



# TOUR OF CHERRY TREE BOROUGH

**A SELF-GUIDED  
ACTIVITY TO DO  
ANYTIME!  
PUBLISHED 2024**

## First National Bank Building

The Farmers and Merchants Bank of Cherry Tree began business in January 1923. The first building (*right*) they used was located where the Presbyterian Church parking lot is now located. When the First National Bank closed following the panic of 1933, the Farmers and Merchants Bank purchased their building and operated as National Bank of the Commonwealth and then First Commonwealth Bank until closing in 2015.



## Education in Early Cherry Tree

The first educational institution in Cherry Tree was a private school which opened in 1831 – three years before PA's public school system was created. Children from any county or town could attend so long as their subscription was paid. In 1851, the Cherry Tree Male and Female College was established. After two decades of success, it closed its doors in 1874 with the news that a State Normal School was to open in Indiana Borough, PA. The first public school started around 1855 and was held in the old Independent Order of Odd Fellows building located on the northwest corner of Cherry and Main Streets. From 1867 to 1911, a new two-story school building was constructed and used, followed by a four-room building built to serve as a High School. This final school building (*right, second down*) closed in 1981 and was replaced with the Fire Hall parking lot.



## Railroad

Through decades of change in Cherry Tree, the railroads have remained. The original railroad station, which was built around 1893, burned down and was replaced. New York Central first came to Cherry Tree in 1903, and in 1930 a second station appeared on the east side of Front Street, on the west side of the tracks (*right, third down*). New York Central passenger operations ceased in the 1930s, followed by Pennsylvania/Cherry Tree & Dixonville passenger operations which ended in 1947. The railroad is still active and operated by R.J. Corman with coal as its primary cargo.



## Churches of Cherry Tree

In 1838, before Cherry Tree Borough was incorporated, a church sat at the entrance of what is now called the "Old Cemetery." This Presbyterian congregation would receive its charter from the Court of Indiana County in 1854 and move into a new building designed and constructed by Alpheus Tibbett in 1856. In 1929, a classroom and a new pipe organ were added; both remain today. Stained glass windows were donated in memory of loved ones by congregational members in 1945. The first Methodist Church in Cherry Tree was located on the corner of Main and Cherry Streets and housed the Methodist Episcopal congregation around the 1840s. In 1911, the congregation moved to its current site on South Main Street, formerly called South Susquehanna Avenue. An area for social gatherings was added in 1976, followed by a Pastor's study, classroom, furnace room, and restrooms in 1987. In 1968, Methodists joined the United Brethren Church, becoming the United Methodist Church.

*There are many tales about the legendary "Cherry Tree" Joe McCreery. According to oral history, McCreery kept moose for milk cows and a panther for a house cat. He could rip a 150ft tall pine out of the ground, skated frozen rivers using rafts tied to his feet, and was the inadvertent inventor of toothpicks.*

*What is known for fact is that Joe McCreery was born in 1805 in Lycoming County. He settled in Cherry Tree with his parents as a young boy, and became a lumberjack and raftsman around the age 19. As an adult, he was described as standing 6'2" tall and weighing over 200lbs, with a bushy beard. During the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865), McCreery joined Company A of the 11th PA Volunteer Cavalry at the age of 56. He was discharged after losing his leg in 1862.*

*On July 14, 1870, the newspaper Indiana Progress (Indiana, PA), reported two young children of Jonathan Buterbaugh had gone missing. Out of a search party of 300 people, it was McCreery who found and recovered the children 7miles from where they had last been seen. McCreery died on November 23, 1895 and is laid to rest in Citizens' Cemetery.*

## Lumber Workers Memorial

This memorial (*below*), erected in Canoe Place park in 1955, commemorates "The Raftmen, The Loggers, Their Mothers and Wives of Penn's Woods." Timber became one of the strongest industries in PA; timbers were transported by raft for clipper ships, then structural and industrial timbers became vital for the construction of cities further east. A memorial to soldiers of World War II is also located at this site.

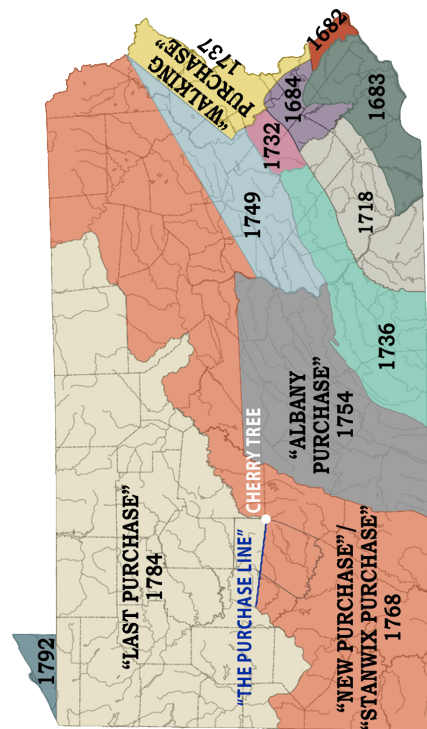
*John and Anne Bartlebaugh are credited with being the first settlers to become permanent residents of this area in 1822. Their son, Abner Bartlebaugh, was the first recorded child born in the town in 1830. Cherry Tree became an official borough on April 30, 1855.*



The impact of negotiations between the Six Nations Haudenosaunee and agents of the British Crown at Fort Stanwix in 1768, as well as the preceding and subsequent land purchases, have impacted native people for generations. Ohio Indians did not recognize the legitimacy of the Fort Stanwix purchase and fought to defend their homelands into the 1790s.

Various indigenous groups have occupied lands throughout Pennsylvania since at least 10,000 BC. However, by 1789 AD, the U.S. Government claimed most tribal lands, leaving many native people to relocate to Canada and western states.

Three parcels of land were awarded to Seneca Chief Cornplanter in 1796, one of which was a square mile of land he settled his people on in Warren County. This last Native Community of PA was forced to dissolve in 1964 for the construction of the Kinzua Dam.

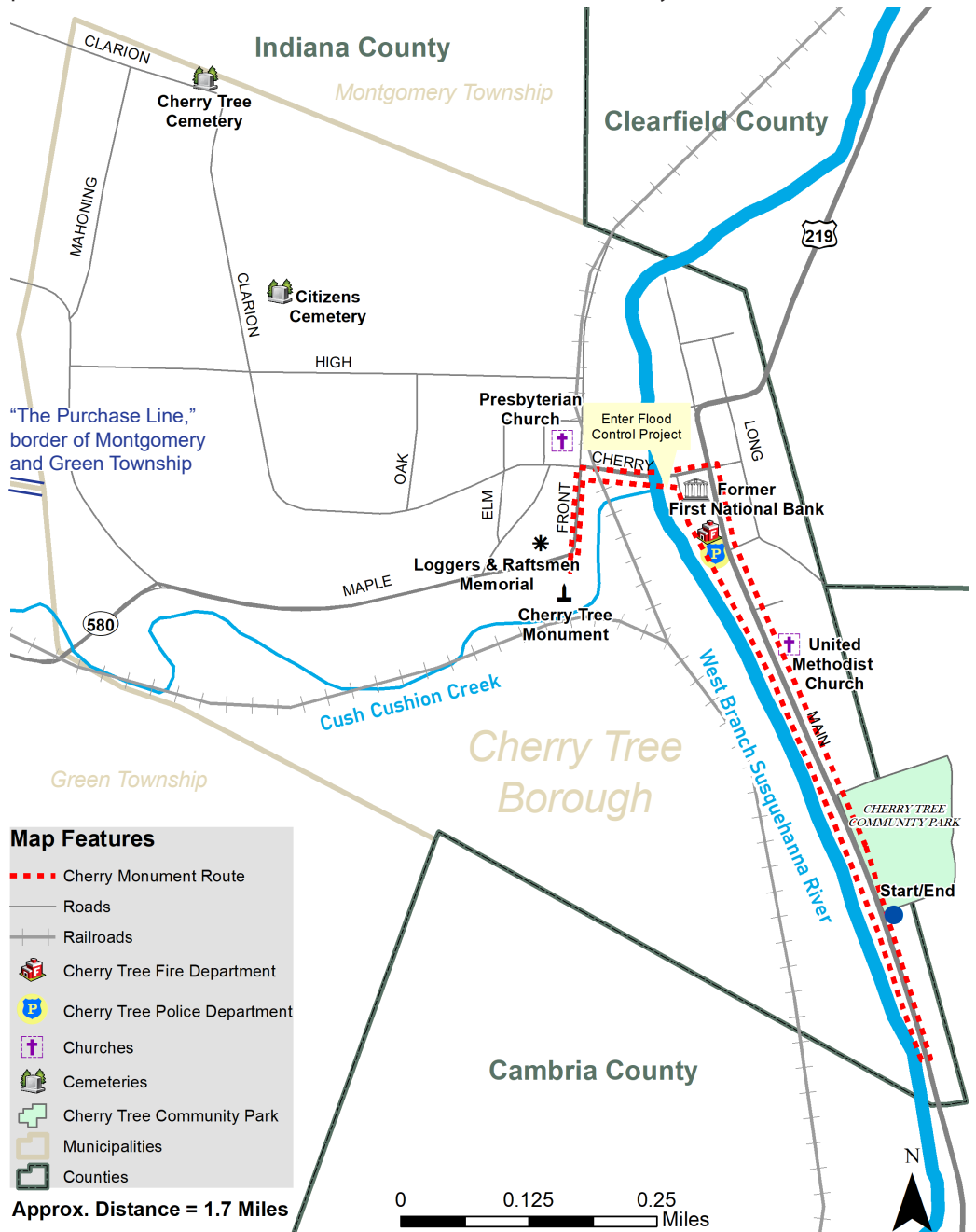


## Cherry Tree Memorial

Cherry Tree Borough lends its name from the grand black cherry tree that once stood where Cush Cushion Creek joins the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. Here, shallow waters prevent northward travel by canoe, inspiring its first name: "Canoe Place." Under the British Empire, the Penn family purchased lands from the Six Nations Indians during the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix (now Rome, NY). The Six Nations (Haudenosaunee) include the tribes Mohawk, Oneida, Onandaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora and the Seneca.

The "1768 Purchase" followed the Susquehanna and Ohio River across PA, WV, and KY. In 1773, a meeting was held at Canoe Place to establish a "Purchase Line" connecting the West Branch of the Susquehanna and the Allegheny River, which leads into the Ohio. This line is visible on modern municipal maps; in Indiana County, it serves as the southern border of South Mahoning, East Mahoning, Grant, and Montgomery, and the north border of Washington, Rayne, and Green.

In 1803-04 the PA Commonwealth created the counties of Cambria, Clearfield, and Indiana, all cornering on the cherry tree at "Canoe Place". The tree washed away in the spring of 1836 or '37. The PA Assembly passed an Act in 1849 requiring a new marker be erected in place of the tree, but the monument did not become a reality until Nov. 5, 1894.



### Map Features

- - - Cherry Monument Route
- Roads
- + Railroads
- Cherry Tree Fire Department
- Cherry Tree Police Department
- Churches
- Cemeteries
- Cherry Tree Community Park
- Municipalities
- Counties

Approx. Distance = 1.7 Miles

**SOURCES**  
**Cherry Tree Bicentennial: 1822-2022 Celebrating 200 Years**, provided by Candi Hann, Cherry Tree (2022)  
**"Monument will honor raftsmen at cherry tree,"** published by The Progress (Page 10-18, Aug. 11, 1955)  
**"The Legend of "Cherry Tree Joe" McCreery,"** webarticle by The Pennsylvania Rambler (Dec. 5, 2021)  
**Prehistory: NCC8 Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology**, originally published by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
**Purchase of 1768 Historical Marker: Explorepahistory.com**

For more information, walks, and self-guided flyers, visit us on Facebook at Indiana County Walking Decathlon or online at [icpd.org](http://icpd.org), then click the Decathlon logo.

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