is dedicated to preserving the area's history through its collections of historical items, records and artifacts and its extensive research library. Bi-monthly public meetings. 610-582-2070 www.amityheritagesociety.com Email: amityhs@hotmail.com

### Andulhea Heritage Center

The Center's mission is to collect, preserve, research, publish and exhibit artifacts and documents of our local area. Located in Rehrersburg, our library is open the last Saturday of each month from 10am–1pm. 717-933-5792 www.andulheaheritagecenter.org E-mail: andulhea@peoplepc.com.

### Berks County Genealogical Society

An exceptional collection of computerized, microfilmed and printed research materials focused on Berks County. The collection includes local church, ministerial, and cemetery records as well as census records, tax lists, immigration records, histories, obituaries, genealogies, early maps and land records to enhance your research. At the Goggle Works Center for the Arts, 201 Washington St., Reading. Free parking. 610-921-4970 Email: berksgenes@dejazzd.com www.berksgenes.org



FLEETWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Fleetwood Area Historical Society

Exhibit of local interest including Fleetwood Metal Body Company which manufactured auto bodies for the rich and famous. For museum hours call or check website. 610-944-9983 www.fleetwoodpa.org Email: dennisbecker@hotmail.com.

### Friends of the Robesonia Furnace

Friends of Robesonia Furnace work to gather, disseminate and preserve the history of the furnace and to encourage preservation of the Fire Engine house and the furnace ruins and grounds. Tours by appointment. An Annual Festival is held in Robesonia, Berks County, on the third Saturday in September. 610-693-6090 or 610-693-6244 www.berksmuseums.org

### Hamburg Area Historical Society

"Preserving the past for the future." A wide collection of things related to Hamburg and the surrounding area reflecting our industrial and commercial past, as well as a small resource library. Please excuse our dust, our collection is growing faster than our facilities. 102 State Street, Hamburg Open: Sun. 1–4pm except holidays. Admission: Free 610-562-3664 Email: dwberger-hahs@comcast.net

### Heidelberg Heritage Society

Local history is preserved in a 1797 tavern containing a museum and research library. For free tour, special event or membership information: P.O. Box 51, 182 West Penn Avenue, Wernersville, PA 19565 610-488-1769

### Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County

The purpose of the Trust is to save historic buildings threatened by destruction, whether it comes from decay, neglect, or, in some cases, progress. The buildings are open by appointment. 610-385-4762 www.historicpreservationtrust.org

### Kutztown Area Historical Society

Provides museum and historical archive for Kutztown and northeastern Berks County. Located in the 1892 Public School Building at Normal Avenue & Whiteoak Street; Kutztown 610-683-7697 www.kutztownhistory.org

### The Leesport Lockhouse Foundation

The Foundation strives to preserve an important part of local canal history. The locktender's house, restored to the 1890–1910 time period, is a museum of the Schuylkill Canal and of the community of Leesport. For tours or information contact Beverly Miller at 610-926-5665.

### Sinking Spring Area Historical Society

Visitors can tour the restored Sinking Spring 1872 passenger station and 1858 freight house, once a part of the P&R Railroad, as well as the 1900-era one room office building, all located in Heritage Park. Open by appointment. 1100 Ruth Street, Sinking Spring. Information: Paul Miller 610-678-4219

### The Tri-County Heritage Society

The Society's mission is to collect, preserve and disseminate the history that relates to the people, properties and events of Berks, Chester and Lancaster counties. Open Tuesdays from 9am–9pm and on the first Saturday of the month from 9:30am to 12:30pm. Located at 590 Willow Glenn Road, Morgantown. 610-286-7477 Email: tchs@dejazzed.com

## Heritage Events

### Kutztown Festival \*

Pennsylvania German folklife festival featuring demonstrations, folklore, live music, dancing, entertainment on five stages. Children's farmyard theater, crafts and authentic Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine. Kutztown Fairgrounds. 610-683-1597 or 888-674-6136 www.kutztownfestival.com E-mail: fooks@kutztown.edu

### \* Admission Fee.



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