

2024



WARREN COUNTY  
1825  2025  
BICENTENNIAL

WARREN COUNTY COURT HOUSE

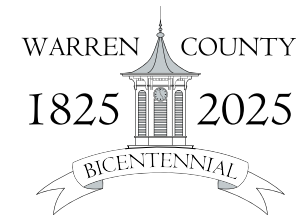
# Millbrook Village




Millbrook Village, part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DEWA), is a re-created community of the 1800s where aspects of pioneer life are exhibited and occasionally demonstrated by skilled and dedicated docents. Although the ill-fated Tocks Island Dam project sealed the fate of this and other villages in what is now National Park Service domain, the Millbrook Village Society has worked hard and consistently to bring the village back to life.



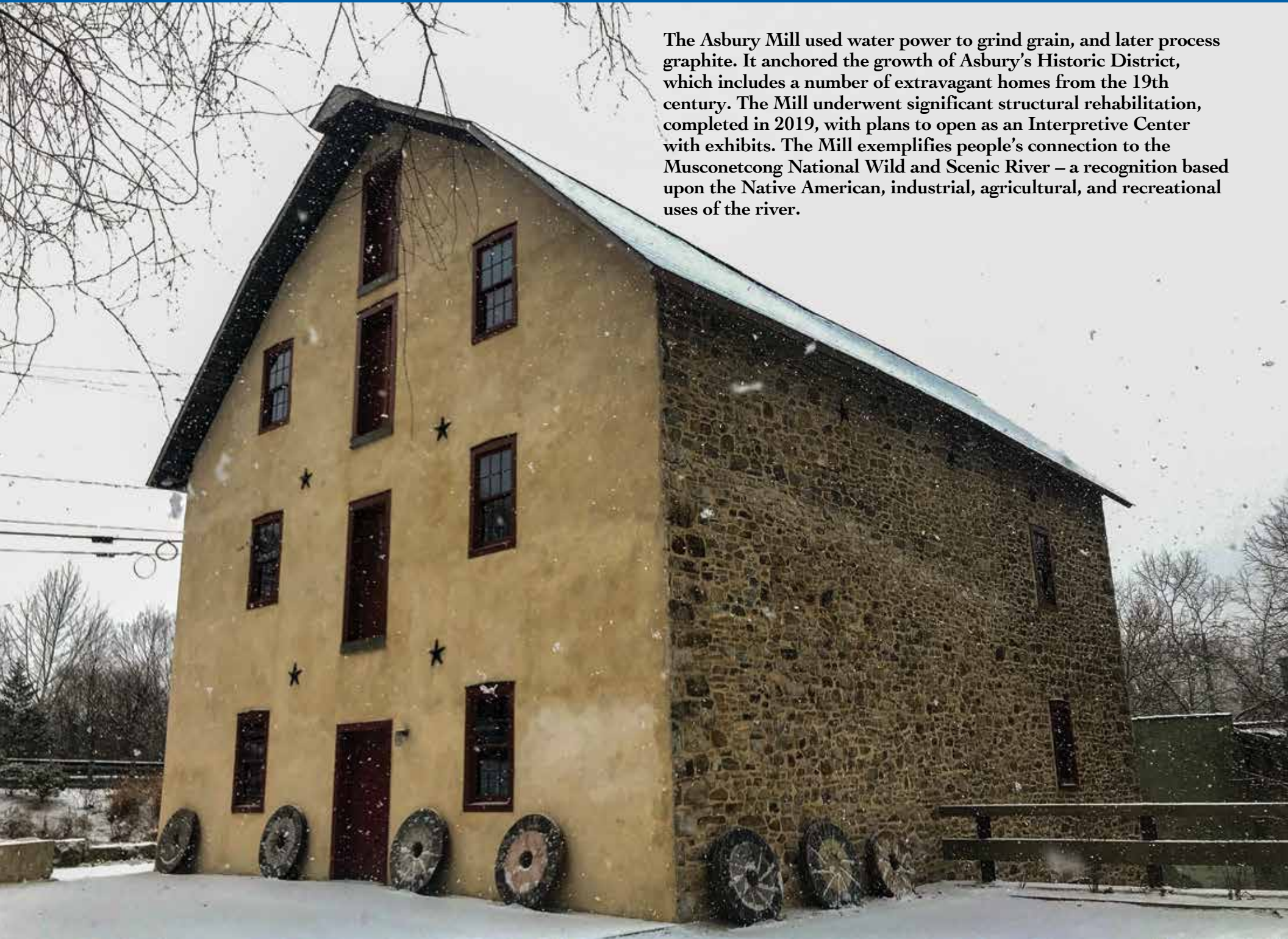
# JANUARY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	New Year's Day 1 1849: Blair Academy opens in original two-room schoolhouse	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 1825: The Belvidere Apollo newspaper is first published	12	13
14	Martin Luther King Jr. 15	16	17	18	19	20
Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park	21	22 1750: Hardwick Township incorporated	23	24 1839: Blairstown named in honor of John I. Blair	25	26
28	29	30	31	 <p><i>The former Farm Manager's House and Billow barn on Walnut Street in Hope</i></p>		

# Asbury Mill








The Asbury Mill used water power to grind grain, and later process graphite. It anchored the growth of Asbury's Historic District, which includes a number of extravagant homes from the 19th century. The Mill underwent significant structural rehabilitation, completed in 2019, with plans to open as an Interpretive Center with exhibits. The Mill exemplifies people's connection to the Musconetcong National Wild and Scenic River – a recognition based upon the Native American, industrial, agricultural, and recreational uses of the river.



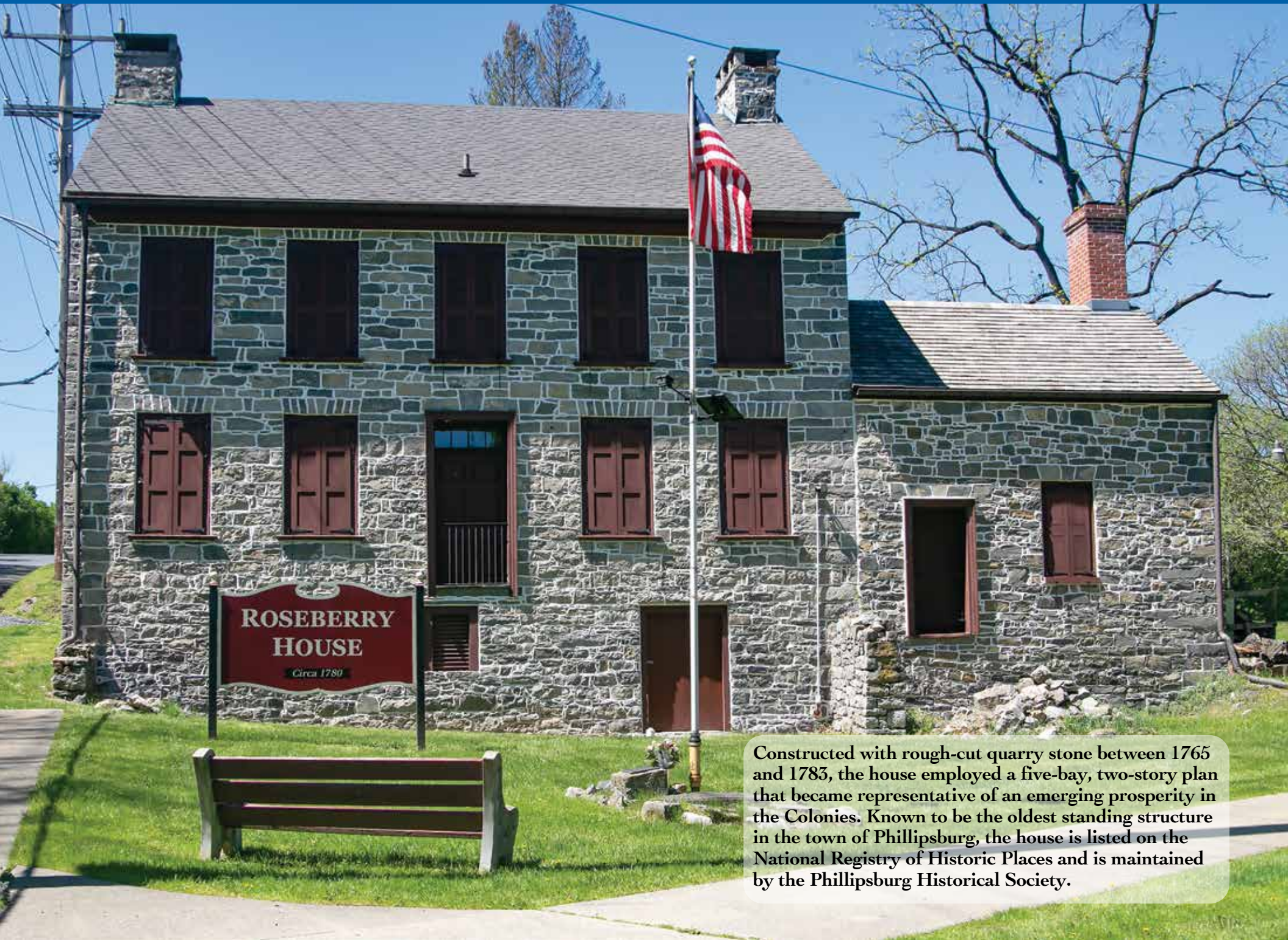


# FEBRUARY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 28  29 <i>Millpond Canal Park in Phillipsburg</i>		 30  31		<b>1</b> Groundhog Day	<b>2</b> 1917: Blairstown fire destroys Roy's Hall and other buildings; rebuilt Roy's Hall opens in July and still stands	<b>3</b> 1854: Belvidere-Delaware Railroad reaches Phillipsburg
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 1877: Blairstown Press newspaper first published	<b>8</b> 1775: Name is changed from Greenland to Hope 1862: Captain Joseph J. Henry, the first N.J officer killed in the Civil War, dies in action at Roanoke Island, NC	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park	<b>12</b> 1809: Lincoln's Birthday	Mardi Gras  <b>13</b>	Valentines Day  <b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 1839: Townships of Harmony and Hope incorporated	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> Washington's Birthday Holiday	<b>19</b> 1845: Legislation passed to incorporate Blairstown Township 1868: Washington Borough incorporated	<b>20</b> 1798: Knowlton Township incorporated 1824: Mansfield Township incorporated	<b>21</b> 1732: George Washington born 1944: B-17 Bomber crashes on the north side of the Kittatinny Mountain near Millbrook, 12 servicemen killed	<b>22</b> 1763: Knowlton Township receives Royal Patent established under King George 1973: Hackettstown Community Hospital opens	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 1849: Washington Township incorporated	<b>29</b>	<i>Ramsaysburg tavern in Knowlton Township</i> 	

# Roseberry-Gess House



Constructed with rough-cut quarry stone between 1765 and 1783, the house employed a five-bay, two-story plan that became representative of an emerging prosperity in the Colonies. Known to be the oldest standing structure in the town of Phillipsburg, the house is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and is maintained by the Phillipsburg Historical Society.



# MARCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>25</p> <p><i>Delaware Lake</i></p>	 <p>26</p>	 <p>27</p>	 <p>28</p>	 <p>29</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1957: Blairstown Hotel and Main Street fire, four buildings lost</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1836: The Belvidere-Delaware Railroad chartered                      1865: Dr. George Wyckoff Cummins, author of the History of Warren County, NJ (1911), born in Vienna, Independence Twp.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>1941: Forrest Mars Sr. receives patent for M&amp;M candies; production began in Newark and moved to Hackettstown in 1958</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>1851: Lopatcong Township incorporated</p>	<p>8</p> <p>1861: Town of Phillipsburg incorporated</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1743: first pig iron produced at Oxford Furnace                      1848: Frelinghuysen Township incorporated                      1853: Town of Hackettstown incorporated</p>
<p>Daylight Savings Time</p> <p>10</p> <p>1783: Garret D. Wall, who donated land in Belvidere for the county Courthouse and park, born in Middletown, NJ                      Open 1-4pm:                      Museum at Bread Lock Park</p>	<p>11</p> <p>1714: Hunterdon County created, including the area that later became Warren County</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1888: Great Blizzard drops more than 2' of snow, crippling railroads, telegraph lines, mail routes</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>1739: Morris County set off from Hunterdon, comprised of present Morris, Sussex and Warren</p>	<p>16</p> <p>1829: George Maxwell Robeson (Civil War general, NJ Attorney General, US Secretary of the Navy and Congressman, born in Oxford</p>
<p>St. Patrick's Day</p> <p>17</p> 	<p>18</p>	<p>Spring Equinox</p> <p>19</p> <p>1845: Town of Belvidere incorporated</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24</p> <p>1881: Township of Pohatcong incorporated</p> <p>Easter</p>	<p>25</p> <p>1926: Liberty Township incorporated</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>Good Friday</p> <p>29</p> <p>1913: Newly built Roy's Hall in Blairstown premieres moving picture shows for 10 cents</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>31</p>						

# Shimer Mansion



Built on a bluff overlooking the well-traveled Easton-Brunswick turnpike in 1850, 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. 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.



# APRIL

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>31</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1827: First Freeholder Board meeting recorded in the new Courthouse in Belvidere</p> <p>1855: Hackettstown National Bank incorporated, the first in Morris and Warren counties</p>	<p>4</p> <p>1873: Allamuchy Township incorporated</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>1839: Franklin Township incorporated</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1913: White Township incorporated</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p>1845: Blairstown Township incorporation becomes official with first town government meeting</p> <p>Open 1-4pm:                      Museum at Bread Lock Park                      Lee Museum at Port Warren</p>	<p>Taxes Due</p> <p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1808: Moravian settlement that was established in 1769 leaves Hope</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>1925: Two-day election ends with Belvidere chosen as county seat</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>Earth Day                      Passover</p> <p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>1911: Alpha Borough incorporated</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>		<p>1</p> <p>April 9, 1835: The famed White Pilgrim (Joseph Thomas, an itinerant preacher known for his white clothes) dies of smallpox at Johnsonburg and is buried in the Dark Moon Cemetery. He is later reinterred in the Johnsonburg Christian Cemetery in a grave marked with a white obelisk.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> 

# Blairstown

In 1839, the village known as Gravel Hill was renamed Blairstown in honor of its most celebrated citizen, John Insley Blair. Throughout the 1800s Blair grew his empire to include railroads, banks, plantations, mills, and mines, all of which he operated from his beloved village, much of which has remained unchanged since his death in 1899. One of Mr. Blair's lasting legacies is the 1893 Footbridge. Once a pathway to the train station, it is now the centerpiece of Footbridge Park. The Blairstown Historic District was established on the National Registry of Historic Places in 2007.

TICKETS

## Welcome To BLAIRSTOWN, NJ

### WELCOME TO BLAIRSTOWN...





The year of the Revolution 1862's battle in Blair's town in 1862. The 1862 battle was a turning point in the Civil War. Blair's town was a strategic location for the Union Army. Blair's town was a strategic location for the Union Army. Blair's town was a strategic location for the Union Army.



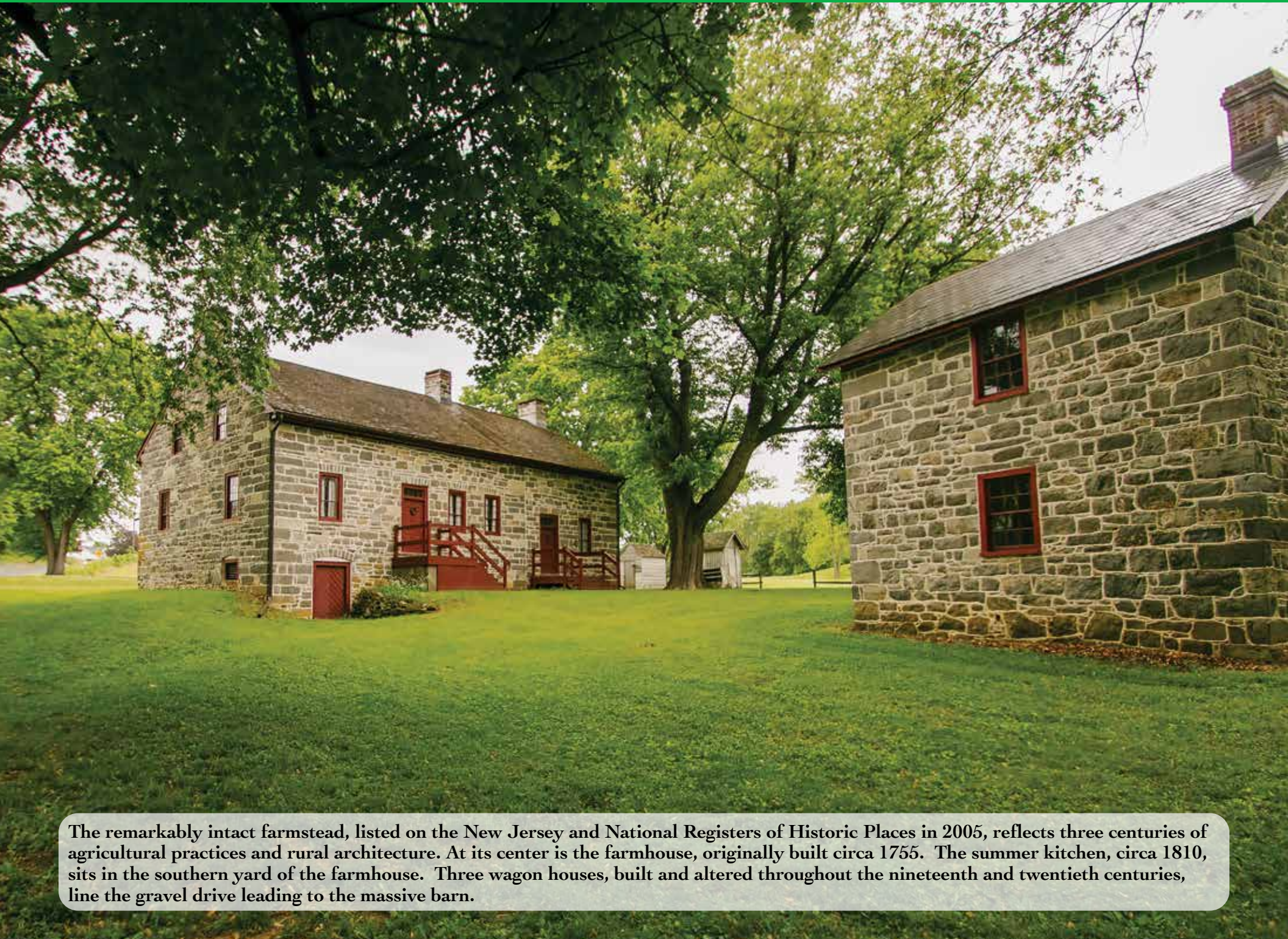


# MAY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>28</p>	 <p>29</p>	 <p>30</p>	1	2 1859: Death of James Ramsay, namesake of Ramsaysburg village	3	4
<p><i>Historic Warrington Stone Bridge across the Paulins Kill</i></p>						
5  Open: Shippen Manor Museum	6	7	8	9 1980: Friday the 13th movie, filmed in northern Warren County, released	10	11 1825: First meeting of the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders held at the home of James McMurtrie in the Village of Belvidere
Mother's Day 12  Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Lee Museum at Port Warren Shippen Manor (hours vary)	13 1921: Maternity Hospital and Infirmary chartered in Phillipsburg; later renamed Warren Hospital, now St. Luke's – Warren Campus	14 1799: Logg Goal is renamed Johnsonburg in honor of first postmaster Jonathan Johnson	15	16	17 1715: Surveyor Samuel Green passes through what becomes Warren County and spends the night near present day Johnsonburg; 20 years later the area would become his home	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 1835: William Henry achieves first "Hot Blast" in America at Oxford Furnace	25
26	Memorial Day 27 1856: Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad commenced running passenger trains to Delaware, NJ	28	29	30 1754: Oxford Township is formed from portions of Greenwich 1894: The citizens of Belvidere dedicate the monument at Civil War General McAllister's grave	31	 <p><i>General Robert McAllister's grave at Belvidere Cemetery</i></p>

# VanNest-Hoff-Vannatta Farm



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. The summer kitchen, circa 1810, sits in the southern yard of the farmhouse. Three wagon houses, built and altered throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, line the gravel drive leading to the massive barn.



# JUNE



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>June 8, 1753: Sussex County created from Morris, including land that became Warren, with county seat located at Jonathan Petit's tavern in present day Johnsonburg. A log jail is authorized on the lands of Samuel Green. The settlement became known as Logg Gaol and remains the county seat until it is moved to Newton in 1764.</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	 <p>31</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Open: Shippen Manor Museum</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>1825: Garret D. Wall presented deed for land in Belvidere for public buildings; Freeholders vote to erect Courthouse</p> <p>Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Lee Museum at Port Warren Shippen Manor (hours vary)</p> <p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>1741: Joseph Warren, namesake of Warren County, born in Roxbury, Boston, MA</p> <p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>Father's Day</p> <p>1925: Rockport Train Wreck</p> <p>16</p>	<p>1775: Gen. Joseph Warren is killed in the Battle of Bunker Hill.</p> <p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>Juneteenth</p> <p>19</p>	<p>Summer Solstice</p> <p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23</p> <p>30</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>1914: Wayne H. Dumont, longtime state Senator from Phillipsburg, born in Paterson, NJ</p> <p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>1820: First Post Office at Buttz Bridge (later Blairstown) established, William Hankinson is Postmaster</p> <p>29</p>

# Ramsaysburg Historic Homestead

The buildings at this twelve-acre historical park — a tavern, barn, cottage, smokehouse and shed — 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. 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. Summer concerts in the Riverside Amphitheatre are a popular attraction.




*Jeah Marie Kirk*



# JULY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>30</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1852: First of five railroads to operate in Phillipsburg, the Central Railroad of New Jersey, reaches the town.                      1997: Pahaquarry Township merged with Hardwick Township</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1908: Robert B. Meyner, NJ Governor 1954-1962, born in Easton, PA; he grows up in Phillipsburg</p>	<p>Independence Day 4</p> <p>1877: Blaiirstown Railway inaugural run traveling from Blaiirstown to Belvidere</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Open: Shippen Manor Museum</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Lee Museum at Port Warren Shippen Manor (hours vary)</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>1782: George Washington and two aides escorted by Moravian clergyman John Etwein ride from Bethlehem, PA to Hope, halting under the Buttonwood tree before continuing to Newburg, NY</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Warren County Farmers' Fair</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Warren County Farmers' Fair &amp; Hot Air Balloon Festival</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	

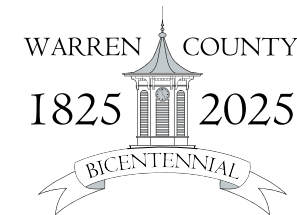
# Rutherford Hall

The 18,000 square foot Tudor-style mansion is one of the last extant, large country estates in New Jersey constructed during the Country Place Era (1890-1920). The house is now on both NJ and National Registers of Historic Places. Visited by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rutherford Hall now serves as a venue for public art classes, lectures, concerts, fairs and festivals as well as private events.





# AUGUST



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 	29 Aug. 19, 1955: Record flood on Delaware River kills 99, destroys Columbia/Portland Covered Bridge and damages Phillipsburg/Easton "Free Bridge"	30	31 	1 Warren County Farmers' Fair & Hot Air Balloon Festival	2	3
4 Open: Shippen Manor Museum	5	6	7	8	9 1982: Warren County leases Shippen Manor and Oxford Furnace from the State of New Jersey; the County later takes ownership, restores and creates a museum	10
11 Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Lee Museum at Port Warren Shippen Manor (hours vary)	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 1911: Vice Admiral John D. Bulkeley born in NYC; he grows up on a farm near Hackettstown and is one of most highly decorated servicemen in US history	19	20	21 1935: The Great Bank Robbery of Blairstown	22 1802: John I. Blair, namesake of Blairstown, born at Foul Rift near Belvidere	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

# Jim and Mary Lee Museum at Plane 9 West



Just outside of Phillipsburg, the Morris Canal met Plane 9 West, the longest of twenty-three inclined planes that conquered an unprecedented 1,674-foot change in elevation along the canal's journey to the Hudson River at Jersey City. Years after the canal ceased operation, Jim Lee, Sr., a railroad conductor who grew up in Phillipsburg, was so fascinated with the Canal that he bought the property and moved his young family to the former plane operator's house. He began to excavate the remains of the canal plane and the powerhouse that operated it, 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 came up with a management plan for the property and turned part of the house into a museum with displays of canal artifacts. Visitors also see remnants of the inclined plane and the innovative turbine machinery that distinguished the Morris Canal from all others.



# SEPTEMBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Open: Shippen Manor Museum	Labor Day 2	3	4	5	6	7 Belvidere Victorian Day
8 Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Lee Museum at Port Warren Shippen Manor (hours vary)	9 1869: Cornerstone laid for Centenary Collegiate Institute, now Centenary University	10	11	12	13	14 Phillipsburg Railroad Festival
15	16	17 1937 Hackettstown resident Bette Cooper crowned Miss America in Atlantic City, NJ	18	19 1942: Army Air Corps C-47 plane crashes into the south side of the Kittatinny Mountain near Walnut Valley, Blairstown Twp., killing 7 servicemen	20	21
Autumn Equinox 22	23	24	25	26	27	28 1918: Fire destroys the center of Hope's village
29	30	 1	 2	 3	 4	 5

# Shippen Manor



Shippen Manor is located in the heart of Oxford (formerly "Oxford Furnace"), developed around the old iron furnace that was built around 1741, one of the first three furnaces built during the colonial era. Dr. William Shippen, Sr. and his brother Joseph Shippen, Jr. had the main (south) block of the Manor house constructed around 1754. During the Revolutionary War, it is believed that the Furnace produced cannonballs for the Continental Army.



# OCTOBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>29</p>	 <p>30</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1712: Dr. William Shippen, Sr. born in Philadelphia, PA; he built Shippen Manor and owned 4000 acres in Oxford, including the iron furnace, Manor and mines</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Rosh Hashanah</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>6</p> <p>Open: Shippen Manor Museum</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p> <p>1738: Greenwich Township incorporated</p>	<p>10</p> <p>1903: Pumpkin Freshet on Delaware River, crest is 5' above all previous records</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>Yom Kippur</p> <p>12</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Lee Museum at Port Warren Shippen Manor (hours vary)</p>	<p>Columbus Day</p> <p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1830: Death of William Hankison, builder of the Old Mill in Blairstown (1825) and mentor of John I. Blair</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>1776: Colonel William Maxwell promoted to Brigadier General, leads four battalions ("Maxwell's Brigade")</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>Halloween</p> <p>31</p>	 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>
						<p>Oct. 17, 1844: Letter written describing the discovery of the skeletons of 5 mastodons in Great Meadows</p>

# Vass Farmstead

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. Located across from the White Lake Natural Resource Area, visitors can split their time between the historic structures and the shoreline of White Lake, enjoying a stroll on the trail system that surrounds the lake.





# NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 27	 28	 29	 30	 31	1	2  Explore Warren History Trail
Eastern Standard Time 3  Explore Warren History Trail	4 1831: first trip on the full length of the Morris Canal completed from Newark to Phillipsburg	Election Day 5 1855: The Belvidere-Delaware Railroad from Trenton north along the Delaware River, constructed between 1850 and 1855, reaches Belvidere.	6	7	8 1973: Route 80 dedicated in Columbia, NJ	9
10 Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Shippen Manor (hours vary)	Veterans Day 11 1782: Independence Township incorporated	12 1912: The "Concrete Mile" opens near Stewartville, NJ's first concrete highway is built with concrete from Thomas Edison's Portland Cement Plant in New Village	13	14	15 1822: Commission created to study what became the Morris Canal	16
17	18	19	20 1824: Warren County created by act of NJ Legislature 200 years ago today!	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	Thanksgiving 28 	29	30

# Moravian Village of Hope


Founded by Moravian missionaries in 1769, this beautiful village with its collection of fine old stone structures is, in itself, a museum. 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.





# DECEMBER



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  Open: Shippen Manor Museum	2 1899: John I. Blair, entrepreneur, railroad magnate, philanthropist and one of the 19th century's wealthiest men, dies at home in Blirstown	3	4	5	6	7
8  Open 1-4pm: Museum at Bread Lock Park Shippen Manor (hours vary)	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 1984: Shippen Manor is placed on the National Register of Historic Places	Winter Solstice 21
22	23	24 1911: Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Cut-Off opened with Delaware River Viaduct and Paulinskill Viaduct in operation	Christmas 25 	Chanukah Kwanzaa 26	27 1824: Pahaquarry Township incorporated	28
29	30	31 1824: Morris Canal and Banking Company incorporated to finance and build the canal	1	2	3	4
2025						

# History of Warren County

**As Warren County, New Jersey prepares to celebrate its bicentennial, let's take a look through our history!**

Prior to the arrival of Europeans to the Americas, indigenous peoples originated from thousands of years of migration from Asia and Africa across the Bering Strait during the last ice age around 15,000 years ago.

The Lenni Lenape ("Original People") have inhabited the New Jersey area long before the arrival of Europeans. They were a part of the Algonquin nation and were occasionally scorned by other tribes for their peaceable manner.

There were three sub-tribes in New Jersey that were a part of the Lenni Lenape Nation:

Minsi (North) – "the people of the stony country"

Unami (Central) – "the people down the river"

Unilachtigo (South) – "the people who lived near the ocean"

Throughout the county, hundreds of archaeological and anthropological finds have been located pertaining to the habitation of the indigenous peoples who lived in the area prior to European settlement.

Turning to the Colonial Era, in 1713, the West Jersey Council of Proprietors purchased all of the land above the Falls of the Delaware in Trenton from the Lenni Lenape, opening the northwestern portion of the colony to settlement.

Two years later, Thomas Stevenson (c. 1648-1725) and John Reading, Jr. (1657-1717), surveyed the land that is now Warren County and found within the hills and valleys established foot trails and settlements of the Minsi (Lenni Lenape). Working independently of one another, the surveyors followed the beds of rivers and creeks, noting mineral deposits and potential water power sites that would bring investors and foster the creation of villages.

Before Warren County became its own county, the land within the county's current borders was a part of Hunterdon County from 1713 to 1738; part of Morris County from 1738 to 1753; and part of Sussex County from 1753 to 1824.

## Creation & Naming

The County of Warren was created by an Act of the NJ State Legislature that was passed on November 20, 1824, and the county came into existence in 1825. The county was named in honor of the Revolutionary War hero General Joseph Warren (1741-1775), a Bostonian who died 50 years earlier at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. Dr. Warren was a Massachusetts physician and politician



*General Joseph Warren*

who helped to spearhead the break from England, and earned a heroic reputation throughout the original 13 states for his devotion to the revolutionary cause. It was Warren who sent Paul Revere and William Dawes on their famous ride to warn the colonists in Lexington and Concord that the British army was on the move, which sparked the beginning of the war. Warren was killed by a musket ball to the back of his head during or just after the storming of the redoubt atop Breed's Hill by British troops. According to British General Thomas Gage, his death was "worth the death of 500 men."

Dr. Warren neither lived in nor visited New Jersey, particularly the county that would one day bear his name. In all, there are 14 counties named for Dr. Joseph Warren in the United States.

## Townships & County Seat

Originally, the county was comprised of seven townships: Greenwich, Hardwick, Independence, Knowlton, Mansfield, Oxford and Pahaquarry. From these original townships emerged twenty-two current municipalities (Allamuchy, Blairstown, Franklin, Frelinghuysen, Greenwich, Hardwick, Harmony, Hope, Independence, Knowlton, Liberty, Lopatcong, Mansfield, Oxford, Pohatcong, Washington and White), three towns (Belvidere, Hackettstown and Phillipsburg) and two boroughs (Alpha and Washington). In 1997, Pahaquarry, one of the original townships, merged with Hardwick Township, the first such merger in New Jersey in 45 years.



*Garret D. Wall*

Belvidere was chosen as the county seat, a decision that was influenced mostly by the action of General Garrett D. Wall who donated the grounds for the county courthouse and public square in Belvidere.

The first Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders met on May 11, 1825 at the home of James McMurtrie in the Village of Belvidere. These first freeholders had been elected at annual Town Meetings in the respective townships, and the board consisted of Moses Vancampen and Jacob Brotzman, Pahaquarry; Uzal O. Howell and George Mott, Hardwick; John Schmuck and Robert Thompson, Independence; Daniel Swayze and David Reid, Knowlton; Nathan Hoagland and Alexander White, Oxford; Archibald Robeson and Garret Lacey, Mansfield; and Peter Kline and Jonathan Robins, Greenwich. Swayze was chosen to serve as Director, and Benjamin T. Hunt as clerk of the board, while Mathias O. Halstead was County Clerk.

## Building the Courthouse

In 1825, the County Board of Freeholders (now Board of County Commissioners) ordered \$3,000 to be raised for the construction of a brick courthouse that included a jail and offices for the clerk and surrogate on the first floor and the courtroom, which is still in use, on the second floor. The Courthouse was built by L. H. Lewis in 1826 for a total cost of \$9,942.24. It was renovated in 1953 and expanded with an addition in 1961.



*Early representation of Warren County's courthouse*

More interior renovations took place over the past 25 years, with exterior renovations completed in 2016 and the rehabilitation of the historic Courtroom 1 completed in 2021. It is a

contributing property that is a part of the Belvidere Historic District and was added to the National Register of Historic Places on October 3, 1980.

## Early Transportation

Transportation was an integral part of the County's history. The earliest inhabitants, the Lenni Lenape, lived along the rivers and streams of the region and created paths and trails for travel and migration.

The first European settlers to the area were the Dutch, who came to Pahaquarry Township to dig for copper in the mid-17th century. During this time, they constructed the first commercial interstate highway in North America called the "Old Mine Road" that began north of Belvidere and traveled north to Kingston, NY. The New Jersey section of the Old Mine Road is a part of Worthington State Forest and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area (DWGNRA) and begins at Route 80 (Exit 1 Millbrook; Flatbrookville) and travels north along the Delaware River to Montague, in Sussex County, NJ.

## Morris Canal

The Morris Canal was completed May 20, 1832, and its western terminus was at Phillipsburg on the Delaware River in Warren County. The canal traversed across northern New Jersey on a 102-mile route to Jersey City. It provided a thoroughfare for the county's farm products to reach metropolitan markets. Villages such as Port Warren, Port Colden, Port Murray and Rockport owe their names and existence to their locations along the canal. The canal also brought together anthracite coal from Pennsylvania as well as limestone and iron ore from New Jersey during an era of early industrialization. Railroads quickly replaced the canal and increased the speed of development and expansion of industry within the country.



*Morris Canal boat enroute near Hackettstown*

## Railroads

In 1856, John I. Blair's Warren Railroad completed its link to the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad (DL&W) and the lucrative eastern markets for coal and iron products from Pennsylvania. Blair went on to become the major shareholder in more than a dozen railroad companies, and ultimately acquired nearly two million acres for railroad and land development across the country.

In 1911, the DL&W opened the Lackawanna Cut-Off, an engineering marvel built using large cuts and fills and two large concrete viaducts, allowing unobstructed high-speed rail travel from Port Morris to the Delaware Water Gap.

At one time, Phillipsburg was the crossroads for five railroads, each with its own freight yard and maintenance facility in the town. Also, one heavy manufacturing plant employed up to 4,500 people and provided a great deal of machinery to the World War II effort.

## Oxford Furnace

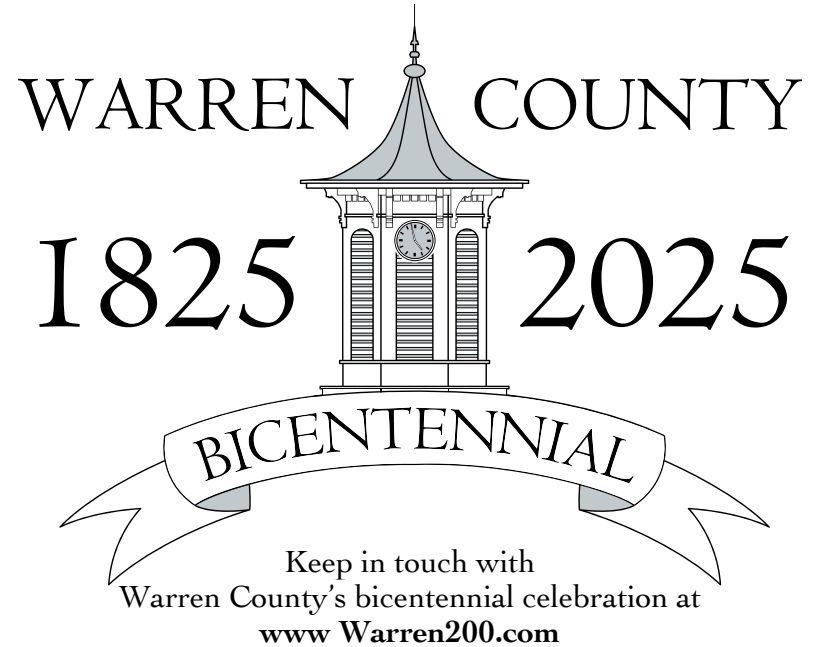
In c. 1741, Jonathan Robeson (1690-1766), who was recruited by landowner Joseph Shippen of Philadelphia, began to build the Oxford Furnace due to the accessibility to local iron mines. The first pig iron was turned out on March 9, 1743 and weekly production ranged from 13 to 15 tons. Robeson later sold his interests to brothers Joseph Shippen, Jr. and Dr. William Shippen, Sr. Shippen Manor, the home of the iron master, was constructed c. 1754 and still stands today, serving as a county museum and the location of historical and cultural programming.

In 1834, William Henry III (1794-1878) leased the furnace property, including Shippen Manor. According to his Journal ("Historical Memoranda"), Henry "rebuilt the stack in part, the entire bridge and casting houses, coal barns, and some six workmens" between April and August of 1832, after leasing the property. Oxford became the first furnace in the United States to use the "hot blast" process, which increased operations and output. Henry established the Henry Rifle Manufacturing Company in Nazareth, PA on Bushkill Creek (an area now part of Jacobsburg State Park) before coming to Oxford. In 1840, he built the Lackawanna Steel facility with the Scranton brothers, who were his partners, and eventually sons-in-law.

Due to a significant crack within the bosh, the furnace was deemed inoperable and by 1884, it was blasted out for the final time. The remains of the Oxford Furnace complex can be seen on Washington Avenue and Cinder Street.

Over its nearly 200 years of existence, the County of Warren has seen innovations, inventions, major events, and expansion. It remains a great place to live, work, and play. Enriched by nature, entrenched in history, and empowered by community, Warren County continues to be a place to unwind, explore and reconnect. Explore the pages of this calendar and its sampling of some of the historical highlights as Warren County prepares to celebrate its 200th birthday.

*adapted from [www.warrencountynjheritage.com/history/](http://www.warrencountynjheritage.com/history/)*



**This calendar is a project of**

**Warren County Board of County Commissioners**  
Lori Ciesla  
James R. Kern III  
Jason J. Sarnoski

**Warren County Land Preservation Department and its  
Division of Cultural & Heritage Affairs**  
Corey Tierney, Administrator  
Gina Rosseland, Assistant Administrator for Heritage Affairs

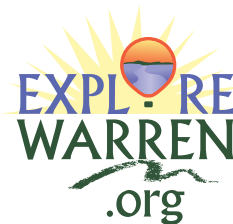
**Warren County Public Information Department and its  
Explore Warren County Tourism Partnership**  
Art Charlton, Director  
Holly Luberto  
Erin Burnett

**Warren County Bicentennial Cultural & Heritage Advisory Board**  
Laurie Rapisardi, Chair  
Charles Fineran; Richard D. Gardner; Randy S. Piazza, Sr.  
Jane Primerano; Karin White; Mark Young

**With important contributions from  
Warren County's many local history organizations**



**WarrenHistoryTrail.org**  
**Save the Dates!**  
**November 2 & 3, 2024**



Calendar graphic production, site descriptions and photographs, except where noted, by Skylands Visitor magazine and website  
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