Partners

Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau
600 W. Germantown Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau
501 Greenfield Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

York County Convention & Visitors Bureau
155 W. Market Street
York, PA 17401

Gettysburg Convention & Visitors Bureau
571 West Middle Street
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Lancaster York Heritage Region
1706 Long Level Road
Wrightsville, PA 17368

This project was financed in part by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region and by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, PA Heritage Parks Program.
Immerse yourself in the stories and places where ordinary people with extraordinary determination changed our nation’s history. Hear of the heroic African-American soldiers who fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War. Engross yourself in the struggles and triumphs of freedom-seekers on the Underground Railroad. Learn of the abolitionists, both black and white, who risked all in their commitment to the Quest for Freedom.

**FREEDOM JOURNEYS**

**The Underground Railroad**

The actual story of the Underground Railroad is very complex, with determined escapees working with both whites and free blacks to employ creative stratagems to reach freedom in the northern states and Canada. Several facets of the intricately layered story of the Underground Railroad are presented in the Quest for Freedom story, utilizing destinations and sites located throughout Central Pennsylvania and Philadelphia.

Lancaster, Columbia, York, Gettysburg, Northwest Philadelphia, and Montgomery County each illustrate a different aspect of the Underground Railroad.

**African-American Patriots**

While African-Americans played very different roles during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, Valley Forge and Gettysburg provide a great start to the story of African-American patriotism. Acts of tremendous heroism were committed and many lives sacrificed, but the story of the African-American at war has largely been omitted from the recounting of America’s early military history. There is no better illustration of the fact that African-Americans have historically embraced and acted upon the American ideal of patriotism than the story of African-American contribution to the country’s various military conflicts. The early conflicts at Valley Forge and Gettysburg provide a glimpse into the history of African-American military service through time, and the policies by which they were shaped.

**Quest Philadephia**

Start your Quest for Freedom in Philadelphia, the cradle of our nation’s independence. Follow Route 76 West (PA turnpike) to exit 327; take Gulph Road (PA Route 23) to the Valley Forge National Historic Park.

**Quest Valley Forge**

Of all places associated with America’s War for Independence, none conveys the suffering, sacrifices and ultimate triumph of our nation more than Valley Forge National Historical Park. Visitors to the rolling hills of this 3,600-acre national park stop first at the Welcome Center to see a timeline of the Revolution and learn about the diversity of the Army, where one in six soldiers was African-American. Throughout the park, see the Monument to Patriots of African Descent; soldiers’ log huts, rows of cannons; the National Memorial Arch; Washington’s Headquarters; and Washington Memorial Chapel. Visitors can search for ancestors who served by viewing computerized Continental Army muster rolls at the Welcome Center.

African-Americans’ proud history of service in our Armed Forces began here, with the American Revolution. More than 5,000 soldiers of African descent fought in the Continental Army. The compelling stories of soldiers, slaves, and abolitionists from the Revolution through the Civil War are told at Valley Forge National Historical Park and other sites throughout the Valley Forge area, and on guided tours of the region.

Valley Forge National Historical Park is the gateway to a region packed with fun and recreation. Gorgeous gardens, great fishing, hiking, boating, and bird watching make every day an adventure. There are more than 20 Revolutionary War sites, and close to 200 attractions in all.
Preparing to fire a cannon outside of Washington’s Headquarters.

A gathering place where abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison, and Abba Alcott, with leading abolitionists and other well-known figures, family, prominent Quakers and abolitionists, were associated that remains intact and open to the public. The Johnson House Historic Site is the only Underground Railroad station in Philadelphia. The area’s great past is apparent everywhere, as they were during the battle. Take part in an educational activities, contact the Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau at (610) 834-7980 or visit www.valleymfor.org/quest

Preparing to fire a cannon outside of Washington’s Headquarters.

About 90 minutes west of Philadelphia, the rolling hillsides and quaint country roads and farmlands of Lancaster County come alive. A region rich in history, culture, tradition, and charm, Lancaster County is a place where the old meets the new in an area where history was made.

The Christiana Resistance

Many historians consider the Christiana Resistance to be the first battle of the Civil War, for it was here that the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was tested for the first time. Southern slaveholders believed that the federal law protected their right to apprehend fugitives; Northern abolitionists denounced the law and denied that the federal government had the right to enact a bill that ran contrary to human rights and the laws of God. A confrontation between the sides was inevitable; their opposing philosophies met at Christiana. Edward Gorsuch, a wealthy landowner from Baltimore County, Maryland, discovered that grain and other items from his farm were missing, along with four of his slaves. With the law on his side, he set out to reclaim his property. Accompanied by a group of men, Gorsuch made his way to Christiana where an informant had told him he would find his runaways at the home of William Parker. Parker was a strong defender of fugitives and was known for assisting those traveling along the Underground Railroad. A fugitive himself, Parker rented a home on the farm of Quaker Levi Powlown. Indeed, the four runaways were hiding there.

On the morning of September 11, 1851, Gorsuch and his group made their way through cornfields to Parker’s tenant house on the Pownall farm. A marshal announced the group’s intention of apprehending Edward Gorsuch’s property. The inhabitants of the house denied that any property belonging to Gorsuch was on the premises. Shots were fired by both sides. Eliza Parker, William Parker’s wife, sounded a horn for help, and between 75 and 100 people came to their assistance. By the end of the encounter, Edward Gorsuch lay dead and his son lay seriously wounded. Federal troops were called in to help with the ensuing investigation. White and black citizens of the community were searched and terrorized. As a result of the investigation, 38 men were arrested and charged with treason for their defiance of a federal order. Heading the defense team were John M. Read and Lancaster’s Thaddeus Stevens. After two weeks of testimony, the jury returned a verdict of “not guilty” after waiting three months. The verdict sent a signal to the South that the Fugitive Slave Law would not be enforced in the North and further fanned the flames of distrust and discord that were spreading throughout the country.

A related destinations of Lancaster County, Christiansa.

1. Zercher Hotel
   15 North Bridge Street | Christiana, PA 17509
   The Zercher Hotel is the site where those arrested were brought. Edward Gorsuch’s body was also taken here after the gunfight at Christiana. A Christiana Resistance Monument was erected and placed at this site on the event’s 50th anniversary.

2. Freedom Chapel Dinner Theatre
   15 North Bridge Street | Christiana, PA 17509
   www.freedomchapelindinnertheatre.com
   Historical documents, photos and mural of the Christiana Resistance.

RELATED DESTINATIONS

1. Valley Forge National Historical Park
   Route 23 & North Gulph Road | Valley Forge, PA 19482
   It was here that George Washington’s Army retreated during the winter of 1777, just beyond reach of British troops in Philadelphia. The area’s great past is apparent everywhere, from colonial mansions to national historical parks.

2. Johnnson House Historic Site
   Germantown Avenue | Philadelphia, PA 19144
   (215) 438-1768
   This is the only Underground Railroad station in Philadelphia that remains intact and open to the public. The Johnson House Historic Site is the only Underground Railroad station in Philadelphia.

3. Camp William Penn
   1638 Willow Avenue | La Mott, PA 19027
   “State Historical Marker Site
   Eleven thousand troops trained at the first U.S. training camp for African-American soldiers during the Civil War.

4. Abolition Hall Venue
   Germantown & Butler Pikes | Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
   “State Historical Marker Site
   A gathering place where abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison and Lucretia Mott, came to speak.

5. Brandywine Battlefield Park
   1491 Baltimore Pike | Chadds Ford, PA 19317
   (610) 459-3342
   Open March–November
   Tuesday through Saturday—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
   Sunday–Monday—9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
   On September 11, this was the site of the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. 15,000 British troops clashed with 11,000 Americans. It was on this date that the Americans were forced to retreat and the British marched on to take Philadelphia, unopposed. One hero, African-American soldier, Ned Hector, refused to abandon his team of horses and supply wagon during the retreat; his bravery was recognized, and Hector Street in Conshohocken is named for him. Visit the park that was the headquarters of Washington during the Battle of Brandywine in 1777. The two farmhouses used by Washington and Lafayette as their quarters stand today much as they were during the battle. Take part in an educational program, visit Washington and Lafayette’s headquarters and even take a driving tour.

6. Zercher Hotel
   Slokom and Green Streets | Christiana, PA 17509
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   Historical documents, photos and mural of the Christiana Resistance.
An important part of Lancaster County’s history is its connection to African-American heritage and the region’s place in the Quest for Freedom. Since the first slaves were brought to Lancaster County in 1726, around the same time Amish and Mennonites settled here escaping religious persecution, Lancaster County has been a catalyst in African-American history and heritage. The first documented Underground Railroad activity in Lancaster came as early as 1804, when William Wright transported escaped slaves across the Susquehanna River into Lancaster County. Downtown Lancaster’s Bethel AME Church, founded in 1817, served as an important station along the Underground Railroad as well as the center of spiritual renewal for freed slaves in Lancaster.

Bethel AME Church was an Underground Railroad stop and a center for spiritual renewal for freed slaves in Lancaster.

along the Underground Railroad and served as a center of spiritual renewal for free African-Americans who lived in Lancaster. Today, journey back to the time of the Civil War and experience first-hand the plight and struggle of escaped Africans while viewing and participating in the living history production “Living the Experience.”

“Living The Experience” Interactive Underground Railroad Reenactment
912 E. Strawberry St. | Lancaster, PA 17602
www.livingtheundergroundrailroad.com

“Living the Experience” is a spiritual interactive Underground Railroad reenactment presented by Bethel Harambee Historical Services, a subsidiary of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Join us for a journey back to the time of the 1800s on the Underground Railroad. Learn the role of the AME Church, Africans (free and escaped), and abolitionists in the successful pursuit of freedom. We look forward to being your conductor.

Performances run each Saturday, February through December, and begin at 1:00 p.m. The performance, including the meal after the show (meal available for groups of 35 or larger only), lasts approximately three hours.

For tickets, call (800) 510-5899 ext. 113 or (717) 509-1177, ext. 102

Thaddeus Stevens/ Lydia Hamilton Smith Historic Site
45–47 S. Queen Street/21–23 E. Vine Street | Lancaster, PA 17603
Currently under construction/ restoration, the homes of Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith will become a historical museum and education center to tell the stories of these two individuals, whose work on the Underground Railroad assisted many Africans. Stevens, an attorney and abolitionist, fought for and won the state’s right to free public schools. Smith, Stevens’ housekeeper, was a conductor on the Underground Railroad. After the Civil War she continued her fight for equality by encouraging Stevens’ efforts to ratify the 14th and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

In 2002, during an archeological dig at this site, researchers found earthenware, utensils, and a large underground cistern, all dating back to the time of slavery. Further research is being conducted to determine their role in the Underground Railroad.

Thaddeus Stevens/ Stevens Gravesite
Schreiner-Concord Cemetery
Along with being a lawyer and an avid abolitionist, Thaddeus Stevens also served on the U.S. House of Representatives. His legacy is the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, which serve as the basis for all civil rights legislation. Stevens died in Washington, D.C., at midnight on August 11, 1868. Over 20,000 people—half of whom were free black men—attended his funeral in Lancaster.

Society of Friends (Quakers) enacted anti-slavery rulings and often aided fugitive slaves. Lampion Friends Meeting House is in Bird-in-Hand.

Bird-in-Hand Meeting House
Route 340 | Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505
Founded in 1749, the Bird-in-Hand Meeting House is the resting place of two brave Quakers, Daniel and Hannah Gibbons. Both were devoted to the freedom of slaves and during a 50-year period, aided as many as 1,000 slaves to a new, free life.

PA Dutch Visitor’s Center/Farmland Tour
501 Greenfield Road | Lancaster, PA 17601
Step back into a world of years past—a world without modern technology or convenience—with a tour of the Amish farmlands and countryside of Lancaster County. This one-hour tour through the back country roads tells the story of the Amish who came to Lancaster seeking freedom of religion. The tour also includes a drive past the Friends Meeting House in Bird-in-Hand, an Underground Railroad station during the 1800s.

Information Center
Route 30 (W) | Columbia, PA 17512
For more information on lodging, dining, and other activities, contact the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-PA-DUTCH or visit www.PADutchCountry.com

Bird-in-Hand Meeting House
Thaddeus Stevens, attorney and abolitionist, is laid to rest at Schreiner-Concord Cemetery in Lancaster.

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Information Center
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For more information on lodging, dining, and other activities, contact the Pennsylvania Dutch Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-PA-DUTCH or visit www.PADutchCountry.com
Columbia, situated on the Susquehanna River near the Maryland border, was ideally located as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Its industrious and burgeoning free black population also made the town an excellent place for escaping slaves to blend in with the community. Prominent black businessmen like William Whipper and Stephen Smith and white abolitionists like William Wright provided rest and transportation along the pathway to freedom. In fact, William Wright donated a tract of land in Columbia to its African-American residents. The area, known as Tow Hill, became a center of Underground Railroad activity.

**First National Bank Museum**
170 Locust Street | Columbia, PA 17512
(717) 684-8864
Open Wed.–Fri., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat. and Sun., Noon to 5 p.m.

This Heritage site, built in 1834, retains the original teller’s cage and bank vault from the 19th century and is the only known bank still preserved in its original setting in the United States. William Whipper and Steven Smith, both successful African-American businessmen, kept accounts at the First National Bank. Funds from these accounts assisted Africans along the Underground Railroad.

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
This bridge, once the main passageway between Columbia (known as the Gateway to the West) and Wrightsville, was burned on June 28, 1863, when Columbia residents and Union soldiers fleeing the Confederacy set the bridge ablaze to prevent the Confederate advance toward Philadelphia. Prior to that, railcars owned by William Whipper and Steven Smith crossed the Susquehanna River via the bridge with hidden fugitive slaves.

York was home to one of the most active Underground Railroad stationmasters, William C. Goodridge. A prominent African-American businessman in York, Goodridge built the tallest building of its time in York City, and often hosted anti-slavery meetings with noted abolitionists.

**William Goodridge Mural**
West Market Street (Between South Penn & Neuberry Streets) York, PA 17401
This larger than life outdoor mural pays tribute to William Goodridge, one of the most prominent stationmasters on the Underground Railroad. A prominent African-American businessman in York, Goodridge was a leader in the abolitionist effort and the struggle to guide escaping slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad.

One of more than 20 outdoor open-air murals throughout the city depicting the rich history and heritage of the York area, the mural is a worthwhile stop on its own, or as part of the larger murals tour available through the York County Heritage Trust.

Visit the home of William C. Goodridge, one of the area’s most prominent African-American abolitionist and businessman.

Today his home stands as evidence to the drive and ambition necessary for a black man in his time to build the kind of wealth and standing that Goodridge possessed in the York community, and also as a testament to the extreme humanity he exhibited through selfless acts as he risked his own life to guide escaping slaves to freedom. A large open-air outdoor mural also depicts the life of this great man who was so instrumental in the abolitionist movement. In addition to the rich history connected to the Quest for Freedom, York provides a number of unique museums and historic sites, including a replica of the Colonial Courthouse, where the Continental Congress met to ratify the Articles of Confederation during their nine-month stay in the region. York County is centrally located in the heart of Pennsylvania’s number one tourist region. Just a short drive from other popular destinations, including Lancaster, Gettysburg, and Hershey.
Goodridge worked in a variety of fields during his life, but the one most connected with the Quest for Freedom involved Goodridge's work with the railroad industry—the Goodridge Reliance Line comprised 13 railroad cars serving 20 Pennsylvania communities. Goodridge used his rail cars to transport escaping slaves along the Underground Railroad.

Goodridge also hid fugitive slaves inside his house, in a secret room at the back of his basement, and in a straw-lined trench beneath his back porch. He put his rail cars to use by driving the fugitives to safety in New York City, either by himself or with the help of several associates.

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 relational_destinations

**Related Destinations**

- **Battle of Hanover Civil War Wayside Markers**
  Walking Tour | Downtown Hanover, PA 17331
- **Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
  LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
- **National Civil War Museum**
  1 Lincoln Center at Reservoir Park | Harrisburg, PA 17103
- **Murals of York**
  14 W. Market Street | York, PA 17403

Follow a self-guided walking tour and see more than 15 public paintings depicting York's history. This is one of the largest collections of murals on the East Coast.

**York County Heritage Trust**
250 E. Market Street | York, PA 17403
The York County Heritage Trust operates a variety of historic sites offering a unique perspective, from the two-story grist mill in the Agricultural & Industrial Museum to the replica of the Colonial Courthouse where the Continental Congress met during their nine-month stay in York.

**Downtown York Visitor Information Center**
149 W. Market Street | York, PA 17402
Visit the home of William C. Goodridge, one of the area's most active Underground Railroad Stationmasters.

**Murals of York**
14 W. Market Street | York, PA 17403
Follow a self-guided walking tour and see more than 15 public paintings depicting York's history. This is one of the largest collections of murals on the East Coast.

**York County Visitor Information Center**
1425 Eden Road | York, PA 17402
For more information on lodging, dining, and other activities, contact the York County Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-888-858-YORK or visit www.yorkpa.org.

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
The murals of York are a diverse citizenship of ancestry and ethnicity-free to live and work together. Many of these stories and those of the citizens and their continued Quest for Freedom have yet to be discovered. In the town and on the fields that became battlegrounds is a rich history that belongs to all of us. We invite you to visit and learn the stories of lives built and rebuilt by our ancestors, an experience to be shared by all.

**Religious Life in Gettysburg**

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
For over 140 years, people from around the world have come to Gettysburg to see and learn the history of the most studied battle of the American Civil War. This story of two armies, fighting for their rights and beliefs, has more to be told. Gettysburg has a rich history that includes interesting stories about the free African-American community of the 1800s and beyond. Populated with educators, businessmen, and farmers, Gettysburg held a diverse citizenry of ancestry and ethnicity-free to live and work together. Many of these stories and those of the citizens and their continued Quest for Freedom have yet to be discovered. In the town and on the fields that became battlegrounds is a rich history that belongs to all of us. We invite you to visit and learn the stories of lives built and rebuilt by our ancestors, an experience to be shared by all.

**Small Grinds in Gettysburg**

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
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**Educational Life in Gettysburg**

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
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**Community Life in Gettysburg**

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
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**Military Life in Gettysburg**

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
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**Gettysburg Lies Just 8 Miles North of the Mason-Dixon Line**

**Old Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge**
LR 128 | Wrightsville, PA 17368
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BLACKS SERVED IN NON-COMBAT ROLES IN BOTH ARMIES DURING THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.

28 Gettysburg National Military Park
97 Taneytown Road | Gettysburg, PA 17325
Park grounds and roads open daily, 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. from April 1 to October 31, and 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. from November 1 to March 31.

29 Rostrum and Lincoln Speech Memorial
Gettysburg, PA 17325
Site of President Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address—said to be a “masterpiece of the English language” in 272 words. Lincoln was credited as being the president that “freed the slaves,” noting in his famous address “that all men are created equal.”

30 Gettysburg National Cemetery—Gettysburg National Military Park
97 Taneytown Road | Gettysburg, PA 17325
Open All Year–September through May, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and June through August, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Soldiers’ National Cemetery is open at dawn and closes at sunset.

Approximately 30 U.S. Colored Troops who fought at Gettysburg are buried at Lincoln Cemetery.

31 Mason Dixon Line
Approximately 8 1/2 miles South of Gettysburg, PA.
This boundary, surveyed along the borders of Pennsylvania and Maryland, became a symbol of freedom from oppression for blacks enslaved in southern states. Underground Railroad agents ushered thousands of fugitive slaves across this line and on to freedom.

7 Information Center
102 Carlisle Street | Gettysburg, PA 17325

7 Visitor Center at Cyclorama Center Museum
97 Taneytown Road | Gettysburg, PA 17325
For more information on lodging, dining, and other activities, contact the Gettysburg Convention & Visitors Bureau at (717) 334-6274 or (800) 337-5015.

32 Historic Fairfield Inn 1757
15 W. Main Street, Route 116 | Fairfield, PA 17320
An Underground Railroad site that served as a “Safe Station” for fleeing slaves. A window on the third floor reveals a small room used to hide slaves. The Inn, open to the public, still serves as a tavern and Bed & Breakfast.