

EXPLORE WARREN HISTORY TRAIL



A Self-Guided Tour of Heritage Sites

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The Friends of Ramsaysburg received an operating support grant from the Warren County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs with funds from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

As it approaches its bicentennial in 2024-2025, Warren County will celebrate a remarkable history as well as its reputation for the cleanest waterways and richest farmland in New Jersey. Stemming from wilderness times well before its official formation through 1824 legislation, Warren County’s agricultural heritage, in combination with eighteenth and nineteenth century innovations in transportation and industry, formed important chapters in the rural American tradition.

Vass Farmstead

97 Stillwater Road (CR 521), Hardwick
Hardwick Historical Society • www.vassfarmstead.org

Jon Vass of German extraction purchased the original parcel in 1802 and built the first section of the farmstead house in 1812, later expanding the house made of hand cut stone to accommodate a growing family. In1997 a consortium of agencies pulled together the resources to purchase the site to preserve the open space, and volunteers undertook the preservation of the house and large barn. Today the Vass Farmstead is transitioning from a museum to a venue that will support a variety of uses in support of continuing preservation efforts. Located across from the White Lake Natural Resources Area., visitors can split their time between the historic structures and the shoreline of White Lake, enjoying a stroll on the trail system circumventing the lake.

A Hardwick Township Historical Society docent will conduct tours of the house and barn on both days,10am - 4pm.



1

VanNest-Hoff-Vannatta Farm

3026 Belvidere Road (CR 519), Harmony Township
Historic Preservation Commission of Harmony Township
www.hoffvannattafarm.org

The remarkably intact farmstead, listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places in 2005, reflects three centuries of agricultural practices and rural architecture. At its center is the farmhouse, originally built circa 1755, with an addition extending eastward circa 1810. The summer kitchen, circa 1810, sits in the southern yard of the farmhouse. An outhouse and smokehouse sit just to the east of the farmhouse. Three wagon houses, built and altered throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, line the gravel drive leading to the massive barn. A remarkable structure, the barn’s heavy timber frame is a unique hybrid of building styles with an integral timber hay chute and a central swing post.

The main farmhouse and summer kitchen will be open for visitors, 10am - 4pm. There will also be fiber arts demonstrations throughout the weekend.



7

Blairstown Historic District

Blairstown Historic Preservation Committee
www.blairstowntownship.org

In 1839, the village known as Gravel Hill was renamed Blairstown in honor of its most celebrated citizen, thirty-seven-year-old John Insley Blair. Blair was born near Belvidere and by 1820 he had moved to the hamlet going into partnership as a storekeeper and becoming the postmaster. Throughout the 1800s Blair grew his empire to include ownership of banking firms, plantations, mills, and mines. In 1853 he established the Warren Railroad becoming a mogul who was instrumental in expanding railroad lines throughout the West. He operated his businesses from his beloved village, much of which has remained unchanged since his death in 1899. Blairstown’s Main Street boasts an 1825 flouring mill and Victorian Era architecture. The Blairstown Historic District was established on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2007.

**November 6: Self-guided walking tour. Maps at Old Mill plaque, 12 Main Street.
November 7: Guided talks 12 - 2 pm. Meet at Old Mill**



2

Asbury Mill

10 Maple Ave, Asbury
Musconetcong Watershed Association
908/537-7060 • www.musconetcong.org

The Asbury Mill forms much of the early industrial character of the Village of Asbury in Franklin Township. Since the Mill’s construction along the Musconetcong River as a gristmill — and later as a graphite mill — it has characterized the early industrial might of New Jersey with its use of water wheel and a turbine to power the early machines of commerce. The Musconetcong Watershed Association is committed to preserving the Asbury Mill and to raising public awareness of the rich social, agricultural and industrial heritage of the area. The turbine that powered the building and grain processing equipment remain in the building to illustrate how the Mill was operated Once completed, the ground floor will serve as a public meeting space and classroom with dedicated interpretive exhibit areas.

Come enjoy an activity station for children as well as some Covid-appropriate snacks.



8

Moravian Village of Hope

Hope Historical Society • www.hopenjhistory.com

When Moravian missionaries arrived in the vicinity of Jenny Jump Mountain, they enjoyed the hospitality of Samuel Green, Jr. and his family, who eventually offered a thousand acres of their land on which to build the planned settlement called Hope. Founded in 1769, this beautiful village with its collection of fine old stone structures is, in itself, a museum. The Moravians constructed a gristmill, mechanics’ shops, a store, a distillery, tavern, tannery, and a church, along with private homes. Most of their buildings were sturdy stone structures, many of which have survived to the current day. The Moravians departed Hope in 1808 , but they left behind the unique architecture that enchants visitors when they come to town, buildings that have been restored and adapted for commercial businesses or contemporary homes.

During History Trail Weekend there will be self-guided walking tours with representatives at prominent buildings to offer historical facts.



3

Ramsaysburg Historic Homestead

140 Route 46, Delaware
Friends of Ramsaysburg • www.ramsaysburg.org

The buildings that you see at this twelve-acre historical park — a tavern, barn, cottage, smokehouse and shed — were built from 1800 to 1870, and are the remains of a fifty-acre tract settled in 1795 by Irish immigrants James and Adam Ramsay in what was then New Jersey’s northwestern frontier. Although they’ve seen their share of abuse and neglect, the remaining structures are relatively true to their original form and are irreplaceable. Visitors exploring the site, listed on State and National Historic Registers, can experience the cultural changes wrought by the extraordinary confluence of river, railroad and highway innovations. The site also provides links to the area’s abundant cultural resources to be found in historic villages and along scenic byways.

**Open 10am - 4pm both days for trail visitors. Saturday, Nov. 6: Docent tour of grounds.
Sunday, Nov. 7: Riverside Fall Festival.**



4

Jim and Mary Lee Museum

477 County Route 519, Stewartsville
Morris Canal Greenway
www.warrenparks.com/morris-canal-greenway/

Just outside of Phillipsburg, the Morris Canal met Plane 9 West, the longest of twenty-three inclined planes that conquered the 1,674-foot change in elevation along the canal’s journey to Jersey City. Years after the canal ceased operation, Jim Lee, Sr. bought the property and moved his young family to the former plane tender’s house, embarking on an avocation that resulted in him becoming one of the foremost experts on the Morris Canal. After Lee’s death in 2007, the county and canal buffs, including Lee family members turned part of the house into a museum with displays of canal artifacts. A visit also includes a walk around the property to see remnants of the inclined plane and a trip through the low tailrace tunnel into the chamber which contains a rare instance of the innovative turbine machinery that distinguished the Morris Canal from all others.



9

Shimer Mansion

401 New Brunswick Ave, Phillipsburg
Pohatcong History and Heritage Society
www.pohatconghistory.weebly.com

It requires some imagination to envision the once-quieter place where the Shimer Mansion rose in 1850, although it was far from remote. Built on a bluff overlooking the well-traveled Easton-Brunswick turnpike, the house was the centerpiece for a 120-acre rural estate about a half-mile east of Morris Canal Lock 10 in the Green’s Bridge section of Phillipsburg. As it followed the Lopatcong Creek out of town, the canal was likely visible from the third story of the stylish Italianate residence, built by banker and gentleman farmer William B. Shimer. 150 years later the historic house stood abandoned until the Pohatcong History and Heritage Society took on stewardship through a generous donation by the Carpenter Family in 2015. The group is working to restore the property as a community center and gallery for local artists.



10

Roseberry-Gess House

540 Warren Street, Phillipsburg
Phillipsburg Area Historical Society
www.phillipsburghistorical.org

Come visit the historic Roseberry House. It is known to be the oldest standing structure in the town of Phillipsburg. It is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and is maintained by the Phillipsburg Historical Society. We will be having a fire pit dedication for our outside fire pit built with the help of Lafayette College students as well as a fire going inside our restored kitchen. Artifacts found on site are displayed inside the original kitchen.

There will be a slide show in the main room as well as local historians present to offer information and field any questions. Light refreshments will be served. Hope to see you there!



11

Shippen Manor/ Oxford Furnace

8 Belvidere Ave, Oxford
Warren County Land Preservation Div. Cultural Affairs
www.warrenparks.com/wccch/ • 908/453-4381

Shippen Manor is located in the heart of Oxford, formerly known as “Oxford Furnace” developed around the iron furnace built around 1754 by Jonathan Robeson, one of the first three furnaces built during Colonial America and the only built near the source of ore. By 1754-56, the hillside was graded and brothers, Joseph and William Shippen, had the main (south) block of Manor house constructed. By 1756, the Furnace was well-established and included lands, plantations, and improvements that included up to 4,000 acres and a gristmill, a blacksmith, sawmill and stamping mill. The Oxford Furnace was the third charcoal furnace in colonial New Jersey and the first to be constructed where iron ore was mined. During the Revolutionary War, cannonballs were made at the Furnace for the Continental Army.

Porch tours and grounds will be open for visitors only on Sunday, Nov. 7, from 12 - 4pm.



5

Rutherfurd Hall

1686 Route 517, Allamuchy
Friends of Rutherfurd Hall
908/852-1894 x338 • www.rutherfurdhall.org

Rutherfurd Hall was designed between 1903-1905 by famed New York architect Whitney Warren. Warren’s work resulted in a 18,000 square foot Tudor style summer cottage for his clients, Winthrop (1862-1944) and Alice (Morton) Rutherfurd (1879-1917) The mansion is one of the last extant large country estates in New Jersey constructed at the turn of the 20th century. Franklin Delano Roosevelt visited the estate in the fall of 1944 to visit with Lucy Mercer Rutherfurd, Winthrop’s widow. Through ongoing preservation and conservation at Rutherfurd Hall we have the means to tell many meaningful historical stories about a cross section of New Jersey citizens and their associates in the first half of the 20th century.

Open on Saturday, Nov. 6, 11am - 4pm, for tours starting on the hour. Mansion is closed on Sunday, but visitors can do a self-guided tour on the exterior, overlooking Allamuchy Pond.



6

Explore Warren County Tourism Partnership

c/o Warren County Public Information Department
Wayne Dumont, Jr. Administration Building
165 County Route 519 South, Belvidere, NJ 07823
800-554-8540 / 908-475-6580 • tourism@co.warren.nj.us

ExploreWarren.org is a project of the Explore Warren County Tourism Partnership, brought to you by the Warren County Board of County Commissioners and coordinated by the Warren County Public Information Department. The website ExploreWarren.org provides information on tourism attractions, parks, museums and events, as well as restaurants, lodgings, farm stands, pick-your-own farms, and unique shops in Warren County. The Explore Warren partnership also provides an extensive calendar of upcoming events and produces the newsletter Warren County Wanderings that is available on the website and set via email to subscribers.

