You are invited to explore the Iron & Steel Heritage and Recreation region located in and around the Schuylkill Highlands Conservation Landscape and Hopewell Big Woods, the finest natural preserve in our region. We encourage you to select from the many locations depending on your schedule, or a self-guided heritage tour blending history and recreation to discover the Iron & Steel Landscape’s many “Faces of Freedom.”

Etched into the natural landscape of portions of Pennsylvania’s Chester, Berks, Montgomery and Lancaster Counties are sites that celebrate the iron and steel industries that literally forged our nation. Starting in the early 1700’s, immigrants came seeking a better life. The region produced cannons and munitions that supported George Washington. It also witnessed the struggle to end slavery and welcomed the nation’s first female industrialists. Immigrant labor in iron-country contributed to the Union cause during the Civil War. Immigrants helped make our nation an industrial giant by the start of the 20th Century.

We invite you to enjoy waterways and hiking trails through woodlands, farms and fields; to explore historic towns and villages; and to tour ironmaster mansions and 300 years of industrial sites. From National Parks and outdoor recreation; to specialty farms, mini-breweries and vineyards; to quiet villages or urban night life…morning, noon, and night we have it all!

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Forging Freedom Tour
Both literally and figuratively the ironmasters of this region supported their emerging nation by forging freedom. Early ironmasters resented British laws that required them to ship pig iron to England and then buy back the finished product. When war came to North America in 1775, the iron industry forged freely by supplying munitions to Washington’s beleaguered army. The Forging Freedom Tour explores this theme beginning at Hopewell Furnace, which provided war materials for the American Revolution and the Civil War, and experienced every social and political event of the 19th century. It tours neighboring furnaces, that were critical to the war effort and growth of the new country.

SUGGESTED START:
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site Visitor's Center
7 hours to tour; 2 days to explore
Joanna Furnace, Warwick County Park, Warwick Furnace, Coventryville, Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, and Pina Forge

Iron & Steel Sites:
Warwick Furnace, 1954 St. Peters Road, Pottstown 610-353-1864 • northcountryusa.org
Hopewell Furnace, 191 County Park Road, Pottstown 610-495-5443 • sasta.co.pa.gov
Warwick Furnace, 1954 St. Peters Road, Pottstown 610-353-1864 • northcountryusa.org

Heritage & Recreation:
French Creek State Park, Coventry Woods Preserve, Wellsner, Warwick County Park, Monocacy Hill Recreation Area, and Crov's Nest Preserve

Historic Villages to Shop & Eat:
Evenson 8 • Heritage Stop at the intersection of Rts 23 and 10. livingplaces.com (search: Evenson)

River Trail in Phoenixville, showcases the industrial legacy of Phoenixville and the Schuylkill River.

River Heritage Center, located in the historic Foundry Building, adjacent to a portion of the Schuylkill River Trail (search: Phoenixville Area Historical Society)

The Powering Freedom Tour follows part of the Schuylkill River Trail. The Schuylkill River development in this region helped guarantee that the new country would thrive and remain independent. Winning independence from Great Britain established the United States of America. Many European countries wanted the new country to fail. However, in the late 18th and 19th centuries industrial development in this area contributed to the growth and stability of the young nation.

SUGGESTED START:
(Mon) Warrenville Woods Trust Valley Way and Warren Furnace Road Thomas P. Bentley Preserve 610-933-7577 • warrenvillewoods.org
(3a) St. Peters Village 3471 St. Peters Road, St. Peters livingplaces.com (search: St. Peters)
(7) Coventryville 1512 Old Ridge Road, Pottstown livingplaces.com (search: Coventryville)
(8c) Sheeder-Hall Covered Bridge 368 Prizer Road, Pottstown 610-495-7453 • wellkew.org

Building Freedom Tour
At the end of the American Revolution, a new nation offered some, but not all, of its citizens unprecedented advantages both politically and economically. To build freedom, however; the citizens of Chester County fought to end slavery and accepted an unprecedented role for women. Rebecca Lukens took over her family’s company in 1825 and saved it from bankruptcy to become Lunkel Steel, the longest continuously operating firm in the American steel industry. Beginning at the Lukens National Historic Site, the Building Freedom Tour explores the evolution from the 18th and 19th century ironmasters to the steel masters of the 20th century.

SUGGESTED START:
Historic Yellow Springs
4 hours to tour; 1 day to explore
The Woolen Mill of Charlestown, Mill at Anselma, Continental Powder Works and Rapp Dam Covered Bridge, Historic Sugartown, Historic Yellow Springs, Birchrunville, Shreader-Hall Covered Bridge, and Four Creek Trail

Tourist Information:
Ludwig’s Corner, Kimberton Village, Historic Sugartown, and Paoli Battlefield Historic Park

Supplying Freedom Tour
This area of Chester County supplied the fight for freedom with iron products, food, medicines, and textiles. Washington’s army at Valley Forge would not have survived the winter of 1777-1778 without support from the surrounding countryside. Unfortunately, the area also supplied freedom with the sacrifices of soldiers and the toil of civilian property during the Philadelphia Campaign of 1777. The Supplying Freedom Tour begins at Historic Yellow Springs where Washington set up headquarters after the Battle of the Clouds and the first military hospital in the United States was built. It continues to explore this theme with visits to with to the Pottsville Battlefield and three mills which provided gun powder, flour and cloth.

SUGGESTED START:
Historic Yellow Springs
National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum and Lukens National Historic Site
3 hours to tour; 11-1 day to explore
National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum, Hibernia Mansion, Langoma Mansion (Isabella Furnace), Downie Forge Farm, and Weybod Farm Iron Tour

TO SHOP & EAT:
Struble Trail, Hibernia Village, Poplar Spring Farm, and Marsh Creek State Park

TO SHOP & EAT:
D genomic Village, Downingtown Historic District and Marshallton Village

TO SHOP & EAT:
Ercildoun Village, Downingtown Historic District and Marshall Village

Powering Freedom Tour
Winning independence from Great Britain established the United States of America. Many European countries soon recognized the new country to fail. However, a decade later, the newly developed iron industry in this region helped guarantee that the new country would thrive and remain independent. The Powering Freedom Tour follows part of the Schuylkill River Trail. The Schuylkill River Heritage Center, located in the historic Foundry Building, adjacent to a portion of the Schuylkill River Trail in Phoenixville, showcases the industrial legacy of Phoenixville and the Schuylkill River. Interactive exhibits and video tell the story of the industries that grew up along the river because of the transportation routes provided by the Schuylkill Canal, and later, the expansion of the railroads throughout the region.

SUGGESTED START:
Visitor Center and Washington’s Headquarters at Valley Forge National Historical Park
4 hours to tour; 1 day to explore
Schuykill River Heritage Center at Phoenixville, Pottsogrove Manor, Valley Forge National Historical Park, and Valley Forge National Park

TO SHOP & EAT:
Neff’s Mill Village, Pottstown, Spring-Ford Area Historical Society, and Four Creek Trail

TO SHOP & EAT:
Philadelphia City Park, Riverswater, New Hope Springs, and Historic Pottstown

SYMBOL KEY
Interpretive Center
Visitor Services
Interpretative Signage/Trail
Landscape Emphasis
Parking
Recreation
Shelter
Touring
Fishing
Hiking
Sheltering
Hunting
Hiking
Picnicking
Camping
Historic Site
Genealogical Resource
Fishing
Hiking
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