

# Town Tours & Village Walks

*Agricultural Heritage of Chester County*

SUMMER 2023

**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 2023 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.

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- Chester County Planning Commission  
 601 Westtown Road, Suite 270  
 West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
 chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours



• FREE TOURS •

# Agricultural Heritage of Chester County

Pennsylvania

29<sup>TH</sup> YEAR



[chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours](http://chescoplanning.org/historic/towntours)

Image credit: Chester County History Center, West Chester, PA

# Town Tours & Village Walks

*Agricultural Heritage of Chester County*

SUMMER 2023

Town Tours & Village Walks is a series of free summer strolls through historic neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, and sites to learn about their role in the agricultural heritage of 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 8th–August 17th.

**Kickoff celebration**

The kickoff celebration will be June 8th at the West Chester United Methodist Church, 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, except for the August 3rd bus tour that requires advance registration, and the August 17th tour that begins with a lecture at 6:00 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.



Plans are underway to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026!  
[america250chesco.org](http://america250chesco.org)



Learn more about local history!  
 225 N. High St., West Chester, PA 19380  
[mycchc.org](http://mycchc.org)

**1** JUNE 8 THURSDAY 5:30 kickoff, followed by tour  
**West Chester Kickoff Celebration: From Colonial Farms to Neighborhoods and Agri-Businesses**



The annual kickoff celebration starts at the West Chester United Methodist Church, 129 S. High St. (corner of High & Barnard). As West Chester developed around the Turk's Head Inn the landscape was dotted with Quaker farms. Remnants of those farms and the agri-businesses that followed can still be seen today. The celebration will be followed by a tour that will focus on the borough's southeast quadrant with the McClellan's "Whigs Welcome Farm" and the adjoining Sharples Homestead. Walk today's neighborhoods and learn about people, architecture, and the many agri-businesses that developed here. They included ESCO, United Dairy, Yearsley's, and the Fruit Growers, to name only a few. If we are lucky, we may even see a "mechanical cow." Sponsor: West Chester HARB & Historical Commission.

**Parking & Registration**

Parking is available at the Bicentennial Garage, 29 S. High St., one block north of the church, and there is limited metered parking in the lot next to the church. There is also street parking. 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 15 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00  
**Westtown School, Westtown Township**



Join us for a tour of Westtown School as we discuss the agricultural history of Westtown Township's longest operating school. Learn about the original farm structures and see how the ones that remain have been repurposed. As farming operations at the school date back to the late 1700s, we will explore the long tradition of student involvement in farming over the years, one which continues to this day! Sponsor: Westtown Township Historical Commission.

**Parking & Registration:** Enter at the south entrance, 999 Westtown Rd., West Chester. Park in the grass lot on your right immediately after the pedestrian crossing sign. The tour will begin at the farmhouse.

**3** JUNE 22 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00  
**Thornbury Farm, Thornbury Township**



Historic Thornbury Farm has been in production since 1709. This farm has a rich history and provides opportunities for community education. Travel back and see what past and current efforts make this family farm still viable today. The farm was central in the Revolutionary War Battle of Brandywine and the family strives to continue to protect these resources. Stops will feature demonstrations on native plants, blacksmithing, an equine rescue, community supported agriculture, Revolutionary War history, and more! Sponsor: Thornbury Township Historic Preservation Commission.

**Parking & Registration:** 1256 Thornbury Rd., West Chester. Park across from the market in the field. Meet at the market.

**4** JUNE 29 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00  
**Paoli Battlefield, Malvern Borough**



Walk the farmers' fields of the battlefield and learn about the 9th bloodiest battle of the Revolutionary War. See the second oldest Revolutionary War monument in the U.S. which stands on a mass grave of 52 Continental troops. This field was used to grow crops before, during, and after the revolution. In fact it was still being used as a crop field in 1998 before it was purchased. Sponsor: Paoli Battlefield Preservation Fund.

**Parking & Registration:** The battlefield entrance is on Monument Ave., west of Wayne Ave. Park along the entrance road that loops around the monument grounds. The tour begins northeast of the monument.

**5** JULY 13 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

**Kennett Square's Agricultural Past—It's Not All About Mushrooms!**



Visitors will learn about Kennett's long agricultural history. Beginning on its main commercial street, the sites of three historic buildings will be presented. Then the tour will meander through the residential district where properties of our agricultural leaders lived or worked. Guides will point out two buildings that contributed to opportunities for expanding markets and production. The tour will end at the Kennett Heritage Center with light refreshments. Sponsor: Kennett Heritage Center.

**Parking & Registration:** Free parking in municipal garage at 120 E. Linden St., Kennett Square. Exit garage from main stairway to Genesis Walkway for registration.

**6** JULY 20 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

**Spackman-Davis Farm, Caln Township**



The farm is a living example of our agricultural history. The corn will be high; the story of how farms, mills, and taverns developed around Beaver Creek will be on display. Eleven acres will be open for exploration, with the 1804 bank barn and three-story springhouse partially open for tours. Reenactments of early 19th-century farm life, and a map guide of other nearby historic resources (including Edges Milling District) ending at Beaver Creek Tavern. Sponsor: Caln Township Historical Commission.

**Parking & Registration**  
 3401 E. Kings Highway (Rt. 340), Downingtown.

**7** JULY 27 THURSDAY first tour 5:30, last tour 7:00

**Grove UM Church, West Whiteland Township**



Learn about Grove Church's rich history—once referred to as "the country church"—now in its 250th year of worship! Tracing its roots to George Hoffman, the farmer who hosted the first congregational meeting in his home (with Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury preaching), Grove has had three church buildings, a school, two parsonage/office buildings and the cemetery on its campus through the years. Sponsor: Grove United Methodist Church.

**Parking & Registration:** 490 W. Boot Rd., West Chester.

**8** AUGUST 3 THURSDAY register for a time  
**Historic Barns, Upper Uwchlan Township**



Three historic farms will be spotlighted on this 45-minute tour. Each farm includes at least one historic building from the mid-1700s (plus one Victorian makeover!). The tour will begin at Upland Farm, now a township park. The tour will proceed by bus to Fellowship Farm, an active farm, featuring a Georgian style formal stone farmhouse. The bus will continue to Whelen Farm, a remnant of the original 200-acre Whelen Farm that included Fellowship Farm. Whelen Farm features a log farmhouse with stone additions and remnants of an outside oven, and a stone English Lake District barn. Sponsor: Upper Uwchlan Township Historical Commission.

**Registration Required in Advance**

Tours are scheduled to begin 5:30, 5:45, 6:15, 6:30, 7:00. Register at [www.eventbrite.com/e/upper-uwchlan-township-historical-bus-tour-tickets-607622343787](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/upper-uwchlan-township-historical-bus-tour-tickets-607622343787) Password: 2023upperuwchlanhistorytour

**Parking & Check-In**

Upland Farm Park, 301 Pottstown Pike, Chester Springs.

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

**Yeager's Farm, East Pikeland Township**



Yeager's Farm shows how some family farms have adapted to changes over the past few years as crops have changed from staples such as corn and fruit to different seasonal items like Christmas trees and pumpkins. At least seven generations of the family have farmed several parcels in the southwestern corner of the township, and several generations continue the tradition. Although the farm draws most of its revenue from products other than food, there is still a cattle herd, fruit orchards, and cornfields. Visitors on this tour will board farm wagons to see the new and traditional farming. Sponsor: East Pikeland Township Historical Commission.

**Parking & Registration**

1015 Pike Springs Rd. (Rt.113), Phoenixville.

**10** AUGUST 17 THURSDAY 6:00 lecture followed by tour

**Historic Yellow Springs: Barns Repurposed**



Until the mid-20th century, the most important building on nearly every Chester County property was the barn. It was the engine driving the agrarian household. As the county became more suburban and farms declined, barns were repurposed. The village of Yellow Springs is home to two such barns from the 18th and 19th centuries. Built to store grains and animals, they were adapted to become theaters, fine arts, and movie production studios. Author and barn historian Gregory D. Huber will present a history of Chester County barns and how they evolved. Tours of the barns will follow. Sponsor: Historic Yellow Springs & W. Pikeland Township.

**Parking & Registration**

1701 Art School Rd., Chester Springs. Follow signs to park at the Chester Springs Library. Doors open at 5:00. Lecture at 6:00. Tours immediately follow.