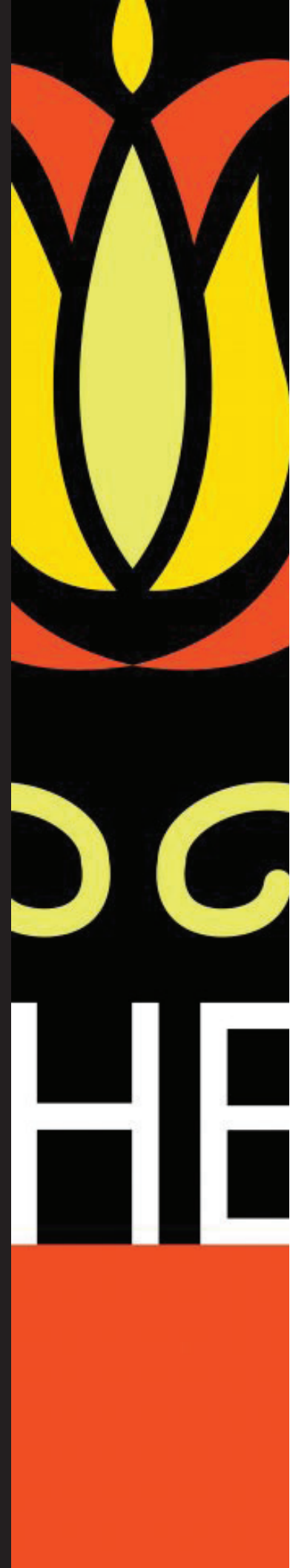# HERITAGE TRAIL

LEBANON COUNTY

Welcome to historic Mt. Gretna!
As you tour the quaint, historic buildings
of Mt. Gretna, imagine what it might have
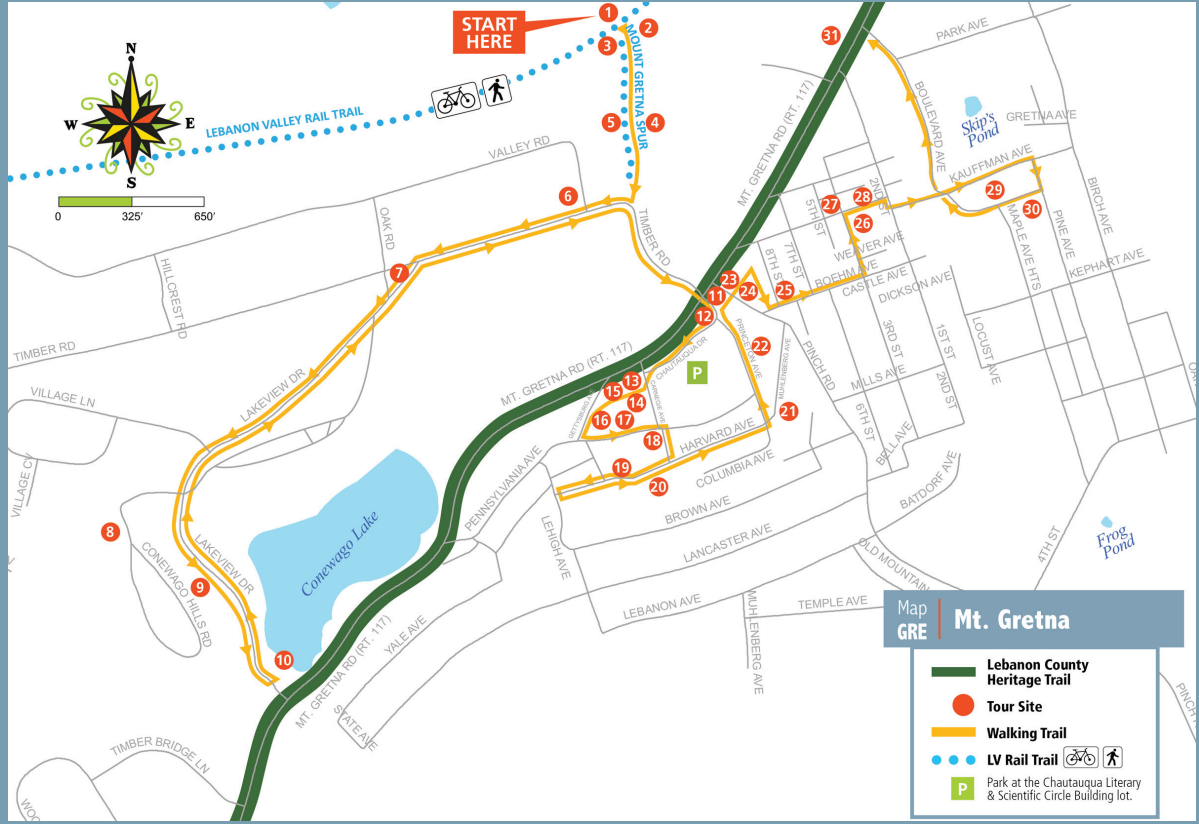been like in the late 1800's.

Nestled in the Conewago Hills, Mt. Gretna was established
in 1883 as a picnic ground near the headwaters of the
Conewago Creek and the newly constructed Cornwall &
Lebanon Railroad (C&LRR). The railroad was built by Robert
Habersham Coleman, great-grandson of iron baron, Robert
Coleman, whose iron producing complex was centered in
Cornwall, PA. Born in 1856, Coleman took controlling interest
in the Coleman empire at age 9. By 1889, he was one of the
wealthiest men in the nation, with wealth estimated at $30
million – more than J.P. Morgan or Vanderbilt.

Mt. Gretna's history developed in sections:

• First, development of Mt. Gretna Park began in 1883, with
  five acres being cleared and numerous springhouses being
  constructed by May 1884.

• In 1885, a large tract was developed for the encampment
  of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

• In 1892, the Chautauqua area was established south of
  Route 117 and west of Pinch Road.

• Also in 1892, the United Brethren Campmeeting area was
  established south of Route 117 and east of Pinch Road.

• In the early 1900's, Abraham Lincoln Kauffman
  established an extensive resort, including the Heights area
  and the since-forgotten Laurel Park.

The Mt.Gretna Tour begins at the original entrance to Mt.
Gretna Park. Parking is available along Timber Road. Walk up
the Mount Gretna Spur to find the kiosk at Site No. 1.

Map GRE | Mt. Gretna

Legend:
- Lebanon County Heritage Trail
- Tour Site
- Walking Trail
- LV Rail Trail
- P — Park at the Chautauqua Literary & Scientific Circle Building lot.

START HERE

LEBANON VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

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1 Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad
North end Timber Rd. Rail Trail Spur

Previously, this was the location of the Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad constructed by Robert Coleman beginning June 1882 and entered into service October 1883. This line led to the creation of Mt. Gretna. It connected Lebanon, Cornwall, Colebrook and Elizabethtown, where it junctioned with the Pennsylvania Railroad. The year placed in service, 1883, was the last year of operation of the outdated Cornwall Iron Furnace. The information kiosk was designed by local architect, Kip Kelly, AIA, and erected in 2006 to mark the Lebanon Valley Rails to Trails. Visit LVRailTrail.com for more info.

2 Mt. Gretna Park Entrance

The Rail Trail Spur you have traveled was the original "Avenue" leading from the Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad (C&LRR) into Mt. Gretna Park. Known as Main Ave., it extends to Rt. 117. The majority of Mt. Gretna Park was located east of Main Ave. By 1891, Mt. Gretna Park featured hot air balloon rides, a carousel, the first roller coaster in PA, a bowling alley, a dancing and skating pavilion, an excursion railroad to Governor Dick, and boating upon nearby Lake Conewago.

3 Foundation of C&LRR Station
Southwest corner Rail Trail & Rail Trail Spur

These are the extensive foundation remnants of the C&LRR station. This station was the entry point for visitors arriving by train to Mt. Gretna Park. This expanded station was erected in 1910. Six sets of track ran concurrently in the vicinity of the current Rail Trail, with an overhead bridge utilized for safe access to the far tracks. This site is obscured by vegetation in the summer.

4 Original Park Fountain
Midway along Timber Rd. Rail Trail Spur

This round sandstone fountain was constructed along Main Ave. in 1888 to greet visitors arriving by train to Mt. Gretna Park.

5 Mt. Gretna Narrow Gauge Railroad
Midway along Timber Rd. Rail Trail Spur

Across Main Avenue from the fountain are remnants of the boarding terminal for the excursion railroad line which skirted the north and west shores of Lake Conewago. It traveled to the summit of Governor Dick where it looped before returning via the same route to this location where it was rotated on a turntable. Service began in 1889. Remnants include portions of the boarding area, turntable pit, and the concrete pylons for the water tank. The water tower itself still exists. It is said to be one of the finest short lines in the country. An accident ended its operation in 1915. This site is obscured by vegetation in the summer.

6 Soldiers Field
Corner of Timber Rd. & Valley Rd.

In 1885, a delegation of the Pennsylvania National Guard (PNG) was invited by Robert Coleman to inspect Mt. Gretna as a possible encampment for its Third Brigade. As a result, General Gobin decided to encamp here beginning in July 1885. This began the clearing of 120 acres originally designated as Camp Sigfried. The camp extended from the west side of Main Ave., approximately one mile along Timber Rd. and Valley Rd. to the current Timber's Restaurant where General Gobin's headquarters were located. The Encampment stretched approximately three miles west to Colebrook. This Camp was the predecessor to the current Ft. Indiantown Gap installation.

It was the military hub of Pennsylvania. It was visited by Civil War General Philip Sheridan in 1887, and President Benjamin Harrison in 1890.

7 16th Pa. Infantry Monument
Corner of Oak Rd. & Timber Rd.

This monument commemorates the mobilization, on this ground, of the 16th Pennsylvania Infantry for the Spanish-American War in 1898, the Mexican Border War in 1916, and World War I in 1917.

8 Conewago Hills Monument
Opposite 7 Conewago Hill Dr.

A prior monument was erected on this spot in 1898 to commemorate the PNG's preparation, at this location, for the Spanish-American War, but was torn down when the Conewago Hotel was constructed nearby in 1908. Due to public outcry, the current replacement monument was constructed in 1909. This monument contains the Maine Memorial Tablet, placed in 1916, made from metal recovered from the Battleship Maine which sunk in Havanna Harbor in 1898, killing 266 and precipitating the Spanish-American War.

9 Conewago Hotel Site
Hillside Northwest of Lake

Immediately above the Lake was the majestic Conewago Hotel, a three-story, 125-bedroom luxury hotel on 15-1/2 acres. Opened in 1909, it was staffed with servants in uniform and chefs from New York. Negatively affected by proliferation of the automobile, the Great Depression, and the PNG relocation to Ft. Indiantown Gap, the Hotel fell vacant in the 1930's and was demolished by 1940. This area is now occupied by the Conewago Hills development.

10 Conewago Lake
Corner of Lake View Dr. and Rt.117

This lake was built in 1885 under the direction of Robert Coleman as a recreational opportunity for those enjoying Mt. Gretna Park.

11 Pennsylvania Chautauqua Entrance
Corner of Princeton Ave. & Rt. 117

In 1892, a charter was granted to The Pennsylvania Chautauqua which arose from the Chautauqua movement which began in 1874 at Lake Chautauqua, New York. Chautauqua programs were then being established throughout the country for literary and scientific attainment and promotion of Christianity. The Pennsylvania Chautauqua secured 47 acres west of Pinch Rd. from Robert Coleman. This site was its primary entrance marked by two stone pillars erected in 1904. This entrance is directly across from Timber Rd., which was the southern extension of Main Ave. which led into the heart of Mt. Gretna Park. The Pennsylvania Chautauqua Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.

12 Mt. Gretna Post Office. 101 Princeton Ave.

The Chautauqua's second Post Office was erected in 1906.

13 Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle Building, 1 Carnegie Ave.

Currently a gift shop known as the Emporium, this building was built in Greek style for the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle which was a program of prescribed readings. Between WWI and WWII, this building was the Oriental Shop, selling items from the Far East which adorned many Chautauqua cottages.

14 Chautauqua Post Office
Carnegie Ave. Footpath

Now the Visitor Information Center, this served as the original post office for the July 1892 Chautauqua opening. It was converted to a bookstore in 1906 when the current post office was constructed. Mt. Gretna's first postmaster was John Mease, appointed July 1899.

15 The Jigger Shop, 202 Gettysburg Ave.

Erected before 1900, in the early days it was known as Meyer's Pavilion. It has been an ice cream parlor since before 1910.

16 Hall of Philosophy, Corner of Gettysburg Ave. & Pennsylvania Ave.

Erected in 1909 and designed in Greek style, this building replaced the Sarah Tyson Rorer Hall of Cookery. Rorer, who resided in Chautauqua, was the Ladies Home Journal domestic science editor and widely known as The Nation's Cooking Teacher.

17 Pennsylvania Ave. Cottages
17 Pennsylvania Ave. from Lehigh to Princeton

This contains lots 29-43 of the original Chautauqua community. Most, if not all, were constructed between 1892 and 1897.

18 Mt. Gretna Playhouse
200 Pennsylvania Ave.

Originally, the Chautauqua Auditorium, this location held the first Chautauqua gathering in July 1892. The north side of this structure originally included numerous classrooms. Designed by John Cilley who grew up near the Colebrook Iron Furnace and survived the intense fighting of the Civil War. In 1927, the Chautauqua consulted with A. E. Scott, of Lancaster's Fulton Theater, after which a stage and dressing rooms were added, commencing Mt. Gretna's summer theater which continues to this date.

19 John Cilley Cottage, 207 Harvard Ave.

This home was designed by John Cilley who also designed the neighboring Chautauqua Auditorium, the Tabernacle in the neighboring campmeeting, numerous Chautauqua cottages, and the Chautauqua Inn. This cottage served as Cilley's home. The Chautauqua Inn, built in 1898, and demolished in 1970, was located on the site of the large parking lot along Route 117.

20 Harvard Ave. Cottages
Harvard Ave. from Lehigh to Princeton

This includes lots 44-69 of the original Chautauqua. Most constructed between 1892 and 1897.

21 Hermann Cottage, 14 Muhlenberg Ave.

This was constructed by Adolph Hermann of New York, and designed by Abner Ritcher who also designed the Conewago Hotel. It was erected in 1903 as the largest private residence in Mt. Gretna. Between 1892 and 1903 this lot contained Terrace Hall, the original men's dormitory for early Chautauqua gatherings. Later, Terrace Hall served as a hospital.

22 Princeton Ave. Cottages
Princeton Ave. from Harvard to Rt. 117

This includes lots 2-11 of the original Chautauqua. Cottages were constructed on these lots between 1892 and 1897. Unfortunately, the first six cottages closest to Route 117, including Postmaster Mease's cottage, were destroyed, then reconstructed, as a result of one of Mt. Gretna's largest fires in 1922.

23 Mt. Gretna Campmeeting Entrance
Southeast corner of Pinch Rd. & Rt. 117

The primary entrance to the 30-acre United Brethren Campmeeting tract was located east of Pinch Road. This tract was secured by the Campmeeting from Robert Coleman in 1891. It was originally called the Pine Swamp due to the large number of pine trees and springs. Over 100 cottages existed by 1892. It was intended as a place to worship God and escape "the worldly element." Bible conferences often brought over 10,000 attendees. Most east-west streets were named for Bishops of the United Brethren Church. The Mt. Gretna Campmeeting Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.

24 Campmeeting Firehouse
Southeast corner of Pinch Rd. & Rt. 117

This firehouse is now used as the Mt. Gretna Library. Initially it was located at 4th & Boehm Streets and later moved to this location.

25 Boehm Ave.

The street named for William Boehm (1725-1812), one of the founders of the United Brethren Church, from which the Campmeeting movement arose.

26 Campmeeting Tabernacle
Third St. & Glossbrenner Ave.

Designed by John Cilley, it was dedicated in August 1899. It still contains the original chestnut benches and support beams. An identical auditorium designed by Cilley is located at the Mt. Lebanon Campground north of Lebanon.

27 Memorial Park
Third St. & Otterbein Ave.

This open park was previously a residential area, destroyed by fire in 1949.

28 Otterbein Ave.

The street named for Philip Otterbein (1726-1813), also a founder of the United Brethren Church.

29 Mt. Gretna Inn and Kauffman Property
Intersection of Hollobaugh Ave. & Kauffman Ave.

The 20-acre tract on which the Mt. Gretna Inn is situated was acquired by Abraham Kauffman in 1907. It became known as The Willows. The Inn, then Mr. Kauffman's home, was constructed circa 1921. This tract became part of a larger resort complex that Kauffman developed which contained Kauffman's Store, Kauffman's Hotel, a dance hall, movie theater, and ice house. Kauffman's Store was located on the parking lot south of the current fire company. Portions of the foundation of the Hotel, which had been located on the northeast corner of Boulevard and Kauffman Avenues, still remain. Kauffman's Laurel Park, established in the 1920's, was located east of Butler Road between Rt. 117 and the Rail Trail. It contained a large roller coaster, a carousel, and a 1,000,000-gallon swimming pool still visible from Butler Road which is overgrown by vegetation. The dance hall and movie theater were located across from Kauffman's Store on Kauffman Ave. Kauffman's over-extension led to foreclosure.

30 The Heights, Kauffman Ave., south & east of Mt. Gretna Inn

Originally, part of Robert Coleman's vast estate, this 62-acre tract was purchased by Kauffman and named the Kauffman Heights. The Heights developed as a residential community in the 1920's.

31 Mt. Gretna Roller Rink, First St. & Rt. 117

Part of Mt. Gretna Park, this building was constructed in 1890. It is the oldest remaining building in Mt. Gretna. Originally the Farmers Encampment Building, it was also known as the Lecture and Exhibition Building. Annual picnic gatherings of farmers were held here. Daily crowds of up to 20,000 people attended farming presentations. It later served the Park as a dance hall and movie theater. Remnants of one of the first Mt. Gretna springhouses, constructed in May 1884, are located in the brush to the northeast of this structure.