

# Saltsburg, PENNSYLVANIA

## Heritage Tour Guide



**In Saltsburg** you will see how embracing the past has poised the community as a place for today's recreation and heritage enthusiasts.



# Saltsburg – Something Special

Where the Loyalhanna Creek joins the Conemaugh River to form the Kiskiminetas River in southwestern Indiana County, Pennsylvania, the town of Saltsburg grew – and was named for – its role in the salt industry from 1798 to as late as the 1890s. Saltsburg’s history as a frontier town was built initially upon its place on the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal during the first half of the 19th Century. Like many communities, Saltsburg has a significant railroad history, reflected today by an exceptional rail-trail. The town also has a legacy associated with surviving the Johnstown Flood of 1889.

This heritage tour guide illustrates the tapestry of historic preservation, cultural interpretation, civic engagement and outdoor recreation that Saltsburg’s citizens have woven together over the past several decades to create a unique intermingling of concepts – preserving the past, poised for the future.

## New Connections Between Old Neighbors™

Saltsburg is a Hub Community in the Pittsburgh-to-Harrisburg Main Line Canal Greenway™, a 320-mile corridor linking heritage sites and hub communities by land and water trails and scenic byways, following the path of the historic canal system.

This project is jointly supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Indiana County Endowment of The Pittsburgh Foundation, and Allegheny Ridge Corporation.



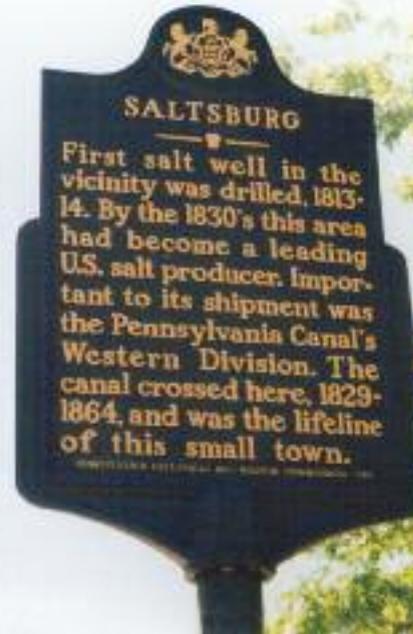
▲ Saltsburg’s Canal Days Festival is the first weekend in June.

## Salt

Sometime between 1795 and 1798, a woman known only to history as Mrs. Deemer was boiling water from a spring near what is now Saltsburg. As the water evaporated, she noticed a formation of salt crystals in the bottom of her kettle. Mrs. Deemer’s discovery led to the birth of an industry that, over the next few decades, made the Kiskiminetas-Conemaugh Valley the third leading producer of Salt in the nation.

Saltsburg’s role in the salt industry, and in the pioneering of the nation, cannot be overstated. As William C. Dzombak states in his exhaustively researched book *Salt in the Conemaugh Valley*:

*“In early times, when ice was not commonly available for the storage of food, salt was a particularly valuable commodity, much needed but difficult to obtain and very expensive as well. Only a few places in America produced salt. Saltsburg, in Pennsylvania, was one of those special places where an abundant source of salt was found – where salt works could be established – and where an abundant supply of coal was at hand to fuel the furnaces used to boil brine...Conemaugh salt was being produced at a time when the survival of settlers on the frontier west of the mountains depended on their ability to obtain salt needed for the preservation of meats and fish, foods that were mainstays of the diet in those times and places.”*



## How the heck did it get there? Geologic History

350 million years ago, anywhere you stand in Saltsburg, or anywhere in western Pennsylvania, you would have been under water. An ocean covered much of North America, and ocean brines were trapped in rocks that once were sand at the bottom of an ancient sea.

When geologic forces raised the eastern mountains of North America out of the great inland sea millions of years ago, salt brines were trapped under what became porous Pottsville Sandstone. Through the ages of geologic time, underground rivers carved their way through layers of rock, leaving the salt brines close to the surface – perfect conditions for accessing them by drilling rather shallow wells.

Further evidence of the marine origins of the Saltsburg area is contained in the Loyalhanna Limestone found in the concrete used to build the nearby Conemaugh Dam. Microscopic study of Loyalhanna Limestone reveals that it is composed of rounded grains of sand cemented together with calcite derived from sea shells ground up by the action of ocean waves on beach sand some 330 million years ago.

The ultimate success of the salt industry was also dependent on another rock layer – the seam of Freeport Coal that lay just above the Pottsville Sandstone.

In 1813, William Johnston drilled his first successful salt well near Saltsburg, and the well produced 30 bushels of salt per day. Johnston used a spring pole drill rig to bore the salt well holes, and he used horse operated pumps. Later, starting in 1828, steam engines were introduced into both the drilling and pumping operations. By 1819, “The Great Conemaugh Salt Works” was comprised of twelve manufacturers. The primitive kettle used by Mrs. Deemer was replaced by large iron pans. Coal from the Freeport coal bed was mined nearby and used as fuel for the steam engines to bore and pump the brine, and to heat pans used to boil the brine. In 1833, over four million pounds of salt were shipped over the other key element in Saltsburg’s development – the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. The salt industry of the Kiskiminetas-Conemaugh Valley peaked in the 1830s, and by 1837 nearly all of the salt wells were played out, although salt production in the valley continued into the 1870s and beyond. Following the salt seam, most of the operations had moved downstream. The industry in Pennsylvania declined as cheaper sources of salt that did not involve the expense of boring and pumping were developed elsewhere. The canal and the salt industry created the “boom” economy that made Saltsburg grow, and led to its incorporation as a borough on April 16, 1838.



## Native American Villages



Of course, long before the European settlement of the area, native peoples lived along the rivers and streams. The Monongahela were pre-historic peoples known to have been in the area, and later the Senecas. Senecas invited Shawnee and Delaware into the region and eventually those two tribes became much more prominent as Senecas moved out. Many of these peoples continued to be pushed out of the region with the development and settlement of the frontier by Europeans. In Saltsburg, you're invited to explore these influences.

The first invitation to explore this world is through the many place names originating from native populations. The mountains, rivers, and creeks were given names reflecting what they were, rather than names established as a means for personal immortality.

**Conemaugh** – the name is derived from Conunmoch, “otter.” Before 1731, a Shawnee and Delaware village named “Conemaugh Old Town” was located where Johnstown is now situated.

**Kiskiminetas** – various meanings have been given to the Native American name, of which Kiskiminetas is a corruption: “Geischgumanito” – meaning make daylight, from gisch-gu, “day,” and ma-nit-toon, “to make;” or “Kee-ak-kshee-man-nit-toos” – meaning cut spirit, from the Delaware for cut with a knife, which is “Gischkschummen, and spirit, Manitto. Another source lists Kiskiminetas as meaning “plenty of walnuts.” Kiskiminetas is also given as the name of a Delaware village on the south side of the river about seven miles from its junction with the Allegheny.

**Loyalhanna** – a corruption of Lawel-hanna, meaning “middle stream.” The Loyalhanna is mid-way between the Juniata and the Ohio Rivers, on the trail from Raystown to Pittsburgh. The Loyalhanna also unites the Conemaugh and the Kiskiminetas.

**Black Legs Creek** – this creek enters the Kiskiminetas just north of Saltsburg. A Delaware village known as Black Legs Town sat on both sides of the creek.

The second invitation to hear the voices of these ancient cultures is on our rivers, creeks and trails.

The Shawnee village known to some as Kickenpauling – located near where the Loyalhanna joins the Conemaugh at what became known as “the Point” or “Johnston’s Point” – can be visualized from the Westmoreland Heritage Trail bridges over the Conemaugh and the Loyalhanna, or from

the pathway from the River’s Edge Park along the Conemaugh River toward the Route 286 bridge. The Kuskusky Path, also known as the Loyalhanna Trail, part of the network of trails that were woven through the hills, trees and streams, came across portions of what is today Westmoreland County along the Loyalhanna Creek and crossed the Kiskiminetas River just down river from the 286 bridge. From there the trail traveled north to eventually join the Kiskiminetas Trail near Apollo and on to the major thoroughfare – the Kittanning Trail. The site of the village at Black Legs is a short mile and a half walk down the Kiski section of the West Penn Trail. If you are still at this site, you can see why the spot was ideal for a settlement. You can stand on the trail bridge that now spans the creek and imagine the village around you, as it was situated on both sides of the creek. You can find artifacts from this very site at the Rebecca Hadden Stone House Museum on Point Street.

The area figured prominently in the complex tensions leading to the French and Indian War. In the early 1750s a group of wealthy Virginians formed the Ohio Company to survey and sell small tracts of land west of the Allegheny Mountains to British settlers – even though it belonged to native Delaware, Shawnee and Iroquois.

In 1758 Pennsylvania Governor Denny commissioned Christian Frederick Post, a man who had lived and traveled among Shawnee, Delaware and other Native Americans, to travel through western Pennsylvania to convince the tribes to approve of the Treaty of Easton. The treaty promised to preserve the land west of the Alleghenies for the native populations if they abandoned their support of the French. Post was respected and liked – he had taken the time to learn the languages and customs of the people and twice married Delaware women. His journals describe a trip down the Loyalhanna to Keckenepaulin’s Town and on to Kiskiminetas Town then to the Allegheny River. Ultimately, the aggressions of the French and Indian War and subsequent continued westward European movement forced Native Americans further west, down the Ohio and on.

*“Ye say they all have passed away,  
That noble race and brave;  
That their light canoes have vanished  
From the far off crystal wave;  
That ‘mid the forest where they roamed,  
There rings no hunter’s shout;  
But their name is on your waters,  
And ye cannot wash it out.”*



## The Town

In 1816, Andrew and Jane Boggs purchased land at the confluence of the Loyalhanna Creek, Conemaugh and Kiskiminetas Rivers and immediately began selling lots in the tiny pioneer town. Driven by the salt industry, businesses began springing up – coopers, blacksmiths, wagon makers, stone masons and carpenters. The location had an abundant supply of timber and stone for building and plenty of good water.

Some say the first house was erected in 1819-1820 at the rear of the present Presbyterian Church lot on Salt Street. There were, however, many log cabins on the site as early as 1800.

As you walk through town, note how closely the community is still laid out to its early design. The map above shows dense construction with a mix of residential and business uses. Early towns were designed to be walkable out of necessity; today, model communities seek that mixed use approach for community health benefits, to decrease the burden of sprawl on remaining open space and to reduce reliance on the car for day-to-day activities.

## The Canal, The Rail

It may be hard to visualize today, but before there were paved roads, highways, rail lines, before there was a canal system, it took 3-4 weeks to travel from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh by wagon. Imagine the impact it must have had on moving people and goods when the construction of the canal made that same journey possible in four days. The 104-mile Western Division of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal ran through Saltsburg as it connected Johnstown with Pittsburgh. It was the lifeblood of Saltsburg for more than 30 years.

The canal – an artery of water 28 feet wide at the bottom of the prism, 4 feet deep and 40 feet wide at the water level – cut through Saltsburg in a graceful curve, following near the bank of the Conemaugh River and crossing the town’s major streets. Saltsburg’s interpretive Canal Park traces the authentic path of the canal. As you visit Canal Park, you’ll note that homes along the west side of the canal have “original front entrances” facing the canal or “post canal entrances” facing Water Street. Canal channels and tow paths generally 62 feet wide ran along the river. Mules were led along the canal path to pull the boats through the waterway. Lock #8, a canal boat basin, and a warehouse fronting the basin were located on the northern end of town. An interpretation of the lock can be found at the actual site at the end of Canal Park, where sign panels explain its form and function.

Eventually, railroad technology enabled the rail system to surpass the transportation efficiency of the canal. Railroad construction began to advance toward Saltsburg between 1845 and 1854. The Pennsylvania Railroad purchased the Saltsburg section of the canal system in 1857. A railroad bridge spanning the Kiskiminetas River – you can still see the piers just north of the Route 286 bridge – and a passenger and freight station were constructed in Saltsburg between 1855 and 1864. The station still stands and functions as the borough offices.



The photo above shows the first train to enter Saltsburg in the fall of 1863. The rail line through town had to be built parallel to the PA Canal, since the canal was still operating up to the time rail service began. In 1882, the decision was made to move the rails to the dried up canal bed. With this accomplished, the tracks were laid and a new station constructed on Washington Street. A photo of this spectacular station can be found in the “Things That Are Gone” section of this brochure.

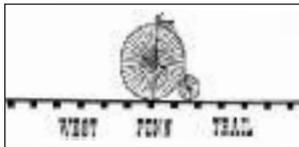


Lock #8 was filled in, the gates on the north end of the lock carefully lowered onto the floor of the lock, hoping no doubt that they would be discovered someday. They were – in 1989 by archeologists doing exploratory digs on the canal.

Luckily, in 1875, John Martin had removed some of the large, fine cut stones from the lock. He then used them to build the Soldiers Monument in the Edgewood Cemetery that sits at the top of the hill above Saltsburg.

The centerfold map will point you to visible remnants of two old rail road grades in Saltsburg. The current line that bypasses Saltsburg was built in 1954 to elevate the tracks above lake level in the flood control reservoir when construction on the Conemaugh Dam was completed in 1952.

## The Trails



With all of this rail history, Saltsburg was poised to be a hub for the burgeoning regional trail system. The Conemaugh Valley Conservancy's West Penn Trail is a 15-mile rail-trail

for hiking and biking between Saltsburg and the Newport Road near Blairsville. Its significant history is told through a virtual heritage tour at [www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org](http://www.conemaughvalleyconservancy.org)



The Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation/Regional Trail Corporation's goal for the Westmoreland Heritage Trail is to construct a nineteen mile trail from Saltsburg to Trafford. Currently, 4 miles of trail are

open from Saltsburg to Slickville. Take a virtual heritage tour at [www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks](http://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks)

The Roaring Run Recreation Area is just 4 miles away with a trailhead near Apollo and efforts are underway to connect the West Penn and Roaring Run Trails. The area features a rail trail, mountain biking/hiking trails, canal remnants and more. Visit [www.roaringrun.org](http://www.roaringrun.org)

Saltsburg also offers easy access to the Kiski-Conemaugh Water Trail at the Rivers Edge Park at the end of Market Street.

## Civic Engagement and Self-Sufficiency

Much of the interpretation, historic buildings and even outdoor recreation opportunities you see in and around Saltsburg are the result of citizen action.



Conemaugh River and Loyalhanna Creek.

**Trails and bridges** – Led by the Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, skilled volunteers were involved in all aspects of the trail design and construction, including the rehabilitation of two old railroad bridges over the

**Canal Park** – Volunteers laid the ground work for Saltsburg's most prominent interpretive feature – Canal Park. In 1983 townspeople cleared the area north of Washington Street, following the canal towpath, and created the 1st segment of the Park. All told more than one hundred volunteers contributed to the project, which became a parklet and made a statement that the rest of the project could be completed. This section was known as North Park, but was also named in honor of John M.W. Maguire, who led the volunteer effort.

**Saltsburg Area Historical Society** – the group created the Rebecca Hadden Stone House Museum in the early 1960s with financial assistance from a local businessman who requested to remain anonymous. Over the years as the collection of local artifacts and treasures grew, the Society built two additions including a separate wood shed in the back yard that stores and displays a wonderful collection of antique tools and farm equipment.

The Society still strives to engage young and old alike in local heritage by co-sponsoring an American History Essay Contest for grades 5-8, providing an annual award to honor an outstanding contributor to historic preservation, and hosting local school children for museum tours.

**Historic Saltsburg, Inc.** – this group was organized in the mid-1970s and incorporated in 1980 to help preserve Saltsburg's rich historic character. Some of their accomplishments include:

- **1978** – Established a moratorium on construction on the then undeveloped site of the canal path
- **1980** – Conducted historic building survey with Indiana County Historic Site Survey; Established PA State Historical Architectural District (HARB)

- **1981** – Initiated first Canal Days festival, which became an annual signature event for the community that continues today during the first weekend of June
- **1982** – Placed Saltsburg and Packsaddle Gap (on the Conemaugh River between Robinson and Blairsville) canal sites on the National Register of Historic Places
- **1984** – Secured State Historic Site Marker for Saltsburg, commemorating the early salt industry and the canal; Protected the architectural integrity of the Liberty Theater building on Salt Street; Published Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal, the first book to be published by a historical organization in Indiana County, written by George B. Johnson.
- **1986** – Packsaddle Gap and Saltsburg Canal sites, and Saltsburg's Historic Architectural District selected for development by the National Park Service

**The Herb Society of Historic Saltsburg** – the purposes of this society are to plant and maintain traditional herb gardens in the Historic Saltsburg area and to teach, learn and share herb-related activities and their love of herbs. Formed in 1993, this club currently maintains community gardens at several sites, including the Stone House Museum, the River's Edge Park, the Borough Building, and the Steps and Bible Garden which features accurate signage of traditional heritage herbs. These sites are easy to find on the map, and are best viewed between May and October. Members of the society provide guided tours of their gardens during the Canal Days Festival. To learn more about the Herb Society, visit [www.herbsocietyofhistoricsaltsburg.org](http://www.herbsocietyofhistoricsaltsburg.org)



## Things That Are Gone

Although Saltsburg citizens' dedication to preservation is legendary, here are a few examples of buildings that were lost due to fire, flood, or "in the name of progress."

A block of buildings that once stood on the site now occupied by Shop 'n Save. ▶



▲ The canal ticket office was located on the southeast corner of Chestnut Alley.

This business was on the northeast corner of Point Street and Marble Alley. ▶



▲ This grand building was Saltsburg's second railroad station, used for the 1884-1954 route and located at Washington Street near the Saltsburg Canal Park sign.

The Saltsburg Historic District is recognized in the National Register of Historic Places – the nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation – and runs roughly west of Plum Way and Walnut Alley to the river. The Historic District covers 480 acres, 118 buildings, 1 structure, and 15 objects. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. This architectural tour and accompanying map provides more information about some of these buildings.

**1. Rebecca Hadden Stone House Museum**  
105 Point Street (c.1830)

Five bay vernacular fieldstone structure with a central doorway, gable ends, interior brick chimneys and no windows in the gable ends.

This was the home of one of the McIlwain brothers who are credited with much of the growth and development of early Saltsburg. Robert McIlwain, Saltsburg’s first blacksmith, built this home for his residence c.1830. Note the similarities between this residence and the McIlwain store at 212 Washington St (# 27 on the map), which was constructed 11 years earlier. Dr. James Crawford (below) would live in the home in 1871. This building has housed the Saltsburg Area Historical Society’s Stone House Museum. In 1993, the Stone House Museum was dedicated to Rebecca B. Hadden, the founder of the Historical Society. Mrs. Hadden was a physician’s wife who was universally well-liked, diplomatic and was active in early preservation efforts and many other community activities.

**2. Dr. Crawford’s Office**  
107 Point Street (1868)

A two story frame house with simple Italianate windows, it is two bays wide and two bays deep with Victorian bargeboards in the south gable.

It was built by Dr. Crawford for use as his physician’s office. Dr. Crawford moved to Saltsburg in 1868 after serving and being wounded in the Civil War.

**3. Robert McIlwain House, Saltsburg House**  
109 Point Street, (1876)

A two story Second Empire structure with a mansard roof. Built by architects Bailey and Anglin of Allegheny City, PA.

The Saltsburg House was constructed for William McIlwain. The McIlwain brothers owned the McIlwain Canal Mercantile Store and the McIlwain Warehouse on Washington Street. The house was converted to a hotel in 1908 and would serve that function through the 1940s. The first floor of the hotel had a dining room. Rooms for lodging were on the second and third floors. A reservoir in the attic supplied water for the water closet on the second floor.

**4. Altman Feed Mill**  
111 Market Street (c. 1912)

Run by electric motors, this is the successor of the Canal period mill.



Saltsburg River and Trail now occupies this building, providing canoe and kayak livery services, bike rentals and friendly chats.

This old feed, flour and grain mill was constructed at a cost of \$40,000. At one time this mill stored 30,000 bushels of grain and ground 100,000 bushels of corn a year. Regular and buckwheat flours were ground, as were various feed. Such flour brands as Nellie Bly, Pearl Roller, Perfection and Nectarine were milled here. The mill still houses original machinery dating from 1893 and purchased from the Allis Chalmers Company of Milwaukee.

**5. Martin’s Restaurant**  
117 Point Street (1913)

A two story brick veneered commercial structure whose south facade has a gablet front with wide semi-circular brick arch and balcony below. The corners of the building have corbelled brickwork.

Since its construction this building has always operated as a restaurant, beginning with local and prolific stonemason John Martin’s family. The Martins opened a restaurant here – affectionately known as “the Shack” – after the stone cutting yard that was located on this site was closed. Mrs. Martin allowed neighborhood kids to make chalk sketches on the sidewalk in front of the store. She was also legendary for letting Kiski School students sneak down after curfew on “pie days” and sneaking them back out again through a loose plank when the schoolmaster came looking for them.

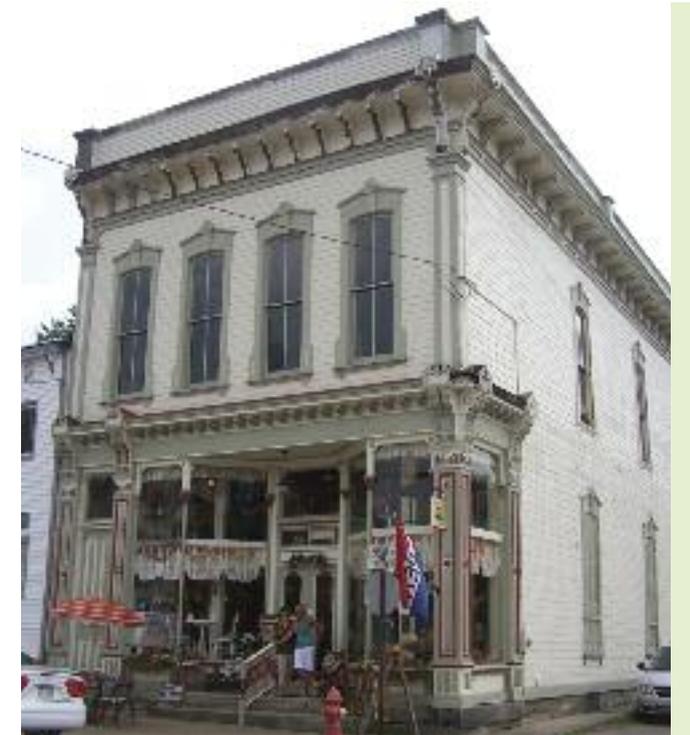


1889 – 1912  
Local knock-abouts hang around the storefront of what originally operated as Martin’s before the current building was constructed.

1913 – Present  
The building has been beautifully preserved, with the ownership only changing once in 97 years...in 1969.



**6. P. D. Shupe Building**  
202 Point Street. (1884)



Canal Country Cupboard offers handmade and primitive gifts, antiques, old fashioned ice cream and homemade desserts.

A two story frame structure four bays wide with heavy Italianate bracketing surrounding the top of the structure and pilastered corners. There is a centrally located door with large commercial windows on the first floor and a door on the extreme east corner for second floor access. All regular windows are Norman arched with decorative Victorian keys. Lighter bracketing separates the first and second floor front. The first floor interior has a balcony.

The best example of Victorian Commercial architecture in Saltsburg, it was built by John W. Robinson. Over the years the building housed the original Robinson Funeral Home, the Armory Hall, G. Wilson’s General Store, and Taylor’s General Merchandising Store. P.D. Shupe’s Hardware moved into the building in 1915 and remained there through the 1950s. Shupe is remembered for his fine merchandise and colorful window displays. Many children passed through the tall narrow door on the left and up the stairs to visit St. Nick.

-  HISTORIC BUILDING TOUR SITE
-  WEST PENN TRAIL HEAD KISKI SECTION
-  WEST PENN TRAIL HEAD SALTSBURG SECTION
-  WESTMORELAND HERITAGE TRAIL
-  1863 WEST PENN RAILROAD PIERS
-  HERB SOCIETY PROJECT
-  RIVER'S EDGE PARK & BOAT LAUNCH
-  PARKING
-  PUBLIC RESTROOMS
-  1863 RAILROAD
-  WEST PENN TRAIL / PATH OF MAIN LINE CANAL / 1884-1954 RAILROAD
-  WESTMORELAND HERITAGE TRAIL
-  CANAL PARK



## Historical Building Tour Key

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-  3 Robert McIlwain House, Saltsburg House
-  4 Altman Feed Mill
-  5 Martin's Restaurant
-  6 P. D. Shupe Building
-  7 Robert J. Taylor House
-  8 Saltsburg Bank Building
-  9 222 Point Street
-  10 Shields-Stear House
-  11 Free Gospel Church
-  12 Andrew Getty House
-  13 Saltsburg Methodist Church
-  14 801 Salt Street
-  15 I.O.O.F.
-  16 306 Point Street
-  17 Western Pennsylvania Railroad Station
-  18 Saltsburg Academy
-  19 John Martin House
-  20 Stone House
-  21 Saltsburg Presbyterian Church
-  22 J. B. Robinson House and Cabinet and Chair Shop
-  23 Andrew A. Taylor House
-  24 Lutheran Church (Sons of Zebedee)
-  25 218 Washington Street
-  26 216 Washington Street
-  27 McIlwain Stone House/Store
-  28 William McIlwain Warehouse
-  29 St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church

### 7. Robert J. Taylor House (1836)

Built by William Stewart, it is an excellent example of a two story commonbond Federal style structure with characteristic parapet chimneys and two story recessed porches in the rear ell which have been enclosed. To the east, there is a two story commonbond brick addition two bays wide that was originally used as a saddle shop. The central gabled dormer on the front facade was a Victorian addition with fishscale patterned shingles. The top lintels of the windows have bull's eye moulding. The central doorway has a brick semicircular arch with half-length sidelights and a fanlight above the door.

As typical for the period, the structure's original use was dual residential-commercial ("office-in-the-home") thus the extra eastern door in the main part of the building. Robert J. Taylor was a canal boat captain and had a saddle shop in his home. The addition to the east end was the home of the Saltsburg Bank upon its establishment in 1871 until it moved to its own building at 216 Point Street in 1875.

### 8. Saltsburg Bank Building 216 Point Street (1875)

A two story commonbond brick building with a flat roof. It has a Victorian commercial facade with bracketing and finials on the front cornice.

The Saltsburg Bank was established by William I. Sterett in 1871 and this building was its second home. Sterett had organized the Fairbanks Coal Company and served the banking needs of its workers from a room in his home. The Saltsburg Bank closed in 1890 and the building now serves as the Lion's Activity Center.

### 9. 222 Point Street (c.1880s)

A two story Victorian commercial frame building with overlapping board, beveled and German siding on the exterior. It has a gabled roof with extended cornice boards. There are carved Victorian brackets and dentil work in the cornice and Italianate windowheads on the east side.



The staff at All American Barber Shop maintains an old Saltsburg barber shop tradition of closing on Wednesdays.

### 10. Shields-Stear House 706 Salt Street (c.1830s)

A two story five bay commonbond brick Federal style house with a later three bay addition on the south side and three interior chimneys. The windowheads on the east side have bull's eye moulding.

Marshall Shields is best noted for his work on the section boat committee in 1848. By the 1840s the state was attempting to regulate what types of boats could be used on the Main Line Canal. Saltsburg's boat yards were noted by many as having the best section boats along the canal. Shield's committee worked to be sure the section boat remained legal transportation. Shields was also a school teacher and justice of the peace.

### 11. Free Gospel Church Salt Street (1843)

A three bay structure with a central gothic arched doorway with decorative brick corbelling in the step-gable end. The exterior of the structure is stucco-coated brick. There are twelve brick-framed gothic arched windows and a brick framed oculus window in the east gable end above the door. The chimney is located on the exterior of the north wall. The interior tin ceiling and walls are original, as is the baptismal.

### 12. Andrew Getty House 825 Salt Street (c.1840s)

An excellent example of a typical Pennsylvania vernacular frame house, two bays wide with a gable roof and rear shed-roofed addition.

This house, a stone's throw from the canal, was purchased by Andrew Getty in 1847. Getty, one of Saltsburg's most prominent individuals, was a schoolmaster and farmer at 18, and years later, a Universalist Church minister and operator of several canal boats. He also owned a steam-operated flouring mill. In 1871, he purchased a large tract of land on the hill on the north side of Saltsburg where Point Street intersects with Cathedral Street. As the town grew, it spread eastward, and the enterprising Andrew Getty sold lots.

### 13. Saltsburg Methodist Church 809 Salt Street (c.1850s)

A simple gothic stretcher brick structure with a cut stone foundation and brick dentil work on the west side separating the basement and first floors, built in a cross plan with painted gothic arched windows throughout. In the gable ends, there are oculus windows with leaded tracery in the form of a star.

### 14. 801 Salt Street (c.1828)

A two story frame house with ten gabled dormer windows in the mansard roof. There are Victorian scrolled brackets under the cornice and on the front porch. The windows have slightly arched top lintels. The one story addition to the northeast corner of the rear was the original summer kitchen which was moved up against the house.

The mansard roof is a later addition to the original 1828-32 structure built by Dr. Benjamin F. Sterett, Saltsburg's first

resident physician. Originally from Ireland, Dr. Sterett lived first in Virginia and then at Salem Crossroads (Delmont) before moving to Saltsburg. He purchased the home from a canal boat captain.

### 15. I.O.O.F. 605/607 Salt Street (c.1880s)

A three story 19th Century commercial Victorian structure built of commonbond brick having five doors and 25 windows (all one over one light). On the north and south sides there are (2 each) brick support columns that are corbelled at the bottom. In the west gable, there is a gothic arched louvered attic ventilator window. In the east gable, there is a rectangular attic window. All windows on the north, south and east sides have concrete top lintels while the windows on the west side have both concrete top and bottom lintels. There are stone beltcourses on the top of each floor; the last being between the third floor and attic. The cornice on the north and south sides has decorative brickwork. The four windows on the west side of the third floor have gothic arches. Between the first and second floors on the front there are three wooden Victorian brackets. The first floor front has been re-bricked and remodeled with a commercial picture window and two entrances. It also has decorative corner boards and 6 mullioned (6 over 6) windows.



Sorrella's Pizza has been serving up pies from this building since the late 1980s.

### 16. 306 Point Street



*P.J. Brown's Restaurant attracts regular diners from more than 40 miles. Emerson Guest House is the accompanying Bed and Breakfast.*

### 17. Western Pennsylvania Railroad Station (Saltsburg Borough Building) 312 Point Street (1864)

Built in 1864 by John Martin, the one story commonbond brick structure has a cut stone foundation. It has both single and double bay brick arched windows with shutters. The roof is gabled with extended eaves and roof braces, eleven in number. The trim around and above the windows and under the eaves is wood, painted white.

The Western Pennsylvania Railroad company contracted Samuel S. Jamison to build this building for a railroad freight and passenger station in the mid 1850s about the time the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal was closing. Saltsburg stone mason John Martin laid the brick. Both Jamison and Martin had built portions of the canal. Jamison also received the contract for the high bridge over the Kiskiminetas River. Martin would also do that stone work. Due to economic condition of start-up railroads at the time, the Western Pennsylvania was bankrupt by the end of the decade. But, in 1860, the North-western Pennsylvania Railroad Company purchased the depot and the rest of the line. In 1883, the railroad lines through Saltsburg were purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the tracks were moved to the canal trace along the river. The depot was replaced by a new one on the north side of

Washington Street near the present site of the Canal Park (a picture of the building is in the Things That Are Gone section of the brochure). The old depot became known as Town Hall and was used for civic events, high school dances, plays, and town meetings. Today it serves as Saltsburg's Borough Building.



*Four wayward cows stand in front of the old façade of the borough building, which served as the train station at the time. The doors in this photo are now inside the building and serve as an entry to the council chambers.*

### 18. Saltsburg Academy 401 High Street (1851)

A two story gabled roofed commonbond brick structure of Pennsylvania vernacular style with simplified Greek Revival overtones. There is a decorative brick cornice. A rectangular transom and sidelights surround the front door entrance while the south side door has rectangular transom lights but no sidelights.

Built in 1851 and opened in 1852 with 75 students, this coeducational school had the distinction of being the sixth academy established west of the Alleghenies. The community built the school at a cost of \$3,300. Contractor for the building was S. S. Jamison and the builder was John Martin. At the time, the Presbyterian Church was holding high school classes in the church basement. In 1870, the Church purchased the academy's shareholders' interests and renamed it Memorial Institute on April 3, 1871. Tuition was six to ten dollars for a five-month session. The Memorial Institute was closed by 1890 and from 1890 to 1912 housed several grades for the public school before passing into private ownership in the 1920s.

### 19. John Martin House 502 High Street (1850)

A two story frame dwelling five bays wide and three bays deep with a hipped roof and two wide chimneys located at the jointure of the roof slope. The east door is wide with a half hip cover roof. The supports for the porch are curved bars with round cut-out circles. There is cresting around the roof edge. On the north side there is a half six-sided porch roof with cresting, curved bar supports and circles. On the west side is a two story porch whose roof also has cresting. The front yard fence repeats the design of the cresting. The main part of the house has a cut stone foundation.

Built in 1850 for master stonemason John Martin, it was constructed of wood supplied by a carpenter to satisfy a sizeable debt he owed Martin. Martin, an Irishman who made his way to Saltsburg by way of Quebec, has left examples of his craftsmanship all over Saltsburg and through the Pittsburgh area. Among the many structures Martin built in Saltsburg are St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church, the Leech farmhouse near Saltsburg, the Saltsburg Academy, the addition on the Presbyterian church, the soldiers' monument at Edgewood Cemetery, and the High Bridge over the Kiskiminetas River – the railroad bridge, the piers of which still stand just north of the current Route 286 bridge. Martin had this house built in 1841 as a duplicate of the home he left in Enniskillen, Ireland.

### 20. Stone House 519 Salt Street (c.1830s)

A two story, five bay stone house with hipped roof and central doorway. On the front there is a Greek Revival porch c.1909-1927, two stories high with a second floor balcony and full length poured Ionic columns. There is also an elliptical pediment window in the gable of the front porch. Two interior end wall chimneys are present and to the rear there are two story recessed porches in the wing.

It is not known who carpenter John White built this grand old place for in 1830. What is known is that Dr. Thomas Murray, a noted physician and the first Burgess of Saltsburg borough lived here in 1836. Dr Murray's office was located in a building on the lot where the Presbyterian Church now stands.

### 21. Saltsburg Presbyterian Church Salt Street (1874)

A Gothic Revival style church with a gabled roof, four sided apse on the east gabled side and a corbelled tower on the northwest corner. The windows in the original church main part are all gothic arched, with stained glass; those in the addition have flat windowheads or are Norman arched by bricks. The original window and door arches have rounded or teardrop keystones with shamrocks cut in them. The south-western entrance has a recessed door with four arches formed by the brickwork. There are false buttresses on each side of the original church building. A circular window is located in the east and west gable ends. The brickwork around the main entrance to the church is reminiscent of the wood window posts on many of the houses in Saltsburg. The base and the area adjoining the architrave are wide while the post joining the two is narrower. The stained glass window in the front facade has a six pointed star in the arch formed by tracery. There are paired brackets and dentil work in each gable end. Two additions have been added; one on the north side and another on the east side. This is the fourth church built by the congregation. The total cost of the structure was \$27,765.

*In the parking lot beside the church you will find a marker for the old rail road bridge that once spanned the Conemaugh. Follow the steps up to the parking lot (or follow the Parking for Presbyterian Church sign on Point St. across from the borough building) and you'll find this old spring. Water from the spring was made available to the town by founder Andrew Boggs in 1816 with the expressed intent that it be maintained for public use and not destroyed for other construction or development.*



**22. J. B. Robinson House and Cabinet and Chair Shop**  
425 Salt Street (c. 1835)

A two story frame building, five bays wide with a gabled roof. There is decorative woodwork in the gable and on the front porch. There is a large classical arch with bull's eye moulding above the front entrance. The cabinet and chair shop was in the rear wing of the house. There is a one story recessed porch in the wing.

Factory-made furniture was only beginning to become popular between 1835 and 1870 when J.B. Robinson built his cabinets and chairs for Saltsburg's housekeepers and business people. Robinson lived in one part of the house and built his furniture in the other.

**23. Andrew A. Taylor House**  
413 Salt Street (c.1830s.)

A three bay, two story Federal style structure with a central doorway built of commonbond brick with a gabled roof and interior end chimneys.

Baker Andrew Taylor was noted along the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Main Line for his ginger cookies. It is said that when he heard a canal boat approaching, Andrew Taylor would run across the street to the canal to sell his cookies to the travelers.

**24. Lutheran Church (Sons of Zebedee)**  
422 Salt Street (1878)



This commonbond brick church is three bays wide and has a bell tower located in the front center. In the tower is a round stained glass window. There is a centrally located front door with arched stained glass windows on each side. The foundation is stone. There is false buttressing on the bell tower, the front facade of the main structure and the sides. There is a diamond pattern in the slate roof. All arches are gothic.

**McFarland/McIlwain properties, 210 to 218 Washington Street.**

These buildings are all Canal Era structures. 216 Washington Street was used by Dr. John McFarland as a drug store and a doctor's office in the mid-nineteenth century. Dr. McFarland lived next door in the house to the immediate left and was one of Saltsburg's most prominent residents. He served as an army surgeon, and as the first director of the Western Pennsylvania Railroad, the president of the Indiana County Medical Society, the director of the Saltsburg Academy, and as representative to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 1845-46. The McFarland buildings butted against the McIlwain Canal Mercantile Store, 212 Washington, first run by brothers Robert and William McIlwain, from 1829 through the Canal Era. From the 1850s through the mid 1870s, the store was run by Sterett, Robinson and Co. The frame structure at the right was once a warehouse and sat directly behind the store. Between 1871 and 1886, it was moved to its present location and remodeled.

The parking lot just east of this group of buildings was once the site of the J.M. Marshall house. John Marshall was the proprietor of a line of canal boats which operated between Blairsville and Pittsburgh, as well as a two-horse hack operation from Saltsburg to Indiana.



Washington Street as seen from across the Kiskiminetas River.

**25. 218 Washington Street (c.1850s)**

A two story commonbond brick with scrolled Victorian bracketing in the cornice and an oculus window in the front gablette.

**26. 216 Washington Street (1840)**

A two story Federal-style dwelling four bays wide. There were originally two front doors in the structure, but one has been removed. This Canal-era building was used as Dr. McFarland's drug store and doctor's office.

**27. McIlwain Stone House/Store**  
212 Washington Street (1827)

A two story vernacular rubble stone structure with dressed stone corners, it is five bays wide and has a shallow Hellenic pediment over the central doorway. There is a gabled roof and interior end chimneys. Originally used as the first home of the William McIlwain canal mercantile store.

**28. William McIlwain Warehouse**  
210 Washington Street (c.1830s)

A two story frame house with a gabled roof and central chimney; it was originally used as a canal warehouse and moved to this site. The windows and door on the north side have battened side trim.

**29. St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church**  
Cathedral Street (1847)

A simple Pennsylvania vernacular one-story brick church built under the auspices of Father Boniface Wimmer as a mission church in 1847. It is 40 feet long and 35 feet wide with a centrally located door in the south gable end. Flanking the front door (which has a transom) are two rectangular



windows with wooden tracery forming gothic arches. It has a dressed cut stone foundation. The bell tower has been removed. There are four windows on the sides (east and west) and no windows in the north gable end.

Father Wimmer was to become the first Arch Abbot in America and was the founder of St. Vincent's Seminary in Latrobe, Pa. He left vestments in the church so that priests traveling west on the Pennsylvania Canal could stop at St. Matthew's to celebrate Mass. The church was built by John Martin as a "thank you" offering to the Sisters of Charity of Quebec, Canada for saving his father's life from cholera. The bricks were baked in a little run near the church. The kiln was built by John Martin and the foundation stones were brought by canal barge to Martin's Stoneyard.

**Geologic History**

*Salt in the Conemaugh Valley*,  
Dzbomak, William. Closson Press, 2004. This comprehensive volume is available for purchase through the Saltsburg Area Historical Society. Mr. Dzbomak graciously donated all future proceeds from the book to the Society.

**Canal, Rail, and Other Historic Resources**

*The PA Canal in Indiana and Westmoreland Counties*,  
C.D. Stephenson, A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., Inc., Indiana PA, 1979  
*Saltsburg and The Pennsylvania Canal*,  
George B. Johnson, Historic Saltsburg Inc., Saltsburg PA, 1984.  
*History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania*,  
(series) originally published by J.A. Caldwell, Newark OH, 1880;  
reprinted Higgins Book Company, Salem MA.  
*Pennsylvania Main Line Canal Juniata and Western Divisions: Special Study*,  
David Fritz and A. Berle Clemensen, U.S. Department of the Interior,  
National Park Service, 1993.

**Community Design/Sustainability**

*Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania:  
Ideas for Creating More Livable and Prosperous Communities*,  
Edward T. McMahon and Shelley S. Mastran, The Conservation Fund and PA Department  
of Conservation and Natural Resources, 2005.

**Keystone Principles**

The Keystone Principles and Criteria for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation describe a coordinated interagency approach to fostering sustainable economic development and conservation of resources through the state's investments in Pennsylvania's diverse communities.  
[www.newpa.com](http://www.newpa.com)

**Historic Preservation**

**National Trust for Historic Preservation**  
Provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities.  
[www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org) • (202) 588-6000 or (800) 944-6847

**Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission**

The official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, responsible for the collection, conservation, and interpretation of Pennsylvania's historic heritage, which is accomplished through the Pennsylvania State Archives, the State Museum of Pennsylvania, the Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums, the Pennsylvania Trails of History, the Bureau for Historic Preservation, and the Bureau of Management Services.  
[www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us) • (717) 787-3362

**HeritagePA**

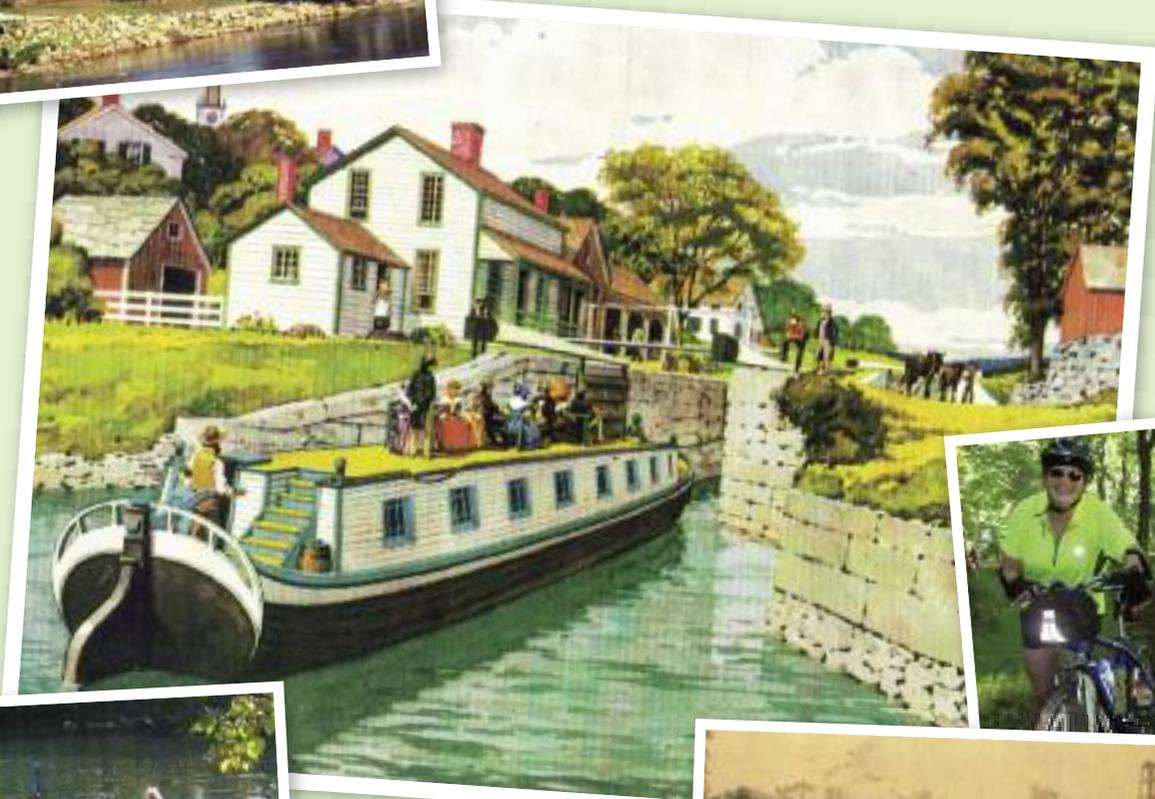
PA Heritage Areas are large geographic regions that contain a multitude of inter-related historic, recreational, natural and scenic resources of state and national significance that collectively exemplify the heritage of Pennsylvania.  
[www.heritagepa.net](http://www.heritagepa.net)

**Eastern Native American History**

*A History of the Indiana Villages and Place Names in Pennsylvania*,  
Dr. George P. Donehoo, Wennawoods Publishing, Lewisburg PA, 1999.  
*The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*,  
C. Hale Sipe, Wennawoods Publishing, Lewisburg PA, 1999.  
*The Indiana Chiefs of Pennsylvania*,  
C. Hale Sipe, Wennawoods Publishing, Lewisburg PA, 1999.  
"Vanished Indian Trails of Western Pennsylvania: Through Indiana County"  
This interpretive map display is housed at the Indiana County Historic Museum and includes all native trails throughout the western part of the state. Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, 200 South 6th Street, Indiana, PA, 15701.  
(724) 463-9600



◀ Rivers Edge Park and canoe/kayak launch.



Shown is the only known photograph of a salt well in the Conemaugh Valley. ▶



**The Rebecca B. Hadden  
Stone House Museum**

105 Point St./P.O. Box 12  
Saltsburg, PA 15681  
724-639-9003



The Saltsburg Area Historical Society owns and operates the Museum, which has survived many floods and has been standing since the days of the operation of the canal.

The Society relies on community and visitor donations to maintain the property. Please stop by, visit, and contribute, or send a tax-deductible donation to the address above.

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**Thank You!**



◀ Piers from the 1863 rail road alignment greet visitors to Saltsburg, sitting just north of the Rt. 286 bridge into town.

**From Downtown Pittsburgh:**

I-376 12 miles east to Monroeville; I-376 becomes US 22; US 22 East about 18 miles to PA 981 North at New Alexandria; Left on PA 981 North about 8 miles to PA 286, cross bridge over Conemaugh River into town.

**From Johnstown/Altoona:**

US 22 West to PA 981 North at New Alexandria; right on 981 North about 8 miles to PA 286, cross bridge into town.

**From Indiana:**

PA 286 West for 20 miles to Salt Street.



Please cut off and send in this form with your donation

**Saltsburg... 1 hour from Pittsburgh and Johnstown,  
30 minutes from Greensburg and Indiana.**