



HERITAGE

TRAIL

LEBANON COUNTY

Map

PAL

Palmyra

Welcome to historic Palmyra! As you tour the magnificent historic buildings of Palmyra, imagine what it might have been like before the automobile arrived.

While the identity of the first settler is in dispute, it is known that Dutch traders built a trading post/stockade circa 1650 in the northwest corner of present day Palmyra. For approximately 100 years thereafter Scotch-Irish, and then Palatinate Swiss-Germans without ownership deeds settled in the Palmyra area. It was into this area that Doctor Johann "John" Palm arrived on June 17, 1766 to begin the more permanent settlement now known as Palmyra.

Palm purchased his narrow tract of land from Conrad Raisch, built his farmhouse and outbuildings, and began his medical practice shortly thereafter.

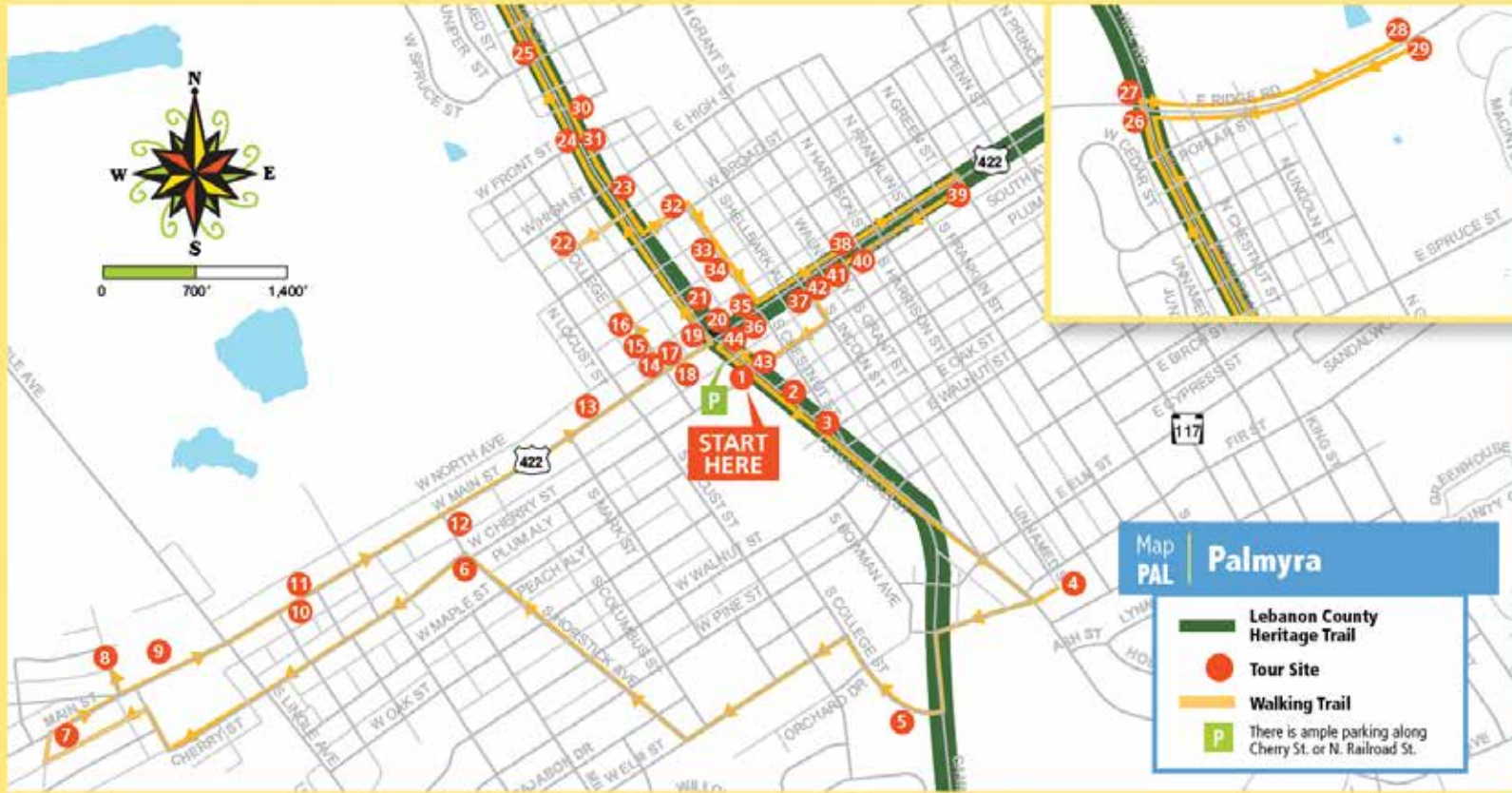
During the days of Dr. Palm, the village of Palmyra was considered part of Derry Township, Lancaster County. In 1768, the eastern part of Derry Township became Londonderry Township. In 1785, Londonderry Township became part of Dauphin County. In 1813, the eastern part of Dauphin County was reorganized into Lebanon County. In 1895, Londonderry Township was divided with this area included as part of North Londonderry Township. In 1913, the bustling industrial village of Palmyra was separated from agricultural North Londonderry and incorporated into a stand-alone borough.

Palmyra Borough developed into a hub of transportation, industry and agriculture. The former footpath for local natives, now known as Route 422, became the Berks and Dauphin Turnpike in 1817. The Union Canal began bringing additional commerce and people in 1827. The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company unloaded its first load of passengers at Palmyra Station on November 30, 1857. With the arrival of electricity in the 1880s, entrepreneurs constructed internationally known shoe factories that flourished until the 1960s. Many skilled and experienced Palmyra residents were employed by Milton Hershey as he built his fabulous chocolate factory, and Palmyra Square was the eastern stopping point for the Hershey Trolley Company on the Chocolate Avenue branch.

The arrival of the automobile in the early 1900s ushered in larger stores and the ability to shop at faraway places. Small business helped turn what had been a dusty frontier town into a bustling factory town and more recently into a thriving bedroom community.

The Palmyra Tour begins at Palm Lutheran Church. There is ample parking along Cherry Street or North Railroad Street.





**1 Palm Lutheran Church  
11 W. Cherry St.**

The original 1845 building (700 block of W. Main St.) was shared with the Reformed Church. In 1910, George Washington's gavel from the cornerstone laying of the US Capitol in 1793 was used to lay the cornerstone when the original stone of "Old Palm" was relocated here. In 1967, a new cornerstone was laid.

**2 Rothermel Funeral Home  
50 E. Maple St.**

This original non-farm building near Palmyra Square was owned and operated by generations of the Rothermel family. The business eventually moved across S. Railroad St.

**3 Palm Memorial Stone  
S. Railroad, S. Chestnut & E. Oak St.**

In 1932, in honor of George Washington's 200th birthday, a stone monument was erected on the triangle in memory of Palmyra's founder and First Citizen, Dr. John Palm.

**4 Banker's House  
200 Fir St.**

This brick farmhouse, built for Farmer Heisey, stands out from surrounding homes built during the 1960s. Local lore has bankers owning this house more often than successful farmers.

**5 John Oehrle (Early) Farmstead  
807 S. College St.**

Thought to be the oldest structure in Palmyra Borough, this circa 1800 limestone house is on the original tract of land patented to Johannes Deininger by the sons of William Penn. It was from that original tract that John Palm purchased his 100 acres. Dr. Palm's widow, his third wife and former Indian captive, Elizabeth Williams, spent her last days in this house.

**6 Palmyra Cemetery  
600 W. Cherry St.**

The Palmyra Cemetery Association was formed in 1845 by William and Martin Early and other church leaders. This is the final resting place of several of Palmyra's early leaders.

**7 Limestone Schoolhouse  
1612 E. Chocolate Ave., Palmdale**

Believed to be constructed during the Civil War, the first floor was a one room schoolhouse. The oldest portions of the second floor were added in the late 1890s with newer additions since then.

**8 Tollkeeper's Cottage  
1702 Palm St., Palmdale**

Moved 100 yards north in 1915, this structure served as the Tollkeeper's residence on the Berks and Dauphin Turnpike. The B&DT began in 1817 for a better road between Reading and Harris Ferry (Harrisburg). In 1917, the gravel road was paved by the state and named Route 22 or the William Penn Highway, later renumbered as Route 422 and renamed the Benjamin Franklin Highway.

**9 Wilhelm's Hardware Store  
1805 E. Chocolate Ave., Palmdale**

Originally part of Mr. Henry's 358 acres purchased from the sons of William Penn, this converted late 1800s farmhouse has served family-owned businesses for nearly 100 years.

**10 Old Stone House  
730 W. Main St.**

Since larger limestone homes were typically only built for those of wealth, it is believed this 1800s structure was constructed for one of Palmyra's early merchants.

**11 American House Hotel  
661 W. Main St.**

A resting place for weary travelers, this second-generation hotel and tavern was the site of an "infamous" murder in the early 1900s. Homeless German immigrant Ephraim Stober fatally stabbed tavern worker Oliver Groy.

**12 Horstlick Homestead  
518 W. Main St.**

Hessian soldier Frederic Horstlick arrived during the American Revolution. Aided by local German farmers to escape from a Lebanon County prisoner-of-war camp, he settled in Palmyra and married a local woman. Under the vinyl facade is the original log house that was constructed in the early 1800s. Son Conrad and grandson Joseph were leading businessmen in the early and mid-1800s.

**13 Palm Limestone House  
115 W. Main St.**

Believed to be the original house built for John George Palm, Jr., the eldest son of Dr. Palm, this limestone building was built in the early 1800s. The alternating brownstone and limestone quoins on the corners were unusual for a village but fairly common among farmhouses. The turrets, front peak and extended back section were added later.

**14 Gabriel Hocker Moyer House  
103 W. Main St.**

Built for Andrew S. Stauffer in the late 1800s, this house was later owned by Gabriel Moyer, a graduate of Witmer's Palmyra Academy and shoe-cutter in the Kreider factories before he entered the Dickinson School of Law in Carlisle in 1896. He was elected State Representative for several terms, and was Chairman of the Valley Forge Park Commission.

**15 Citizens Fire Company  
21 N. College St.**

Palmyra's firefighting needs were met with mixed results utilizing equipment often stored in back barns. The first engine house was built in 1892 after formally organizing its volunteers in 1891. The two-story brick portion of the current building was dedicated in 1923.

**16 Jubilee Ministries Clothing Store  
103 N. College St.**

Constructed as a four room schoolhouse in 1904, this was the areas first public high school until 1915. The building was sold at auction to Harvey Seltzer and subsequently expanded for a knitting factory and producer of Jordache jeans.

**17 First Evangelical Congregation Church  
55 W. Main St. & N. College Ave.**

In 1857, Peter Witmer opened his Palmyra Academy on this corner. The private school educated many local teachers until shortly before Mr. Witmer's death in 1890. The building served as Palmyra's Town Hall until 1899. A modified Georgian colonial church and parsonage replaced it in 1900 and has been used by the current congregation since 1956.

**18 Baum's Bakery  
62 W. Main St.**

Started by John Shiner, it was owned and operated as Baum's Eagle Bakery by E.M. Baum and family members beginning in 1911. The shop was a center of village life in the days before Wonder Bread.

**19 Palmyra Bank Building  
1 W. Main St.**

The original Palmyra Bank was organized by Palmyra's leading businessmen in the 1880s. Built by its first cashier, Simon H. Bowman, this proud building has been in continuous use as a bank since February 1887. The third floor was long used as the meeting place of the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America.

**20 Light Building, 16 N. Railroad St.**

Built in 1921 for "Doc" Light as Palmyra's first Ford dealership, this building contains one of the region's first industrial and still operable elevators. Its specialty first floor wood floors were milled in Mr. Hershey's lumber yard in Derry Township. The site was previously used as a barn, housing for his father's veterinary hospital and as an early 1800s blacksmith shop.

**21 K&G Hardware  
50 N. Railroad St.**

Used by many small shops prior to its purchase by the Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, the building was repurposed as K&G's True Value Hardware and employed four generations of the Reigle family.

**22 Palmyra Bologna Company  
230 N. College St.**

Organized and built by Harvey Seltzer and Felix Burkholder in 1902, this is the last of the great turn-of-the-century Palmyra businesses. Still in operation and utilizing Seltzer's original recipe and method of smoking, they were featured on Mike Rowe's 'Dirtiest Jobs' TV show.

**23 J. H. Light House  
246 N. Railroad St.**

Built for a single family, this narrow two-story brick house optimized the heating potential of its small fireplaces and kitchen stoves.

**24 Railroad House Hotel  
347 N. Railroad St.**

Once the Philadelphia Railroad began passenger operations at Palmyra Station in 1857, this hotel was constructed on the SW corner of the rail crossing. It remained popular until the arrival of the automobile and the cessation of train passenger traffic in the early 1960s.

**25 William H. Erb House  
503 N. Railroad St.**

Until 1906, Erb was the owner of the Palmyra Planing Mill, a successful lumberyard and wood planing mill built in 1888 by the Kreider family formerly located behind this house. With success came large private homes, and Erb's home was a showcase of local craftsmanship.

**26 Henry Wilhelm House  
30 W. Ridge Rd.**

Located within Johannes Deininger's 1751 land purchase, the property was bought by the Londonderry Water Company to take advantage of a nearby spring. A covered stone reservoir was installed along N. Railroad St. Most of the reservoir was removed when the water company was sold.

**27 Gravel Hill Cemetery  
901 N. Railroad St.**

The upper portions of these 40 acres were in use from at least the time that the Zion Chapel, now the Gravel Hill Methodist Church, was constructed circa 1845.

**28 Hanshaw Log House  
505 E. Ridge Rd.**

As Mrs. Hanshaw, daughter of the late Palmyra Bank President Eugene Bowman, looks out her kitchen window, she can see the last water reservoir of the former water companies organized by Martin Early in the 1850s. Mrs. Hanshaw and her late husband, the veterinarian Dr. Henry H. Hanshaw, lived in the house, using part of the first floor as his examination room.

**29 Hanshaw Limestone Bank Barn  
500 E. Ridge Rd.**

Constructed for Joseph and Maria Horstick (Horstick) in 1847, the barn is part of the last working farm in Palmyra Borough.

**30 The Train Shop at Palmyra Station  
30 E. Willow St.**

Located on the north side of railroad tracks off N. Railroad St., the current structure was built in 1910. The smaller original wood-framed building was built in 1857. The first Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Company passenger train, the "Lebanon Valley," arrived on November 30, 1857.

Passenger service was discontinued in 1962.

**31 Londonderry Mills  
338 N. Railroad St.**

The flourmill and grainery was built by Martin Early in 1859. Local lore says that in 1863 the mill was the safe haven for wheat and other grains from Gettysburg, as the Confederates headed north into Pennsylvania. Owned and operated by the Curry family beginning in 1915, flour from the mill is used in Hershey's Kit Kat bars.

**32 J. Landis Shoe/Palmyra  
Boot and Shoe Company  
201 N. Chestnut St.**

The first of the great Palmyra shoemakers began here in 1888 as the Palmyra Boot and Shoe Company and later as the J. Landis Shoe Company.

After a 1905 fire, the company rebuilt the structure using brick.

**33 United Christian Church  
133 N. Chestnut St.**

One of the oldest church buildings in Palmyra, it was dedicated in 1895.

**34 Palmyra Church of the Brethren  
N. Chestnut St. & Arch St.**

Born from the 1708 Pietistic Movement, they ceased meeting in homes of members once the first wood-frame meeting house was constructed here in 1892. A brick church replaced the wood structure in 1916. A side gallery was added in 1935, and an Aeolin-Skinner pipe organ was installed in 1940. An additional education wing and narthex were dedicated in 1959.

**35 Trinity Reformed Church  
37 E. Main St.**

A daughter church of the Reformed congregation that helped construct Bindnagle Church in 1754, this building was dedicated in 1903 after the combined Reformed and Lutheran congregations moved from their 1845 church on W. Main St.

**36 Martin Early House  
46 E. Main St.**

Built around 1850 and home of Palmyra's original industrialist, this is where many of Martin Early's ideas hatched including the feed mill, coal yard, railroad station and water company.

**37 David Kreider Mansion  
201 E. Main St.**

Built circa 1908 for the grandson and manager of the Kreider Shoe Concerns, this was the home of David A. and Minnie Kreider and three succeeding generations of Kreider's.

**38 Yengst Hotel  
301 E. Main St.**

This structure opened as one of Palmyra's great hotels in 1902. Today it continues to provide short-term and long-term housing as the Main Street Inn.

**39 W. L. Kreider Mansion  
430 E. Main St.**

Once an estate building with an adjoining orchard, this building hosted the Borough's municipal offices and library until about 1970 when those functions were moved to the former American Legion complex on S. Railroad St.

**40 Stauffer Ice House  
312 E. Main St.**

In the days before refrigeration, ice was important in the food industry. J. Early Stauffer built this Dutch Gambrel in 1925. By 1939, the ice block business was history.

**41 Gingrich Hall  
232 E. Main St.**

Constructed around 1910, this distinctive landmark, on Palmyra's east side, was the boyhood home of long-time Palmyra history teacher Robert Gingrich. In 1946, former Palmyra State Representative Jack Seltzer approached his dad Russell Gingrich with the idea of making the building the home for returning World War II vets. Since then, this has been the home of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6417.

**42 J. Carper Early House  
206 E. Main St.**

Many of Palmyra's homes built from 1890-1940 contain millwork from the Palmyra Planing Mill, including this home which was built for the Early family.

**43 Federal Post Office Building  
60 S. Railroad St.**

William Palm became the first postmaster of Palmyra in 1804. Palmyra had its first permanent post office building when this federally-owned structure was opened for business on May 29, 1939.

**44 Greiner Building  
1-22 W. Main St.**

This building, built by George Greiner, replaced a smaller wood frame building in 1903. Purchased in 1917 by the Valley Trust Company, it has been the home to many Palmyra businesses.