

14. Adam Mensch Grist Mill

Adam Mensch (1787-1874) built the large stone grist mill in 1822. The grist mill was in continuous use by three generations of the Mensch family until this 43 acre property was sold by Adam L. Mensch (1846-1930) to the Trustees of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church in the U.S., Inc. in 1928 and is a church campsite today.

15. Adam Mensch Farmhouse

The Mensch family home was located next to the grist mill on the hillside which overlooked the mill dam. It was constructed of native stone in an L-shaped floor plan. This farmhouse today is the camp office.



Continue on Mensch Mill Road to the 7.1 mile marker and turn right onto Dale Road to the 7.45 mile marker. Turn right onto Airport Road and travel to the 7.85 mile marker. On your right are lime kilns.

16. Trollinger Lime Kilns

These lime kilns are located on the farm owned by Johannes and Peter Trollinger during the mid to late 1800s. The lime kilns were used to burn limestone, dug locally, in order to produce lime that was spread on the fields to control acidity and enhance the growth of crops. Lime was also used in the preparation of "whitewash" for painting and making plaster and mortar used in construction. These latter two materials replaced the common use of mud, horsehair, and lime that is commonly found in early homes as the foundation for a thin skin of whitewash paint on interior walls and ceilings.

Turn around in the driveway at the entrance to the Inn at Bally Springs and go back on Airport Road to Dale Road to the 8.25 mile marker. Turn right on Dale Road and travel to the 8.65 mile marker. Turn left on Dairy Lane. Drive to the 9.85 mile marker to a stop sign at the intersection with Huff's Church Road. Turn right on Huff's Church Road and drive to the 10.85 mile marker and turn left on Captain Wolfe Road, an unimproved road. Continue to the 11.85 mile marker (the road then is improved name changes to Kriebel Road) and continue to the 12.7 mile marker. On your left is an early farmstead with numerous outbuildings and pond.

17. Israel Kriebel Farmhouse

This farmhouse was constructed in the 18th century by the Griesemer family. Israel Kriebel (1790-1860) owned and lived on this property with his family during the mid 1800s. Numerous outbuildings including a huge barn fill this area near the house. A source of pure spring water was utilized for a trout hatchery in former times. It remained under Kriebel ownership until only recently.

Continue on Kriebel Road to the 12.85 mile marker. On the S-curve, on the left side, is a stone mill.

18. Kriebel's Oil and Grist Mill

In 1837, Israel Kriebel (1790-1860) built a mill on the corner of Kriebel Road and Route 100. Over the years, the mill processed flaxseed for linseed oil, gypsum for soil improvement, and grains for human as well as animal consumption. Water power was used to turn a wheel near the mill's roof, which in place turned a cable extending from the mill to the Israel Kriebel barn where it supplied power for agricultural machinery.

Continue to the intersection of Kriebel's Road with Route 100. Turn left onto Route 100 and travel to the 13.25 mile marker, reaching the intersection of Routes 29 and 100.

THIS CONCLUDES THE TOUR



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"Back-A-Ways", Watercolor
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Hereford Township



Self-guided Tour

Tour #6

of a series of 7 tours



Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center
Pennsburg, Pennsylvania

Hereford Township Self-Guided Tour

WE ASK THAT YOU RESPECT THE PRIVACY OF THE OWNERS OF THE TOUR SITES BY REMAINING ON SIDEWALKS OR ROADWAYS WHEN VIEWING THE SITES, UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED.

Introduction

Berks County was established in March 1752 and Hereford Township was established on February 1, 1753. In 1840, Hereford Township was reduced to its present boundary with the formation of Washington Township from the southern half of the township and part of Colebrookdale Township. Prosperity came to this township in its early days for several reasons. The primarily German emigration from 1730-1770 brought a sturdy, hardworking population. The establishment of the early iron industry by Thomas Mayburry in the early 1730s brought an important industry. And lastly, prosperity came through farming and all of the associated occupations required to support this community. Village communities developed in Chapel, Clayton, Huff's Church, Seisholtzville, Harlem, and Hereford.

A driving tour of Hereford Township will provide you with examples of various styles of architecture and building use forms. Picture yourself as a participant in the day-to day activities of the people who lived here in former times.

The starting point for the tour of Hereford Township begins in the village of Hereford at the traffic - light intersection of Routes 29 and 100. Set your trip odometer at 0.0 miles. Continuous mileage notations are provided to identify each place of interest.

Begin driving on Seisholtzville Road at this intersection. The first two buildings of interest are in the village of Hereford at the intersection of Old Route 100 and Seisholtzville Road at the 0.1 mile marker.

1. Hereford Country Store and Post Office

This building was constructed in the 1860s by Manassas Treichler. It served as the General Store and Post Office from that time until 1961 when operations were discontinued. Postal service was established in this village, then known as Treichlersville, beginning on March 6, 1830, with Jacob Hillegas as postmaster. The general store served not only the villagers, but also the surrounding area of farms and businesses. Rural lore tells of a pot-bellied stove in the middle of the store as a gathering point for the locals after the daily chores were completed.

2. Hereford Hotel

The hotel was built by Samuel Treichler around 1830 and was originally known as the Sands Springs Hotel. The location at the junction of two turnpikes provided an ideal opportunity for business during the horse and buggy and the horseless carriage days. The most notable proprietor was Augustus D. Spaar, owner from about 1912 to the early 1950s. Numerous events, such as pork and sauerkraut suppers, cattle and pig auctions, national and local holiday celebrations, and Old Man's Day, plus a museum of old farm and household implements, gave this location a reputation for good food and a gathering place for many varied family activities.



Continue up Seisholtzville Road to the 1.35 mile marker. Turn right onto Deer Hill Road. When you reach the intersection at the bottom of the hill, your odometer reading is 1.7 miles. Proceed on the second road from the left Township Road. This road turns to an "unimproved surface". At the odometer reading of 2.1 miles, you will see a pointed stone farmhouse on the right.

3. Gehman-Marsteller-Heimbach House

The Gehman-Marsteller-Heimbach house on Township Road was built in the early 1800s. The oldest structure is the small stone house that sits in front of the pond. The Georgian-style main house has a central hall entrance. Gable-end chimneys suggest internal gable-end fireplaces, including a walk-in hearth in the kitchen area. A springhouse is located behind the main house, where cold running water provided refrigeration during the warm summer months. The remnants of the original stone foundation for the barn and barnyard remain across the road from the house. This house was inhabited by Gehman, Marsteller, and Heimbach families into the 1900s.

Continue on Township Road to the 2.4 mile reading and you will see a large stone barn followed by an early log house on the right.

4. Christopher Gehman Swiss Bank House

The 1763 Swiss Bank house was built by Christopher Gehman, who died in 1772. He fathered 13 children with his two wives, Anna and Magdalena. The first floor level was constructed of stone and the second floor level of logs, originally covered with German siding. The house was heated by three stone fireplaces, including a walk-in fireplace for cooking. The original farmstead was patented in 1740 and covered 300 acres. This site was the location of the largest applejack distillery in the area. The liquor was taken by horse and wagon to Philadelphia where it was sold for 25 cents a gallon. The property remained with Gehman family descendants until 1945.

At the 2.5 mile marker, another pointed stone farmhouse is situated on the right side of the road.

5. John and Lydia Gehman Farmhouse

Johannes Gehman (1804-1876) and Lydia (Moyer) Gehman (1814-1886) built this farmhouse in 1856 along with the barn, and other outbuildings on Township Road. This farm was divided from the original Christopher Gehman tract of 300 acres. A date stone can be seen on the second floor level between two of the windows.

Continue on Township Road, bearing to the left to the intersection with Seisholtzville Road where you should have an odometer reading of about 3.2 miles. Turn left on Seisholtzville Road. Travel to an odometer reading of 3.6 miles. Turn right onto Old Mill Road. An early log house sits on the right at the 3.65 mile marker.

6. Gregory Log House

The Gregory log house was probably built sometime during the mid to late 1700s by a member of the Gregory family, one of the earliest families in Hereford Township. The recent removal of the German siding exposed the original log structure. It provides a visual representation of the appearance of this house shortly after construction in the 1700s. Note the notched ends of the logs and structure of the corners of the building. The walls of the house were sealed by the insertion of stones and mortar between the logs.

Continue on Old Mill Road to the 4.15 mile marker and on the left is an old stone house, perhaps the earliest stone house in Hereford Township.

7. Richard Gregory House

Richard Gregory (1685-1765) built this medieval-style house of native stone with a Germanic floor plan around 1740. The roof was pitched at a steep angle for good water drainage. The sharply-sloped roof had enough space beneath it to build two attic floor levels. Two windows in the gable end admitted daylight one for the lower attic and another above it for the upper attic. Doors and windows have stone-arched window lintels. A huge walk-in fireplace, as evidenced by the central chimney on the roof, was used for cooking. Family lore states that logs were dragged by a horse through facing doors and rolled into this fireplace with the horse exiting the door on the opposite side of the room. Grooves worn in the floor provide evidence of this anecdote. The Gregory family owned the house until 1866 when Samuel Gregory died.



Continue on Old Mill Road until you reach the stop sign at the intersection with Hunter Forge Road at the 4.95 mile marker. Turn left and travel to the 5.75 mile marker at the stop sign at the intersection with Huff's Church Road. You are in the center of the village of Huff's Church.

8. Daniel Bechtel House, Huff's Church Village

Daniel R. Bechtel (1846-1915) built this large Victorian brick house in 1890 for \$12,000 on the corner of Hunter Forge and Huff's Church Roads. Decorative wooden shingles were used for siding on the wall under the pitched, third floor roof. The stained-glass windows were original to the structure.

9. Huff's Church Hotel

Samuel Bittenbender built the present stone building, known as the Huff's Church Hotel, replacing an early 1800s structure. There were ten rooms for guests on the second floor and an additional four rooms in the attic. Hitching posts remain in front of the hotel. The early 1800s structure was known as Hoof's Tavern and was owned by George Hoof, later Huff, a descendant of the early Huff families who inhabited the village and surrounding area. The Reitnauer family operated a general store and ice cream parlor in the same building in the 1930s and provided space in the second story of the wagon shed for weekend entertainment for the local inhabitants.



10. Huff's Church General Store/Post Office

The Huff's Church General Store was built in two time periods. The original two sections, the current center section and the westernmost section (living quarters) were constructed by Milton M. Gery in 1871. He opened the general store and was appointed postmaster on March 2, 1874. In the early 1900s, the easternmost section of the building was added.



Daniel R. Bechtel (1846-1915) and his wife, Sally Ann (Bittenbender) Bechtel (1850-1934) were the proprietors of the General Store in Huff's Church from 1876 until about 1920. Daniel R. Bechtel was the postmaster in Huff's Church from 1876 until 1890. The post office closed forever on October 31, 1906. The Pilgert family operated the general store for two generations from about 1920 until 1985.

Turn right onto Huff's Church Road for a distance to the 5.85 mile marker. On the right side is the one - room school house for this area.

11. Huff's Church Schoolhouse

The Huff's Church Schoolhouse, built in 1878, was at least the second building constructed on this site for the education of the local youth. The land was originally given by Frederick Huff for the building of a school in the early 1800s. It is one of the best examples of a brick schoolhouse in Berks County. After 1956, the schoolhouse was no longer used for public education.

Turn left onto Conrad Road. On your immediate right is Huff's Church at the 5.95 mile marker.

12. Huff's Church

The history of Huff's Church predates the present structure that was built in 1881. The foundation was constructed of stone from the 1814 church. The cornerstone was laid on June 5, 1881 over the old cornerstone dated May 30, 1814. The 1852 pipe organ, built by George Krauss of Palm, was installed in this building after construction was completed. The bell tower housed a 2200 pound bell. A concern regarding deterioration of the original church steeple resulted in its removal in 1924. The current steeple was installed sometime after 1956.

The cemetery contains over 200 interments that were made prior to 1815. These graves are identified by unmarked fieldstone markers.



Continue on Conrad Road to the 6.55 mile marker and turn left onto Mensch Mill Road. At the 5.4 mile marker you have reached the site of the Hereford Furnace and Camp Mensch Mill.

13. Hereford Furnace Historical Site

The Camp Mensch Mill property was the site of the Hereford Furnace, Thomas Mayburry's iron furnace operation started in the early 1730s. This furnace is credited with the production of the first ten-plate cook stove in America. In 1915, the Historical Society of Berks County placed a granite monument in the form of a replica of that stove on what was believed to be the actual site of the furnace.

This project of the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Upper Perk Downtown supports these series of tours.

