Preserving the Past for the Future

The State Museum of Pennsylvania

Archaeologists preserve the past and educate about the role of archaeology in preserving our heritage. The State Museum of Pennsylvania's Archaeology and Anthropology Gallery, Harrisburg, focuses on the cultural heritage of Pennsylvanians. Visitors can explore almost 16,000 years of human occupation from Native American prehistory through European colonization. The museum is also the official repository for state and federal archaeological investigations and curates these collections for future generations.

Preserving Archaeology

Archaeology enhances and enriches all our lives, but prehistoric and historic sites are non-renewable resources. Unfortunately, sites are ruined on a daily basis due to development and urban sprawl. When a site is destroyed, information about the past is lost forever. Because unrecorded archaeological sites are those most often destroyed, every effort must be made to locate, evaluate, and record their content for the future, before a development project is undertaken. If you know of locations where artifacts have been found and wish to assist with the preservation of archaeological sites, we encourage you to record these locations with the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS).

We also encourage you to donate your collections. These artifacts represent our connection to the past and should be preserved. Information, recording forms, instructions, and additional resources about Pennsylvania archaeology can be obtained at:

- www.paarchaeology.state.pa.us
- www.pennsylvaniaarchaeology.com
- www.phmc.state.pa.us
- http://twipa.blogspot.com

Pennsylvania Trails of History™

In Pennsylvania, all roads lead to history.

To help find your path, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) has blazed several special-interest trails leading to some of Pennsylvania's most historic sites. We invite you to explore one site at a time, travel an entire trail, or create your own road-trip to Pennsylvania's past. No matter whether you choose one of our classic trails, a trail based on PHMC's annual themes, or if you blaze your own, we're sure it will lead you to experience and embrace the people, places, and events that make Pennsylvania so special.

Begin your journey online at
www.PATrailsofHistory.com

Also, visit these featured sites online:
Drake Well Museum: **www.drakewell.org**
Eckley Miners' Village: **www.eckleyminers.org**
Ephrata Cloister: **www.ephratacloister.org**
Graeme Park: **www.ushistory.org/graeme**
Old Economy Village: **www.oldeconomyvillage.org**
The State Museum of Pennsylvania:
www.statemuseumpa.org

Pennsylvania
Historical & Museum
Commission

Edward G. Rendell, Governor
Wayne Spilove, Chairman
Barbara Franco, Executive Director

Contributor
Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, Inc.

12/09

Archaeology through the Pennsylvania Trails of History™

Ephrata Cloister

Glass trumpet excavated at Ephrata Cloister, Lancaster County

ARCHAEOLOGY through the Pennsylvania Trails of History™

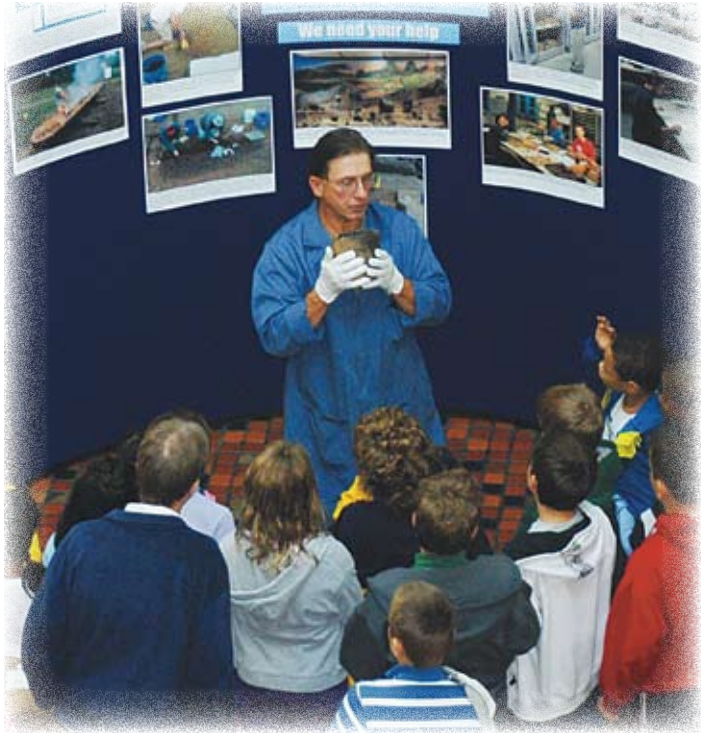
The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) is the official history agency for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In this capacity, PHMC covers the gamut of prehistory and history in its role to investigate and educate the public about the archaeology of Pennsylvania. In conjunction with its archaeological programs, PHMC also explores many of its own historic sites throughout Pennsylvania. PHMC-administered sites such as Ephrata Cloister, Drake Well Museum, Old Economy Village, Graeme Park, and Eckley Miners' Village are not only known as public destinations to learn about the Commonwealth's history; for many years, they have also been destinations for archaeologists to discover Pennsylvania prehistory and history.

Before embarking on this trail of Pennsylvania archaeology, let's unearth what is archaeology, why it's important, and what it means to us.

WHAT is archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of past human behavior through the systematic recovery and analysis of material remains or objects. These objects, called artifacts, can be as small as a button or as large as a building. Either large or small, they are the evidence of past cultures. These artifacts are proof of those before us and serve as a physical connection to our past.

Archaeology is divided into prehistoric and historical archaeology. Prehistoric archaeology is the study of cultures that did not have a written language. Although prehistoric peoples did not write about their culture, they left remains such as tools, pottery, ceremonial objects, and dietary refuse. Historical archaeology studies the remains of cultures for which a written history exists. Historical archaeology examines records from the past that include diaries; court, census, and tax records; deeds; maps; and photographs. Through combining the use of documentation and archaeological evidence, archaeologists gain a better understanding of the past and human behavior.



WHY is archaeology important?

The goal of archaeology is to understand how and why human behavior has changed over time. Archaeologists search for patterns in the evolution of significant cultural events such as the development of farming, the emergence of cities, or the collapse of major civilizations for clues of why these events occurred. Ultimately, they are searching for ways to better predict how cultures will change, including our own, and how to better plan for the future.

Archaeology is not only the study of these broad issues but also provides a history and heritage to many cultures. Nothing would be known of the cultural developments of prehistoric peoples if it were not for archaeology. Additionally, archaeology paints a picture of everyday life for groups such as slaves, coal miners, and other early immigrant workers who were poorly documented by historians.

Today, our culture seems to document everything through books, newspapers, television, and the Internet. However, there is frequently a difference between what is written and what people actually do. Modern media often puts a "spin" on a story that reflects an editorial bias on what has taken place. Although the written record may be tremendously useful, it is biased by the beliefs and mistakes of those who produced them. Archaeology frequently provides a more objective account of our past than the historic record alone.

Our past is our cultural heritage, and how we choose to use this information for future generations is an important role for archaeologists. Understanding patterns and changes in human behavior enhances our knowledge of the past. It aids us in planning, not only our future, but for generations to come. Many people believe that public archaeology is critical to understanding, protecting, and celebrating our rich and diverse cultural heritage. Archaeologists recognize the importance of this role and are developing various mechanisms of media outreach, publications, Internet, and public programs, to publicize the contributions of archaeology.

HOW do archaeologists examine the past?

Archaeological sites are evidence of human activity often associated with concentrations of artifacts. Excavation of archaeological sites is a destructive process requiring systematic removal of soils and artifacts. Archaeological sites are similar to research laboratories where data is collected, recorded, and analyzed. Controlled excavation and mapping of information relative to the soil layers and the artifacts associated with each layer allows archaeologists to search for patterns in past human behavior. They study these patterns and changes in human behavior over long periods of time, as evidenced in the artifacts. The combination of analysis of activities only present in the soil, such as the stains left by cooking, and the artifacts recovered, survive as the archaeological record of a site.

ARCHAEOLOGY through the Pennsylvania Trails of History™

MILITARY HISTORY TRAIL
1 Erie Maritime Museum and the Flagship *Niagara*
2 Fort Pitt Museum
3 Bushy Run Battlefield
4 Pennsylvania Military Museum
5 Brandywine Battlefield
6 Washington Crossing Historic Park

HISTORIC HOMES TRAIL
7 Joseph Priestley House
8 Conrad Weiser Homestead
9 Hope Lodge
10 Graeme Park
11 Pennsbury Manor

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE TRAIL
12 Drake Well Museum
13 Pennsylvania Lumber Museum
14 Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum
15 Scranton Iron Furnaces
16 Eckley Miners' Village
17 Cornwall Iron Furnace
18 Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

RURAL FARM AND VILLAGE HISTORY TRAIL
19 Old Economy Village
20 Somerset Historical Center
21 Landis Valley Museum
22 Ephrata Cloister
23 Daniel Boone Homestead

24 The State Museum of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania State Archives

WHERE is archaeology?

Archaeology is everywhere. It's all around us. While a nondescript location may appear to be barren, the evidence of a past society and civilization lies just beneath the surface. In alignment with its mission to preserve the state's memory as a teacher and champion its heritage for the citizens of Pennsylvania and the nation, PHMC archaeologists actively lead site investigations and explore some of the historic sites on the PHMC Trails of History™.

22 Ephrata Cloister

Located in Lancaster County, Ephrata Cloister was an eighteenth-century religious communal society founded in 1735 by Conrad Beissel. The biblical name "Ephrata" was selected for the community, because it signified a place of suffering. Members were expected to take vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience, and personal possessions were not permitted.

Ephrata Cloister

Extensive archaeology between 1993 and 2003 located several structures, including the first communal dormitory and prayer house and the Mount Zion prayer house. The archaeology at this site was particularly significant because it demonstrated several inconsistencies in the written record. Most prominent of these was the vow of poverty and the rule prohibiting personal possessions. The quality of food was high compared to other sites of this time period, which was demonstrated archaeologically in the butchered bone refuse. Examples of personal possessions in the form of pottery with initials carved on the bottom and the discovery of a glass trumpet contradicted the historical documentation. These examples illustrate the biases in the historic documentation and the reality of the archaeological record.

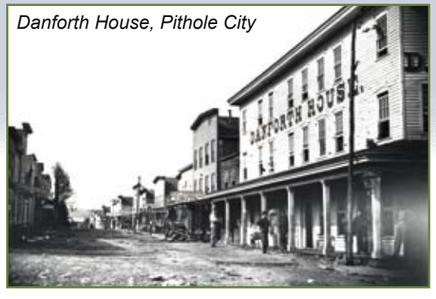
19 Old Economy Village

Home to the Christian communal group Harmony Society, Old Economy Village, Beaver County, was established in 1824. Members left Germany seeking religious and economic freedoms. A central philosophy of the society was the expectation of Christ's return in the Millennium and their desire for a "divine economy."

Both of these concepts are reflected in the layout of Old Economy Village and the gardens established by the Society. Gardens were planned in four sections that consisted of vineyards, a Grotto (a stone structure for meditation and retreat), fruit trees, flower beds, a central area for a pond, and a pavilion with fountain.

Old Economy Village

Archaeology combined with historic documentation has provided this site with valuable information for the restoration of the garden. Archaeologists identified the original planting methods for the vineyards, which were concentric planting patterns for the gardens, rather than the radiating ray pattern depicted in the historic interpretation. A brick-lined root cellar located within the foundation of a shed/cow barn, produced examples of dishes and glassware. These tablewares help to paint a picture of the values and lifeways of the Harmonist culture.


Danforth House, Pithole City

12 Drake Well Museum

Long before organized drilling for oil began in Venango County, archaeological evidence demonstrates that Native Americans were harvesting oil in wood-lined pits. Radiocarbon dating conducted on wood recovered from these pits finally answered the question as to who had created the thousands of pits observed by European settlers. Initial archaeological testing revealed that as early as 1410 A.D., native peoples were utilizing oil for medicinal purposes. Additionally, European settlers skimmed the oil from the seeps and used the petroleum as a source of lamp fuel and machinery lubrication.

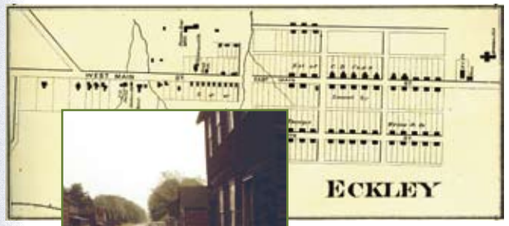
Graeme Park, summer kitchen

In 1859, Edwin L. Drake (1819–1880) successfully drilled an oil well at Titusville, Venango County and launched the modern oil industry. Almost overnight, towns sprang up, and in 1865, Pithole City, the largest oil boomtown in America, was settled. At it's peak, Pithole's population rose to over 15,000. Plagued by fires and the discovery of new wells elsewhere, the population declined to 281 by 1870. The archaeology at this site documents a fleeting moment in recorded history that would have otherwise been lost. Excavations of foundations provide a window into the daily lives of a boomtown which existed for only five years.

10 Graeme Park

Graeme Park is located in Horsham, Montgomery County, a suburb of Philadelphia. Keith House, the only existing home of a colonial Pennsylvania Governor, was constructed about 1722 by Sir William Keith. It was purchased in 1739 as a summer residence by Dr. Thomas Graeme for entertaining prominent guests of Philadelphia society. The stone exterior construction prevented significant changes, but Graeme upgraded the interior of the home to a level more appropriate of his social status. Among the archaeological remains were imported delft tiles which reflect the social economic status of the property.

Archaeological investigations conducted since 1958 were instrumental in reconstructing the Graeme's kitchen. Also located were historically documented formal gardens, a cobblestone road, and a smokehouse. Excavations in the formal gardens revealed brick walkways and stone perimeter walls. The sparse number of artifacts suggests meticulous care of the gardens, since few ceramics were found. This is an example of patterning of human behavior that archaeologists observe in cultures over long periods of time.



1873 Eckley Village map by D.G. Beers

Eckley Miners' Village

16 Eckley Miners' Village

The village of Eckley, Luzerne County was established in 1854 to provide housing for coal miners working in the nearby Council Ridge Colliery and their families. Referred to as a company town, the homes, schools, and churches were all company owned. The town was planned according to a pattern of social status based on a person's position within the mining operation. Lots on the west end of town were reserved for superintendents, foremen, and professionals. The location of the three churches similarly reflected cultural and economic segregation of the town. The Catholic church was located on the eastern end of town, closest to miners of Irish heritage and lower-class positions. The Episcopal and Presbyterian churches were on the western end of town where residents were generally of English, German, and Welsh heritage.

Social patterning enables archaeologists to compare the household inventories for evidence of a person's or family's status through the artifacts. By utilizing historic documentation and oral histories, archaeologists begin to pattern the past through the remains of this early industrial community. This archaeological research provides a voice for these under documented peoples.