

## LEBANON'S HISTORIC GEMS

The city of Lebanon's history began in the 1750s when George Steitz, a Swiss-German immigrant, designed a plan for a town and began to sell lots. The settlement was initially known as Steitztown, but by 1778, it was named Lebanon due to Moravians' preference to use Biblical names for towns.

Lebanon's advantages included having the primary east - west and north - south routes through the Lebanon Valley intersect in town. Next would come turnpikes, the Union Canal and railroads. From being a town that served the surrounding agricultural community, Lebanon became a major center of iron and steel production as well as a host of diverse manufacturing enterprises including, textiles, shoes, massive chains, machine shops, railroad cars, paper boxes, cigars and organs. The retail business sector prospered.

Today's Lebanon possesses "historic gems" that are reminders of its modest frontier beginnings, the deeply religious nature of its people, as well as the wealth of some of its citizenry in the "Gilded Age" of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the premier families, the Colemans, showered their largess throughout the city as you will discover.

*( NOTE: The Coleman Legacy Scenic Ride focuses on how the Colemans became rich and powerful in the iron industry, created other varied enterprises, and provided a legacy of landmarks for us to enjoy in 21<sup>st</sup> century Lebanon County.)*

While this short city ride displays many of Lebanon's significant sights, there is so much more to discover by parking your bike and taking a walk on Cumberland Street and other downtown streets and alleys. Visit the William Henry Stoy House where the Lebanon County Historical Society has its museum. Explore the Farmers Market and take home fresh foods. There are many restaurants and eateries, coffee and tea shops. Sample Shuey's pretzels and Wertz' candies.



*coffee, carmel corn and chocolates!*

Starting your tour on 8<sup>th</sup> Street , you will pass the *Lebanon Daily News* and the City/County Municipal Building before turning right on Chestnut Street.

On your right, just before the Harding School, is an 1830 structure that was the Evangelical Association Church. Later it was used as a synagogue. What may have already caught your attention is the massive St. Luke's Episcopal Church built in 1878 of native limestone and red sandstone. It is an outstanding example of Gothic Revival. Gargoyles stretch out from the tower. The Coleman family made this elaborate church possible.



*St. Luke's Episcopal Church*

Continuing on Chestnut Street, you arrive at a lovely block of Victorian town homes. Circle the island, *when traffic permits*, and return to 8<sup>th</sup> Street and turn right.

The Farmers Market, built in 1892, is on your left and beckons you to come in and taste and shop. It is open Thursday – Saturday. At the corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Cumberland Streets is the Samler Building which was constructed in the 1880s and has housed a variety of businesses. The Queen Ann Tower has become the city's icon.

*Farmers Market*



*Samler Building*



3.

At the next intersection, at 8<sup>th</sup> and Willow Streets, is the Old Salem Lutheran Church which was built in 1796 of limestone to replace the log church. A thousand ton bell cast in London in 1770 hangs in the bell tower, and the Miller organ, crafted locally and installed in 1888, has 1900 pipes. Beside Old Salem is the 1898 Salem Memorial Chapel.



*architectural treasures.*

*Religious faith permeates many of Lebanon's*

Two railroad stations are your next destinations on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. On the west side is the Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad Station financed by Robert H. Coleman in 1885. The station served as the northern terminus of the 22 mile short run railroad that went to Mt. Gretna and Conewago Junction from 1883 to 1929. .



*Cornwall & Lebanon Railroad Station*

*Robert H. Coleman's motto was "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well".*

On the east side is the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Station, built in 1900. Its tower's only purpose was for architectural enhancement. Twenty seven trains stopped at this station daily.



Monument Park, at the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> and Lehman Streets, honors Civil War veterans with a Sailors and Soldiers monument. George D. Coleman purchased this land for the county to be preserved as a memorial to the men in service. The 93<sup>rd</sup> Regiment had trained on this site which was part of the fair grounds. Coleman had provided the Regiment with funds for equipment and their flag which the Regiment gave to him at the end of the War.

Maple Street is lined with history. On the south side is Brandt's Mill and on the north side are two Lehman residences - the Union Canal Resident Engineer's home and main office of the Union Canal Company and his retirement home. The former was constructed in 1828 with large, hand made bricks from the original 1790s locks. However, it is Light's "Fort" that earns the title as most historic, because it is the oldest structure in the county.



*Union Canal resident engineer's home and Union Canal Company's main office*

In 1742, Mennonite John Light built this large, stone, saltbox type structure. The building served as his home, a distillery, a place of worship and a fortification against Indian raids during the French and Indian War. A large stockade could house sixty families who took refuge. Under the “fort” is a large arched cellar that could hold 200 people. A spring and well are in the cellar. Light’s “Fort” has suffered through many uses, but efforts are underway to restore it. There are Open Houses and re-enactments.



***Light's Fort, the oldest structure in Lebanon County***

Across from the busy intersection at 12<sup>th</sup> Street is Christ Presbyterian Church, built in 1870-71. Once again, the Coleman family were benefactors.

Coleman Memorial Park was originally an estate owned by G. Dawson Coleman and his descendants. There were five mansions on the estate; the city was granted the land in 1935. You can cycle within the Park and view two gate houses, a garage and stable.



From Coleman Park, the ride continues to Union Canal Tunnel Park to view the oldest existing transportation tunnel in the country. Built in 1825-1827, the tunnel was the connecting link between the eastern and western branches of the Union Canal.

*(Note: The scenic ride, Union Canal and the Swatties, starts at the North Portal parking area and provides opportunities to view more aspects of the Canal as well as rural scenery.)*



6.



*Union Canal Tunnel Park festivities*



The last historic sight on this cycling tour is the log cabin on Chestnut Street, ca.1750. It stands on one of the original lots laid out by the town founder, George Steitz. It is the typical three room kitchen-hall house with a central fireplace that was built by Pennsylvania Germans during the colonial period



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**Descriptive Cue Sheet:** This scenic ride is in an urban area and traffic is inevitable. Weekends are the most suitable days for undertaking this ride. The Farmers Market opens at 7 AM on Saturdays. The distance is 7 ½ miles but due to frequent stops to view sights, exact mileage is not possible. Some approximate distances are provided.

**Ride Start Location:** Lebanon Senior High School at S. 8<sup>th</sup> and Hauck Streets, 4 blocks from SR 72S, or the LVRT Trailhead which opens in 2009

Dist.	Cum.	Dir.	Street
0.0		ST	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Street</b> , cycling north; pass <i>Lebanon Daily News</i> and City/County Municipal Building on right
0.9		R	<b>Chestnut Street</b> Evangelical Association Church (1830) on right next to the elementary school; St. Luke's Episcopal Church at 6 <sup>th</sup> and Chestnut; continue on Chestnut to view Victorian townhouses
0.3		BL	<b>Chestnut Street</b> Circle the island <i>when traffic permits</i> and return to 8 <sup>th</sup> Street
0.3		R ST	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Street</b> Farmers Market on left; Samler Building on left <b>8<sup>th</sup> Street</b> crosses Cumberland and Willow Streets Salem Lutheran Church and Memorial Chapel on left; both Railroad stations are a short distance farther
		ST	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Street and Lehman Street</b> - Monument Park on your right Visit the Park and view homes around the square; return to 8 <sup>th</sup>
0.8		L	<b>Maple Street</b> Lehman homes and Union Canal Office on right; Brandt's Mill on left; Light's Fort at the intersection of Maple and 11 <sup>th</sup> Street. To view Light's Fort, you should go to the site and view it from several sides
		ST	<b>Maple Street</b> ; becomes <b>SR72</b> Christ Presbyterian Church straight ahead on left; <i>very busy intersection</i>
0.6		L	Entrance to Coleman Park within a short distance
		BR	Bear right through the Park; this park road descends (After Labor Day, barriers are placed but bicycles are permitted)
		R	Exit the Park through a barrier; Donoughe Drive is to the left at the barrier
		L	Maple Street (not named)
		L	22nd Street <i>Exercise caution due to limited sighting</i>

- R Union Canal Drive which goes to Union Canal Tunnel Park
- ST Cycle into the parking lot to view the tunnel and canal.  
Depart from parking lot
- R 25<sup>th</sup> Street
- .2 L Lehman Street
- .6 R N. 16<sup>th</sup> Street
- .4 ST Cross SR422 (Cumberland Street) .2 miles right is a Coleman  
Chapel and Inn 422, a restaurant and B&B, which has a Coleman  
history with a tragic romance linked to James Buchanan
- .1 L Chestnut Street *Exercise caution when crossing at 12<sup>th</sup> Street*  
Log house on right (1110 Chestnut Street)
- .8 R 8<sup>th</sup> Street to return to start location  
OR turn Left on 8<sup>th</sup> Street to return to the downtown to  
continue touring by walking, shopping, dining. Visit the Lebanon  
County Historical Society Museum at the William Henry Stoy  
House, 924 Cumberland Street