

HERITAGE PASSPORT

to BLAIR COUNTY
P E N N S Y L V A N I A

The Guide to Regional History



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The Guide to Regional History



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Penn State Altoona's
Community-Based Project Grant
2017

Acknowledgements



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Also worthy of recognition are all of those who operate the sites included in this booklet. Their willingness to participate in this experiment speaks of their enthusiasm to share the rich stories of regional history with broad audiences. This project is dedicated to them.

Please send your feedback regarding this book to me at:
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Penn State Altoona - 3000 Ivyside Park, Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-5531 - jtf5039@psu.edu

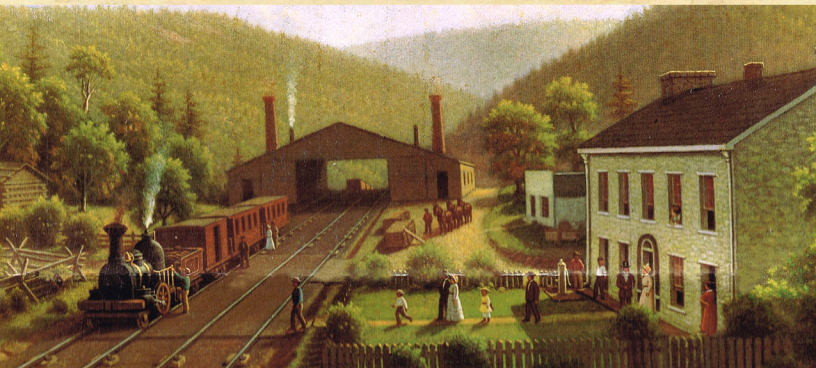
Your Gateway to the Past



The Heritage Passport serves a number of useful purposes for curious and adventurous visitors. Inspired in part by the wildly successful National Parks Passport of a similar nature, this booklet seeks to connect travelers to the dramatic stories, people, events, and places that profoundly shaped local and national history.

This passport conveys the stories of seventeen unique sites in the Blair County, Pennsylvania area. While this is hardly a comprehensive directory of all historic landmarks in the region, the locations included are able to offer context with exhibits, guided tours, and educational programming. Each site listed has its own stamp so one can mark the respective page upon visitation. Passport participants are also encouraged to become engaged with the sites via opinion and trivia-based questions scattered throughout these pages. Each location featured in this book has different hours and seasons of operation. Some sites are free of charge while others require paid admission. Please check the websites or call each landmark to inquire about hours and fees before visiting.

As an extra incentive for visitors, we are pleased to partner with Altoona Curve Baseball—our local affiliate team of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Please see the last page of this booklet to learn how you can attain free game tickets and prizes by completing this book! We hope you enjoy the adventure that awaits!



Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site

Opened in 1834, the Allegheny Portage Railroad was the finishing piece to the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and the first direct route between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Visitors are able to tour an engine house, the Skew Arch Bridge, and the historic Lemon House tavern—an 1800s travelers' rest.

110 Federal Park Road - Gallitzin, PA 16641

(814) 886-6150 - www.nps.gov/alpo

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What famous people traveled on this railroad?



Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum

The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum is an interactive museum that showcases the contributions of railroaders to American life and industry. The site includes three floors of colorful exhibits, a movie theater, a gift shop, an archives, and an impressive roundhouse featuring historic trains and cars.

*1300 9th Avenue - Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 946-0834 - www.railroadcity.com*

**Stamp
here!**

Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

How could railroad life be difficult or dangerous?



Baker Mansion History Museum

Baker Mansion, built in 1849, was originally home to ironmaster Elias Baker. Today, it is home of the Blair County Historical Society and features numerous rotating exhibits interpreting compelling aspects of local and national history. One of the most architecturally significant structures in the region, many of the home's furnishings are original to the Baker Family. Picturesque grounds add to the sense of 19th Century grandeur.

*3419 Oak Lane - Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 942-3916 - www.blairhistory.org*

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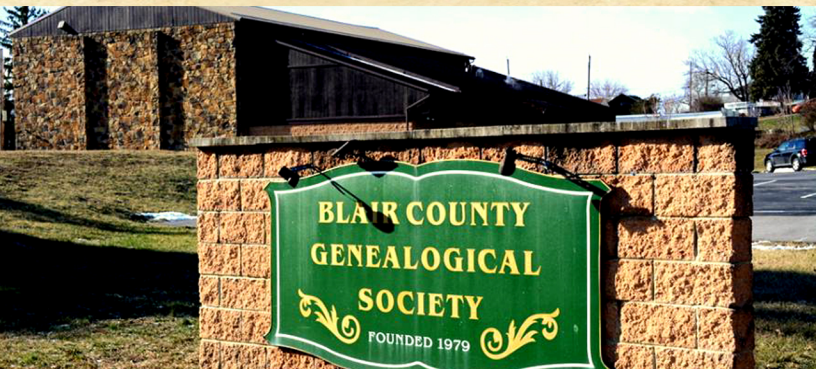
Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

In what ways did the Bakers display their wealth?



Blair County Genealogical Society

The collections of the Blair County Genealogical Society offer family tree researchers a broad array of historical materials including county records; birth, marriage, and death records; newspapers; and more. Considered one of the best research libraries in Pennsylvania, the site hosts workshops, guest lecturers, and a unique bookshop with rare, regional titles.

*431 Scotch Valley Road - Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 696-3492 - www.bcgslibrary.org*

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1 2 3 4 5



Canal Basin Park

In the 1830s and 1840s, Hollidaysburg's Canal Basin was a major terminus for the Pennsylvania Canal. Here, visitors can view a replica of the lock mechanisms and experience life along the canal with the unique exhibits in the Reiser House Visitor Center. Families can also visit a vibrant, historically-themed playground and stroll along the Greenways or Lower Trail. The park is near many shops and restaurants of the historic downtown.

*Park in the lot at Franklin and Bedford Streets -
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648*

(814) 696-4601 - www.blairco.org

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

How did Daugherty's Boats work on the canal?



Canoe Creek State Park

The beautiful, 961-acre Canoe Creek State Park features a 155-acre lake, wetlands, hiking trails, picnic areas, and educational activities. In the early 1900s, surrounding limestone was extracted and used for many purposes, including supplying a raw material for the once-thriving steel industry of Pennsylvania. The Blair Limestone Company Kiln remnants are the focus of historical and interpretive programs and displays.

*205 Canoe Creek Road - Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 695-6807 - www.visitpaparks.com*

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Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What specific species of wildlife live at the park?



Everett Railroad Company

Enjoy the sights and sounds of old-time steam-powered railroading on nostalgic rides through the Pennsylvania countryside. Departing from the depot in Hollidaysburg, the Everett Railroad operates a variety of excursions throughout the year, including specialty trains for holidays and other observances. Visit the railroad's website for a full listing of excursion tours.

Depot: 244 Loop Road - Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

*Offices: 424 Second Avenue - Duncansville, PA 16635
(814) 696-3877 - www.everettrailroad.com/ride*

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

Why was the Everett Railroad first established?



Fort Roberdeau Historic Site

Walk in the footsteps of Revolutionary War soldiers on the grounds of Fort Roberdeau, a frontier outpost. Originally built in 1778, the fort was constructed to safeguard settlers and nearby lead mining operations to support George Washington's army. The site features a fully reconstructed fort, an historic farmhouse, nature trails, and a charming gift shop. A full calendar of annual events includes the Star Spangled 4th and Revolutionary War Days, a featured reenactment in July.

383 Fort Roberdeau Road - Altoona, PA 16601

(814) 946-0048 - www.fortroberdeau.org

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What important work did women do on the frontier?



Gardners Candies Museum

Gardners Candies was founded in Tyrone in 1897 by sixteen-year-old James “Pike” Gardner. Before opening a small downtown store, he operated a horse-drawn wagon to sell treats at local fairs and carnivals. Gardners gained fame for being one of the first to create a heart-shaped box for Valentine’s Day candy. Located between the company’s candy store and ice cream parlor, the candy museum highlights both the history of Tyrone and the candy industry.

30 West 10th Street - Tyrone, PA 16686

(814) 684-0857 - www.gardnerscandies.com

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here!**

Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What infamous event happened in Tyrone in 1893?



Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark

An engineering marvel of the Industrial Revolution, completed in 1854 by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the massive 2,375-foot long curve climbs the Allegheny Mountains as a vital rail link between east and west. The site features a museum, visitor center, gift shop, and a majestic scenic overlook.

*2400 Veterans Memorial Highway - Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 941-7743 - www.railroadcity.com*

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

How did Nazi saboteurs threaten the Curve in 1942?



Keirn Family WWII Museum

Located on the campus of Saint Francis University, the museum exhibits a large collection of World War II artifacts from both the battlefield and home front. These artifacts were originally part of the private collection of Command Sergeant Major Joseph Keirn of Altoona. Relics on display include captured enemy items, historic photos, uniforms, and GI gear used on D-Day.

160 Saint Mary's Street - Loretto, PA 15940

(814) 472-0740 - www.francis.edu

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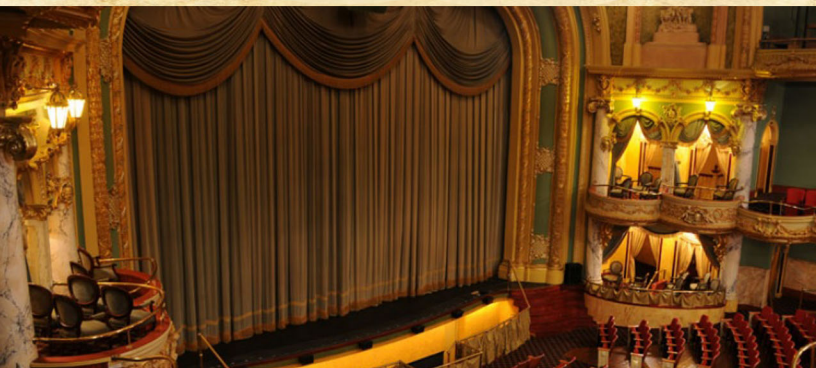
Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What is the story of Staff Sergeant Jack Kuhn?



Mishler Theatre

This elaborate Beaux-Arts theatre in downtown Altoona was built in 1906 and has been renovated continuously since the 1960s. A regular stop on the Vaudeville circuit, the likes of W. C. Fields, Ethel Barrymore, Harry Houdini, and Al Jolson performed there. Featured on the National Register of Historic Places, the ornate venue is host to frequent theatrical, musical, and dance productions by regional and international performers.

*1208 12th Avenue - Altoona, PA 16601
(814) 949-2787 - www.mishlertheatre.org*

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

How was the theatre saved from the wrecking ball?



Quaint Corner Children's Museum & Discovery Center

Located in a grand Victorian Era home, this special museum is dedicated to engaging, hands-on activities for children ages 2-12. The discovery center has three floors and a basement level featuring interactive exhibits on science, art, and more. Youngsters can embark upon adventures in a pirate ship and try on costumes.

2000 Union Avenue - Altoona, PA 16601

(814) 944-6830 - www.quaintcorner.net

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

How big was the family that lived here in the 1890s?



Royer Mansion

Located just outside Williamsburg, the historic Royer Mansion was constructed in 1815. Samuel and Sarah Royer moved into the home in 1821 with the promise of industrial wealth and prestige. For the next 144 years, the stone house served as home to various generations of Royers. Samuel and his brother John were among central Pennsylvania's most prominent ironmasters in the antebellum years. Royer Mansion hosts several events per year and tours are available by appointment.

3909 Piney Creek Road - Williamsburg, PA 16693

(814) 942-3916 - www.blairhistory.org

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What brought an end to the reign of Juniata Iron?



Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art

Located in the historic Brett Building, this modern facility features a vast collection of art designed to promote interest in the humanities. Among the gems of the collection is photography by William H. Rau, an official Pennsylvania Railroad photographer in the late 19th Century. The downtown site is part of the Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art system.

1210 11th Avenue - Altoona, PA 16601

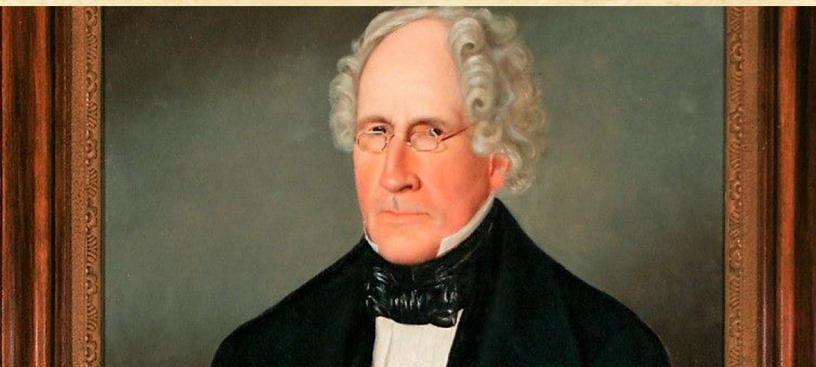
(814) 946-4464 - www.sama-art.org

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

In your own opinion, what is the purpose of art?



Tyrone History Museum

Reminiscent of a classic train depot and built on the site of the town's former Pennsylvania Railroad station (1881-1968), the free museum is located in the Tyrone Rail Park along the Little Juniata River. The museum contains a wide selection of Tyrone-related artifacts, photographs, and vivid displays chronicling a century and a half of regional history. Open Wednesdays and Sundays, 1-4pm. Closed mid-December to mid-April.

850 Pennsylvania Avenue - Tyrone, PA 16686

(814) 684-5141 - www.tyronehistory.org

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Date visited: _____

Rate your experience:

1 2 3 4 5



What we learned or liked most about this place:

What Tyrone native was a famous bandleader, entertainer, and started the WWII Canteens?



The Wall That Heals: Altoona Vietnam War Memorial

In May 1999, a half-scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was exhibited on the grounds of Altoona's Van Zandt VA Medical Center. Locals subsequently purchased the memorial for permanent display. The 58,000 names on the wall include several local service members lost in the conflict. A small visitor center has a memorial directory and displays tributes left at the wall.

*2907 Pleasant Valley Boulevard - Altoona, PA 16602
(814) 943-8164 Ext. 7404 - www.altoona.va.gov*

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What we learned or liked most about this place:

Find Nicholas Cancilla's story at the visitor center:



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“

There are so many career paths with a history degree, from teaching to research and beyond. Our professors are engaging and teach us to apply what we learn. And we have opportunities to learn through travel — like to D.C. and Gettysburg. It's a great major and has taught me so much.



Andrew Culp
History major
Altoona, PA

”

altoona.psu.edu/history

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ADVENTURE AWAITS

Explore the scenic Allegheny Mountains with this unique heritage passport that connects travelers to the dramatic stories, people, and places that profoundly shaped local and national history. The guidebook conveys the stories of seventeen unique sites in the Blair County, Pennsylvania area. Stamp the book, answer trivia, and gain rewards along the way. Embark on your journey to the past!

*This project was made possible by
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*Learn more about the Heritage Passport
with the Blair County Historical Society:
www.blairhistory.org
(814) 942-3916*