

Welcome to Native Lands



Welcome to Native Lands Heritage Trail—a scenic journey through history. This landscape is a place that many people have called their Native Lands.

The one-mile earth and grass hiking trail provides public access and storytelling for Native Lands County Park, a 180-acre preserve owned and managed by the County of York. The route passes through woodlands and open meadows along the Pleasant Garden Trail (yellow blazes) and part of the Mason-Dixon Trail (blue blazes), linking the Zimmerman Center for Heritage with Klines Run Park.

The Heritage Trail's seven numbered waystops, keyed to the information in this guide, provide places to view and learn about this scenic and historic landscape. Other trails in the park circle the historic Susquehannock Indian settlement site and lead to the Dritt Family Cemetery.

Park Open Down to Dusk Every Day/Year-Round



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Susquehanna Heritage is a non-profit organization and Pennsylvania Heritage Area advancing a vision for the Susquehanna Riverlands as a national destination for outdoor fun and cultural discovery.

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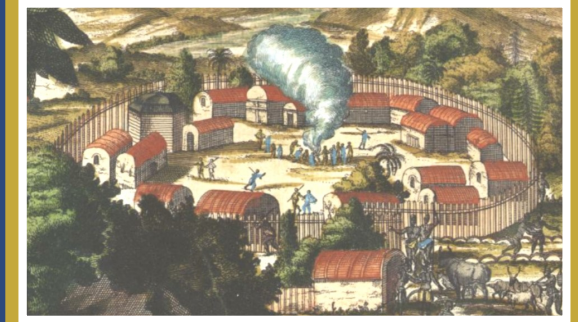
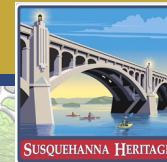
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717-840-7440 Emergency: Call 911
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NATIVE LANDS HERITAGE TRAIL GUIDE

Walk in the Footsteps of Native Peoples!



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"Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children."

Ancient Indian Proverb



WAYSTOP 1

The trail begins at the Zimmerman Center for Heritage, a mid-18th century home restored by John and Kathryn Zimmerman and then

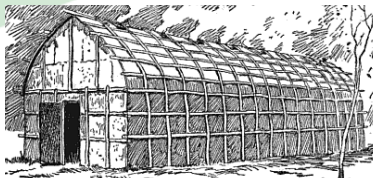
donated to Susquehanna Heritage. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the "Dritt Mansion" for its longest occupants, the house hosts heritage programs for visitors, along with exhibits of river art, Susquehannock Indian artifacts and historic items found during the restoration.

The land here was granted by Lord Baltimore to Thomas Cresap in 1729, who operated a ferry and defended the area for Maryland. Cresap was arrested by Pennsylvania authorities in 1736 after skirmishes known as "Cresap's War", a dispute finally resolved in 1784 when the Mason-Dixon line was established about eighteen miles south of here.

The Zimmerman Center has been designated by the National Park Service as Pennsylvania's official Visitor Contact and Passport Station for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. This water route along the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers showcases Smith's early 17th century voyages, the natural environment he explored, and the American Indians he met, including the Susquehannocks.

WAYSTOP 2

The last known settlement of the Susquehannock Indians occupied this hilltop from about 1676 to 1680. War with other Indians and diseases inflicted by Europeans had reduced the Susquehannocks to about 900 people—down from 3,000 just twenty years earlier. A log stockade wall enclosed the four-acre village, protecting about 16 ninety-foot longhouses, each housing fifty or so family members.



This site's history demonstrates how dramatically Native life was altered after Europeans arrived just seventy years before. In this short time, the Susquehannocks went from being self-sufficient to being inextricably bound to the land's new settlers. It is believed that the Seneca Indians drove the last of the Susquehannocks south into Maryland around 1680. They returned to their homeland in Lancaster County several years later, becoming known as the Conestoga Indians.



WAYSTOP 3

A side trail here leads to the Dritt Family Cemetery. The Tritt family of Switzerland arrived in America in 1739 and moved to this area from Lancaster County about 1750. Johann (Jacob) Tritt, born in 1746, took the name 'Dritt' and married Elizabeth Boyer.

Dritt was a local militia captain when the Revolutionary War began, spent two years as a British prisoner, then served as a Major General in the Pennsylvania militia.

In 1783 he purchased "Pleasant Garden," Thomas Cresap's former property, which by then included the stone house that is now the Zimmerman Center. Dritt worked as a farmer, miller, sawyer, wine merchant, and ferryman. He laid out the village of Washington Boro and received a charter for the first bridge proposed across the river in this area, though it was never built.

Dritt drowned in the river in 1817. His body was found and buried downriver in Maryland. After Dritt's death, his daughter Margaret Bonham bought the home and it remained in the family until 1851. Dritt's wife, daughter and other descendants were laid to rest in the cemetery. The earliest grave dates to 1824, the last to 1879.

WAYSTOP 4

The ruins of an 1800's-era farmstead, located beyond the fence line to the southwest, is a reminder of this land's rich farming heritage. A spring flows nearby, a feature that attracted people for centuries. This land's agricultural legacy likely dates back 500 or more years.

Native Lands Heritage Trail—Waystop Guide

Growing food was part of Susquehannock life, and the Shenks Ferry people before them. Patches of paw paws, a native tree grown for its fruit, still thrive here.

In 1731, fifty years after the last Indians, Marylander Stephen Onion received a patent for 600 acres around this site, which he called "Canhodah", Iroquois for "town". Over the next two centuries, the land was developed into a traditional Pennsylvania farmstead.



From the 1930s through the 1960s, the Leibhart family farmed this landscape, cultivating corn, cantaloupes, apples, berries, asparagus, and hay. Remnants of their extensive complex of farm buildings, orchards, and fields are still apparent in the landscape today.

WAYSTOP 5

Visible to the north are the historic Lauxmont Farms dairy complex and Highpoint Scenic Vista, both of which were part of S. Forry Laucks's 3000+ acre 1920's-era country farm estate. The 40th parallel, originally claimed by Maryland as its northern border, runs along the road just below Highpoint.

Although early American Indians likely made seasonal visits here up to 8,000 years ago, this land is most associated with the Susquehannocks, the last native group to live in this area before Europeans arrived. They settled here about 1575, building the first of several successive stockade villages on the eastern shore. Three of the largest settlements were located near present-day Washington Boro. In 1608, when Captain John Smith first met the Susquehannocks south of here in Maryland, nearly 2,000 people lived in their settlement.



Special thanks to Paul Nevin, Jan Klinedinst, Dana Shirey and Bob Leibhart for their contributions of historical information and images for this guide.

Perhaps due to pressure from other Indian groups, European traders and settlers, the Susquehannocks moved to the western side of the river about 1665, establishing a settlement just north of what is now Klines Run Park. As described at Waystop 2, their last settlement was 1/2 mile to the south of here.

WAYSTOP 6

Although the trail's path across rolling meadows presents a peaceful scene today, this land has seen much controversy. Battles for possession between the Seneca and Susquehannocks, border conflicts between the Penns and the Calverts, and modern day debates about development versus preservation are all part of its history. Today this landscape is a place for sharing a common heritage. The land's healing nature was evident when volunteers from the Mason-Dixon Trail System, York Hiking Club, Lancaster-York Native Heritage Advisory Council and the Dritt family worked with York County staff to prepare the site for public use as a park.

WAYSTOP 7

The Heritage Trail ends at Klines Run Park, created in the 1930s with the Safe Harbor Dam project. Silt build-up from the dam also created Conejohela Flats, the islands and mudflats across the river. Over 17,000 birds from up to 38 species stop there each year during their migrations to breeding grounds in the arctic and wintering sites in South America.

Archaeology has confirmed human settlement along the river dating back over 12,000 years. It is likely that more than 50,000 Indians lived their lives here before the first Europeans arrived. Even though most of this rich history is not visible, images that Native people carved on the river's rocks still exist nearby—the only place on the Susquehanna where such extensive rock art sites have been found.

