



ZIMMERMAN CENTER FOR HERITAGE VISITOR INFORMATION

Welcome

The John and Kathryn Zimmerman Center for Heritage in the historic Dritt Mansion is home to the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area, hosts the Visions of the Susquehanna River Art Collection and showcases river history through historical displays, exhibits and programs. The Zimmerman Center also provides public access to and from the river for power, sail and paddle-craft boaters. Visitors may also hike the Native Lands Heritage Trail to Native Lands County Park, which includes paths to the Dritt Family Cemetery and the historic Susquehannock Indian settlement site.



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The grounds of the Zimmerman Center are open to the public dawn to dusk each day. The historic Dritt Mansion and its river art and history exhibits are open to visitors on a seasonal schedule. House tours are also offered on a scheduled basis.

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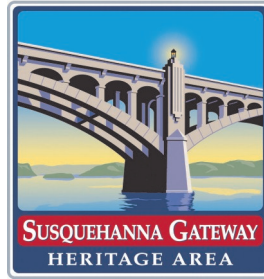
Please visit our website or call us for current visitor hours and tour schedules.:

www.SusquehannaHeritage.org
717-252-0229

Office Hours & Facility Rentals

The Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area's offices at the Zimmerman Center are open for business Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Please call us to schedule an appointment regarding our programs, projects and initiatives along the river.

We invite you to enjoy your next organizational event, corporate meeting or social gathering at the Zimmerman Center. Our facility offers meeting rooms, outdoor patio areas, waterside pavilion, kitchen and scenic river views. Visit our website to learn more.



Our Mission

The Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area is a non-profit organization that connects people to the Susquehanna River and its history as it flows through Lancaster and York Counties in Central Pennsylvania. We enhance regional quality of life and economic vitality through preservation, conservation and interpretation of the river's cultural and natural heritage. We build public awareness and understanding of the river's value to our region, state and nation and help preserve and enhance the river's assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike. Our region has been a designated Pennsylvania Heritage Area since 2001 and we are seeking recognition by Congress as a National Heritage Area.



Explore the Susquehanna's rich heritage at:
www.SusquehannaHeritage.org
Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area
1706 Long Level Road, Wrightsville, PA 17368
info@susquehannaheritage.org / 717-252-0229

State & National Partnerships

The Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area is a member of HeritagePA—Pennsylvania's state-wide network of officially designated Heritage Areas.



As regional advocates in support of common state-wide goals, Heritage Areas preserve and showcase Pennsylvania's cultural and natural resources through conservation, interpretation, community revitalization and tourism. We are also a partner with the National Park Service and its Chesapeake Bay Gateways & Watertrails Network, a multi-state system of heritage sites, parks and water trails where visitors can explore and experience the rich history and treasured landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay and its great rivers.



Susquehanna Heritage Park

The Zimmerman Center for Heritage is part of the Susquehanna Heritage Park system of parks and preserves managed by a coalition of public and non-profit partners. The Susquehanna Heritage Park network also includes Native Lands County Park., Highpoint Scenic Vista & Recreation Area, Wilton Meadows Nature Preserve and Klines Run Park. These sites are showcase attractions in the Susquehanna Riverlands—the ribbon of scenic landscapes, public parklands and historic river towns located at the heart of the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area.



The Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area is supported by private contributions and funding from these community partners:



SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE PARK

THE JOHN & KATHRYN ZIMMERMAN CENTER FOR HERITAGE

VISITOR GUIDE

Featuring the
Visions of the Susquehanna River Art Collection

Published by:





The John & Kathryn Zimmerman Center for Heritage at Historic Pleasant Garden

A Lasting Tribute to Civic Leadership

The John & Kathryn Zimmerman Center for Heritage provides a unique setting for Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area programs and is a lasting tribute to the civic leadership of its namesake donors. For half a century, John and Kathryn Zimmerman committed time and resources to improve the York community. In the late 1990's, they saved this special place from decay and restored the home as a historic jewel on the riverfront.



In 2007, the Zimmermans generously donated the home to the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area to ensure its continued service as a site for preservation and heritage education. In 2014, the Heritage Area completed major enhancements to the site to provide high quality public recreation and heritage facilities, including a waterfront pavilion, floating dock, paddlecraft launch, boardwalk, walking paths, historical displays, improved parking, native landscaping and a rain garden for storm water management.

A Home at the Center of History



This land was valued by Indians and early settlers alike, serving as a crossroads for land and water travel. One of the last known Susquehannock Indian settlements, dating to 1676, was located on the hilltop just behind the Zimmerman Center.

This site also played a significant role in the long-time border dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania. England's King Charles I granted the second Lord Baltimore a charter for Maryland in 1632, with an upper boundary at the 40th parallel, about two miles north of here. William Penn was granted a charter for Pennsylvania by King Charles II in 1681. Since the 40th parallel did not follow a natural feature, the true boundaries of the charters were difficult to define.

European settlers moved into the area during the early 1700s, including John Wright, who established Wright's Ferry a few miles north of here. Marylander Thomas Cresap arrived in 1730 after buying 150-acres along the river (including the site of the Zimmerman Center) which he named "Pleasant Garden". Cresap established a "fort" and the Blew Rock Ferry, and served as a Maryland agent by collecting taxes and remaining loyal to Lord Baltimore.

Pennsylvanians came to despise Cresap as the "Maryland Monster" for his aggressive behavior in dealing with local settlers. Cresap was finally arrested by Pennsylvanians in 1736 and driven out of the area after a series of bloody local skirmishes known as "Cresap's War." King George II intervened and restored general peace to the area in 1737.



Disputes continued until 1750, when the issue was heard before Britain's High Court of Chancery, which decided in favor of Pennsylvania. From 1763 to 1767, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon surveyed Pennsylvania's border with Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Opposition by Native Indians delayed a final resolution until 1784. The new boundary, about 15 miles due south, ran 244 miles west from the Delaware River. It became known as the Mason-Dixon Line and is still marked by colonial boundary stones in some places. This line grew to symbolize the border between North and South and Free states and Slave states.

If Only These Walls Could Talk

The actual construction date of this house is not known, but the 1758 date listed in the National Register of Historic Places is likely incorrect. Historians have dated the house to about 1740, after Thomas Cresap departed. The home's owners have included: John Meyer, Jacob Dritt, Margaret Bonham, Jacob Detwiler, David March, Barton Gnaw, Byrd Leibhart, Kenneth Wallick, and the Zimmermans.

The house is often referred to as the Dritt Mansion, after Jacob Dritt, who lived here from 1783 until he drowned in the river in 1817. Dritt served in the Revolutionary War and became Major General of the Commonwealth Militia. His stone house was both a residence and a place of business.



Dritt was an entrepreneur who engaged in wine and liquor trading, farming, milling and operating a river ferry. He also laid out and sold the original lots for the village of Washington Boro, directly across the river.

Dritt had eleven children with his wife, Maria Elizabeth, and the house remained in the family until 1851. The Dritt Family Cemetery, on the hilltop behind the house, is now part of Native Lands County Park. Jacob Dritt is not buried there, but it is the final resting place of his wife and relatives, with graves dating from 1824 to 1879.

The Pleasant Garden property remained a working farm as late as the 1930s, with a barn south of the main house, various out buildings, and pastures and fields along the river and up the hillsides. The hilltop land was eventually sold off from the house and riverfront grounds after the building of Safe Harbor Dam created Lake Clarke, when the Long Level area became a place for summer homes and water recreation.



History Reconstructed

The home's architectural style reflects both English and German influences. Few changes have been made to the building over time and many original features remain intact, including the four interior fireplaces, doorframes, and the basement's vaulted ceiling. Renovation of the building and the excavation of the grounds uncovered more than 20,000 artifacts, including coins, pottery, glass, hardware, leather, buttons, and prehistoric items. The summer kitchen and beehive oven, most likely torn down in the 19th century, were reconstructed based on uncovered foundation walls and the original hearth bricks from the fireplace.



Our thanks to John Zimmerman, June Evans and Jan Klinedinst for contributing historical information included in this guide.

Visions of the Susquehanna River Art Collection



From its source near Cooperstown, New York, the Susquehanna River flows 444 miles before entering the Chesapeake Bay. Throughout history, the river has been a place of respite and inspiration—especially for America's artists.

In 2006, York County artist Rob Evans curated a travelling exhibit of historical and contemporary river art—*Visions of the Susquehanna: 250 Years of Paintings by American Masters*.

The exhibit examined the rich tapestry of Susquehanna River art created by the great number of renowned artists, past and present, who have been attracted to this waterway. When the exhibit ended in 2008, Rob Evans worked with the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area to acquire key contemporary pieces and create the first-ever permanent collection of Susquehanna River art. Funding was provided by Pennsylvania's Heritage Area Program and private donors. Since the original exhibit opened for public viewing at the Zimmerman Center, additional contemporary and historic pieces have been added to the collection with generous private contributions.



Visions of the Susquehanna helps interpret the scenic beauty, natural wonder, and rich history of the river for current and future generations. There are more than a dozen permanent works and several loaned paintings on display. Among the featured artwork are pieces by acclaimed local artists Michael Allen, Rob Evans, Mark Innerst, Phylis Koster, Carol Oldenburg, Robert Patierno and Mark Workman.

