

Preserving the Lebanon Valley's Heritage and Lands

Two scenic rides start from the Visitors Center at the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. For cyclists who want to pedal more miles, it is possible to combine both rides and enjoy 50 miles of bicycling in the Lebanon Valley. If this is your preference, you should first cycle the *Silos, Spires and Soaring Birds – a Lebanon Valley Skyline*. Visiting the Pennsylvania Game Commission's exhibits, hiking and "bird watching" are activities available at Middle Creek. For additional information, visit <http://www.portal.state.pa.us>

Many miles of this scenic route are pedaled on quiet back country roads. You may share the road with large farm machinery or mule drawn wagons. There are conservative Mennonite and Amish farms next door to farms which operate with the latest technologies. A common thread, however, is that most of these farms have been in production for 150 – 250 years. This is an area of the Lebanon Valley where the Germanic-Swiss heritage is remembered, reenacted, and actually lived with great pride.

The Alexander Schaeffer Farm (Museum) was patented in 1736 by the Meilys who then sold it to a family who emigrated from Switzerland. Alexander Schaeffer, a German immigrant from the Heidelberg area, purchased several farms including this farm in 1758 to establish Shaefferstown. With an abundance of apple trees, he hired distillers to make apple whiskey. His son expanded the distillery business, engaged in pork production and made clay tiles. The Schaeffer Farm is the site for two annual events – the Cherry Festival in June and the Fall Festival in September. Folk life activities demonstrate the skills and crafts of the 18th and 19th century Germanic-Swiss settlers. Combining visits to these festivals with the bicycle route passing through farmland and Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area will enable cyclists to appreciate the value of preservation.

The Early American Craft Show



Cabin at the Schaeffer Farm



The 18th and 19th century homes and buildings in Schaefferstown provide opportunities to visit the past, and the Brendle Museum exhibits the Pennsylvania German culture of the area.

The 1746 Franklin House



1883 Weigley Mansion -22 rooms



1758 tavern for 50 years before becoming a home

In 1744 Alexander Schaeffer constructed a water system to provide public drinking water for the town's residents which would serve as an inducement to settle in his new town. In 1845, the wood pipes were replaced with cast iron.

When it comes to liquid consumption, however, the nearby distillery which operated as early as 1753 made rye whiskey. Production was secondary to the Shenk's gristmill and other farming operations. Later, however, two new stills were added as farmers wanted their grain converted to alcohol so that it could be profitably marketed. In the mid 19th century until the 1980s the distillery was a major producer (closed during Prohibition).

3.

As you pedal on roads such as Reistville, Ramona, Crest, Flintville and Old Mill, the rural scenery will enable you to appreciate the land, the people, and their farmsteads.



The cultures of the very conservative and most modern come together on a daily basis in the Lebanon Valley.



Auctions attract all of us who are in search of special items and bargains.



A motorist beeps his car horn to alert the Amish farmers that two dairy cows from the large herd have escaped the fence and are headed for the barn before milking time. The wife calls for reinforcements to help.

As you gradually climb back into the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area and then view the panoramic scene as you descend, consider not only the value of having this land and water conserved for migratory birds and other wildlife, but the farm families who gave up their heritage to preserve for another noble purpose.

Preserving Lebanon Valley's Valued Heritage and Lands Cue Sheet

Distance: 28.3 miles

Climb Elevation: 1858 feet

Ride Start: Visitors Center, Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area

The Center is located on Hopeland Road, 2 miles south of Kleinfeltersville (SR897).

The Visitors Center is open from February 1 until Thanksgiving, Tuesday through Saturday, 8 AM to 4 PM and Sunday noon to 5 PM. Bathroom facilities are available. The parking lot is open throughout the year.

Dist.	Cum.	Dir.	Road/Description
0	0		Start
0.2	0.2	L	Kleinfeltersville Road/Hopeland Road
2.2	2.4	R	SR 897 (Be very vigilant as you turn right and then left onto Albright)
0.1	2.5	L	Albright Road <i>On your right is the 1860 Albright Chapel erected to honor Jacob Albright who became a missionary and contributed to the creation of the Evangelical Association. He died in 1807 at a nearby farm which included the land where the Chapel and his grave site are located. Descending Albright Road, note the farm vistas.</i>
2.3	4.8	R	SR 419
0.3	5.1	L	Reistville Road
0.2	5.3	R	Richland Road

1.1	6.4	L	Krumstown Road <i>On your right is a farm with a plethora of birdhouses.</i>
1.1	7.5	ST	Krumstown becomes Wartluft Road
0.3	7.8	L	Elco Drive
0.3	8.1	L	Weavertown Road <i>After climbing a short hill, you'll come to a turkey farm on your right; at Thanksgiving and Christmas time, many locals arrive to get their preordered turkeys. Across the road is a significant home.</i>
1.1	9.2	R	Reistville Road <i>As you approach the village of Reistville, there is an Amish school on your right. Many Amish reside in this village. The Creative Crafts Store is Amish owned. As you continue on Reistville Road, you pass Amish farms; note the cattle crossing. There is an auction facility for farm products and on some Saturdays, it is very busy with the sale of a variety of products – a sort of flea market - where trucks, bike scooters, horses and buggies are all parked.</i>
2.1	11.3	R	Ramona Road <i>At the crest of the hill there is a farmstead with a unique summer kitchen.</i>
0.8	12.1	L	Birch Road <i>At the intersection with Prescott Road, to your left is a Victorian home and barn that is worthy of going off route to have a better view..</i>
1.9	14.0	L	Mine Road <i>This section of the route is in suburbia.</i>
1.3	15.3	ST	becomes Evergreen Road <i>Be extra careful at this intersection.</i>
0.1	15.4	L	Crest Road <i>The route returns to rural countryside.</i>
1.5	16.9	L	Fonderwhite Road
0.6	17.5	R	Flintville Road
0.4	17.9	L	SR 419 Schaeffer Road <i>There is more traffic on this road.</i>
0.6	18.5	R	Distillery Road <i>Before you turn on Old Mill Road you can view the remains of the Bomberger's/Michter's Distillery ahead to your right. You can cycle to the Distillery buildings, if interested.</i>
1.1	19.6	L	Old Mill Road <i>Note that farms along this road have been preserved.</i>
0.7	20.3	L	Mill Road
0.9	21.2	R	SR 419 (Main Street/SR897) <i>Major traffic on this section of the route. There are many 18th and 19th century buildings/homes in Schaefferstown. Enjoy walking the streets, visiting the shops and Brendle Museum. If you came to attend one of the fairs, you can access the Schaeffer Farm from either Main Street or Market Street.</i>
0.8	22.0	R	Market Street <i>After passing several historical homes, Fountain Park is on your left.</i>
0.9	22.9	BL	Sinclair Road
0.9	23.8	L	SR 501 Major traffic on this roadway but you are on SR501 briefly. The left turn is just before the hill; not easily seen.
0.1	23.9	L	Spring Haven Road (some climbing required) sandstone home just before reaching Sunnyside Road
0.7	24.6	L	Sunnyside Road There is a lovely 1879 sandstone home on the right just after the intersection with Fawn Hollow. As you enter the Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, consider the heritage that farm families gave up when Middle Creek was created. The Pennsylvania Game Commission utilizes a fine sandstone farm home and barn from another era. As you descend the last hill, you can view the Blue Mountains to your left and the South Mountains straight ahead and to your right as they encompass the Lebanon Valley.
2.4	27.0	R	Kleinfeltersville Road/Hopeland Road
1.2	28.2	R	Museum Road
0.1	28.3		Finish