

# Follow In The Footsteps of George Taylor

Signer of The Declaration of Independence



Photo Courtesy: Marx Room/  
Easton Area Public Library



---

George Taylor arrived in Philadelphia as an indentured servant in 1736. He lived in Bucks, Lehigh, and Northampton Counties for most of his life.

This self-guided tour booklet takes you along  
The George Taylor Trail.

# Mysteries & Questions

1. Supposedly George Taylor was born in Northern Ireland but some think England. Where? When? Early Life? The Geographist-Founding Fathers states that Taylor was 20 years old (1736) before anything conclusive was recorded.
2. **Portraits:** Records indicate there were four portraits, but only one can be traced. It was rolled up and moved to Virginia. Several years later when it was found and unrolled, it was so dry that the paint crumbled into pieces and fell off the canvas. What happened to the other three?
3. **Will:** It often happened in the past that people looking for authentic autographs of famous people would buy, steal or whatever, papers from archives. It is thought that Taylor's will may have been stolen, but all we know for sure is the fact that it ended up in the estate of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet, who collected signatures of Signers of the Declaration of Independence. When Emmet died the collection was sold to the New York Public Library where it remains today.
4. Where is Ann Taylor buried?
5. What happened to Taylor's housekeeper, Naomi Smith, and their five children?
6. Where did Taylor live when he was in Greenwich, New Jersey, in 1779?
7. Was there a grave marker for George Taylor when he was buried in St. John's Cemetery? If yes, what happened to it? Was it moved along with his remains?
8. James Taylor, his son, was buried at St. John's Cemetery. Was his body moved? If not, is it in the Grave Cellar? Was there a gravestone?
9. Taylor's daughter Ann died young. After his son James died, his widow and children went to live with Taylor. What happened to them after Taylor died?



# Introduction

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress met in Philadelphia and approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence. At the time not all the colonists were favor of their decision. Had the outcome of the war been different, that document might have been their death warrant. In August 1776, a group of fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence, knowing they risked being labeled “a traitor.” Five were captured by the British and tortured while others had their homes looted or destroyed. No doubt it was fear of reprisal that was the reason a local delegate changed his mind about signing the official document and Taylor took his place.

Nine signers were from Pennsylvania:

George Clymer

George Ross

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Rush

Robert Morris

James Smith

John Morton

James Wilson

and our own “claim to fame,” **George Taylor**.

---

## TIME LINE:

---

**1736:** Taylor emigrated to Philadelphia, started a career in iron making and worked at the **Durham Furnace** when he signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

**1761 – 1779:** Taylor purchased the 1753 **Bachmann Publick House** and added an extension on to the original structure in mid 1760s. He owned it for 18 years living and conducting business in the structure.

**1767:** Taylor purchased 331 acres in what is now Lower Catasauqua which included a stone house. **The Taylor House** in Catasauqua remains today. He lived there until 1772 or possibly 1774.

**1778:** January and February. Taylor was involved in the last Indian Treaty held in Easton which met at what is now the **First United Church of Christ** of Easton, PA.

**1779/1780:** Taylor leased what is now the **Parsons-Taylor House** until his death on February 23, 1781.

**1781:** Taylor was buried in the **St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church**. He was a member of that church but the dates are unclear.

**1854:** A monument was erected in **Easton Cemetery** in honor of Taylor as signer of Declaration of Independence.

**1870:** Taylor’s body was moved from St. John’s Lutheran Church graveyard on Ferry Street to **Easton Cemetery**.

**Easton Area Public Library:** Research into the various of portraits of George Taylor, one of which is in the Marx Room.

**Northampton County Archives:** Research into why Taylor’s will is in the Archives of the New York Public Library.

# 1753 Bachmann Publick House



**Name of Site:** 1753 Bachmann Publick House

**Address:** 169 Northampton Street, Easton, PA 18042

**Phone Number:** 484-291-1050

**Website:** <http://nchgspa.org>

**Contact Person:** [info@northamptonctymuseum.org](mailto:info@northamptonctymuseum.org)

**Open:** Thursday – Saturday 10am – 4pm and Sunday 12 noon – 4pm

# 1753 Bachmann Publick House

Built in 1753 by Swiss immigrants Jacob and Katrina Bachmann, the 1753 Bachmann Publick House is one of Easton's oldest surviving structures. It is located one block east of Centre Square in downtown Easton, Pennsylvania.

The structure played an important role in the newly formed Northampton County, serving as a place of respite, dining, refreshment, conversation, and a gathering place for locals and travelers. Visitors would hear many languages spoken here, including German, English, and Lenape.

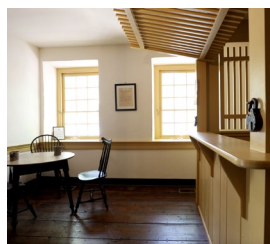
Private rooms and other places to sleep could be rented by people traveling through the area. Their horses would be boarded for the night in the nearby stables. A large room on the second floor was rented out for meeting spaces. The newly formed county government used the room as one of Northampton County's first courtrooms.

George Taylor acquired the structure at a sheriff's sale on December 23, 1761. He added an additional wing to the structure which increased the size to allow for additional boarding and dining.

George Taylor hired Theophilus Shannon to serve as the innkeeper. Shannon ran the business with Cudjo, an enslaved man.

On September 22, 1777, Founding Father John Adams noted that he "dined at Shannon's in Easton at the Forks." This note implies that George Taylor was minimally involved in the running of daily operations of the publick house while he owned it. Interestingly, John Adams and George Taylor did know each other. They both signed the Declaration of Independence the year before.

Taylor owned the structure until 1779, a year before his death. He sold the property outright to his longtime employee, Theophilus Shannon.





# Durham Historical Society



**Name of Site:** George Taylor's Durham Furnace

**Address:** 955 Durham Road, Durham, PA 18039

**Website:** [www.durhamhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.durhamhistoricalsociety.org)

**Contact Person:** [info@durhamhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@durhamhistoricalsociety.org)

**Open:** Village Green is open to the public. The old Furnace walls may be viewed by appointment or on Durham Day.

# Durham Historical Society

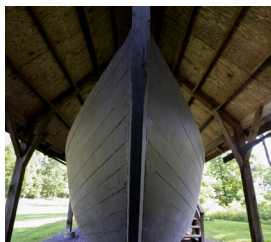
The small Village of Durham at the extreme northeast corner of Bucks County features a magnificent old Mill which was built on the foundation of the 1727 Durham Furnace. The Mill building consists of two parts; the pebble-dashed stuccoed 1820 Mill and a brick warehouse built in 1912. Date stones can be seen at the peaks of both sections. The warehouse was built entirely out of recycled materials (beams, bricks, etc.) salvaged from the second Durham Furnace located downstream.

A full scale replica of a Durham Boat is on the Village Green to the north of the Mill. These boats were used by George Taylor to transport Furnace products to the Philadelphia markets, including cannon balls, iron cookware and stoves. Initially, these items were transported by wagon, but after the Durham boat was designed and constructed by Robert Durham, it was far less expensive to transport things down river by boat.

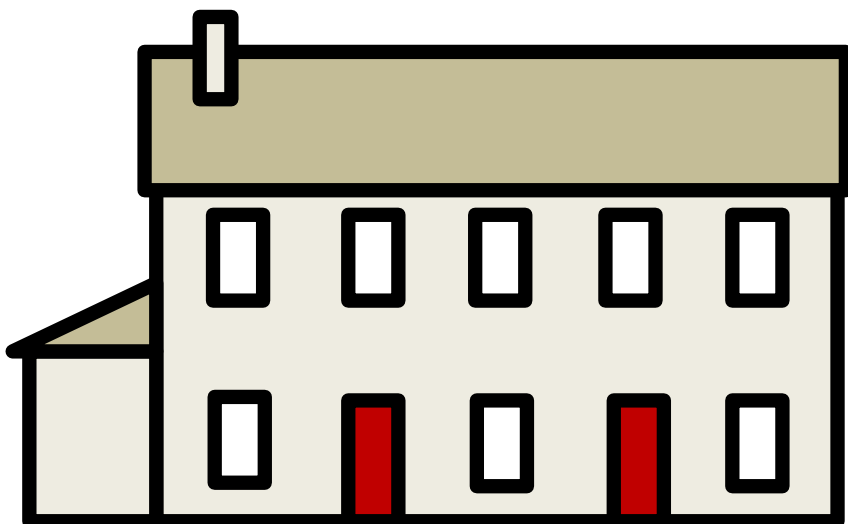
To the south of the Mill are the remains of what is thought to be the fore bay of the 1727 Furnace. Iron ore dug from the surrounding hills, limestone from the area, and charcoal made from the abundant forests of the time, made the Furnace one of the most efficient in the colonies. Just above and to the right of the archway stands a magnificent sycamore tree. It has been recently measured and it is reasonable to suppose that it was a sapling at the time Taylor was here.

Although Taylor's residence, the Mansion House, was burnt through an act of arson in the mid-18th century, another home was built on its foundation. Although it is a private dwelling and unavailable for viewing, it does exist about a quarter mile away from the historic site.

Cooks Creek, the source of water that powered the bellows and other equipment that was used at the Furnace and Forge flows along the north edge of the Green. A dam had been built  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile upstream on the Creek and a Mill race (remains of which can be seen today) and a Mill pond were constructed to direct a continuous water supply to the Furnace. Along the creek can also be seen the old railway bed on which operated the Quakertown Eastern Railroad (the "Q&E"). Fashioned archways over the Mill's tail race and other water sources feeding the Creek can be observed.



# First United Church of Christ



**Name of Site:** First United Church of Christ

**Address:** 27 North 3rd Street, Easton, PA 18042

**Phone Number:** 610-258-3361 (church office)

**Website:** [www.firstucceaston.org](http://www.firstucceaston.org)

**Contact Person:** Church Office at [firstucc2@verizon.net](mailto:firstucc2@verizon.net) or  
Wendy Wandersee at [dwandersee@enter.net](mailto:dwandersee@enter.net)

**Open:** Tours are given by appointment and on Heritage Day (first Sunday after the 4th of July) and Candle Lighting (Friday after Thanksgiving); worship service every Sunday at 10:00 a.m.



# First United Church of Christ

The church was built as a joint effort of the German Reformed Congregation and the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, both of Easton. The interior and front of the church were altered and the Steeple added in 1832 after the Lutheran congregation built St. John's on Ferry Street. The church was dedicated on November 17, 1776, but by mid-December the building was commandeered by the fledgling Continental Congress as a hospital for Revolutionary War soldiers.

In late January those soldiers were moved out for a short time to accommodate holding the seventh, and last, Easton-based Indian Treaty, held January 29 through 31, 1777. A large group of the Six Nations requested meeting in "Eastown," rather than Philadelphia, to avoid Small Pox and other diseases that were so prevalent at the time. The Council of Safety of Pennsylvania agreed.

*Colonel Joseph Dean* and *Colonel John Bull* were appointed on January 20 to facilitate the meetings. The next day *Thomas Payne* (of *Common Sense* fame) was appointed Secretary to the Commissioners. Finally, *George Walton* and *George Taylor, esquires*, were chosen to procure charge such gifts as may be suitable and given \$1,000 to purchase them.

Among the gifts that were deemed suitable included black and white wampum (beads), broaches, ear-bobs and camp kettles. Paine wrote, "The Commissioners, with a thousand dollars' worth of presents, met the Indian chiefs in the German Reformed Church and, after shaking hands, drinking rum, while the organ played, we proceeded to business." Paine was paid 300 pounds by the Pennsylvania Assembly for his services at the Treaty. (*Moncure Conway's Life of Thomas Paine*, pg. 34)

*George Taylor*, a patriot who had signed the Declaration of Independence, was a good choice. He had lived in Eastown from 1763 to 1768 and was instrumental in designing and building the Courthouse in Center Square. He was often involved in the local politics until May 1777, when he retired from public service due to ill health and went to live at 4th and Ferry Streets in what is now known as the Parsons-Taylor House.

The official intent of this Treaty was to get the powerful Confederacy of the Six Nations firmly behind the colonists, providing peace to the West and allowing them to focus their energies toward the British enemy to the East. Sadly, the Treaty soon was declared null and void since it turned out the Native delegation had no power to make a Treaty.

The Church continued to be used as a hospital, as needed, until April 1778. It has a room devoted to the history of the church with pictures and memorabilia. It is well worth a visit.

# George Taylor House – Catasauqua



**Name of Site:** The George Taylor House

**Address:** 35 South Front Street Catasauqua, Pennsylvania 18032

**Phone Number:** 610-264-0541 x251

**Website:** [www.georgetaylorhouse.org](http://www.georgetaylorhouse.org)  
or find the George Taylor House on Facebook

**Open:** Guided tours are given every third Saturday from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM, April through October. Annual July 4th Reading of the Declaration of Independence brings history to life with a dramatic reading, music and reenactments. Special events throughout the year.

# George Taylor House – Catasauqua

The George Taylor House, a National Historic Landmark, was built in 1768 and stands as a testament to colonial America and the remarkable life of George Taylor. In 1767, Taylor purchased a 331-acre tract along the Lehigh River from Thomas and Susannah Armstrong. Known as the Manor of Chawton, this land became the site of his elegant Georgian-style mansion. The house featured five-bay-wide, two-bay-deep rectangular design, paired brick chimneys, and gable roof with a flattened ridge, reflecting the architectural sophistication of the period. The main floor features two original fireback plates, forged in Taylor's ironworks, inscribed with "G.T. 1768," serving as enduring marks of his craftsmanship.

In 1776, Taylor sold the property to John Benezet, a Philadelphia merchant. Over the years, the house changed hands multiple times. From 1782 to 1796, it was owned by David Deshler, a prominent early Pennsylvania figure. Born in Switzerland in 1734, Deshler immigrated as an infant and later became a key figure in Northampton Town (now Allentown), establishing its first industries. His properties played a role in the Revolutionary War by manufacturing and storing munitions for the Continental Army. Deshler also served in public office, including as a Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly member and a delegate to the state convention that ratified the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

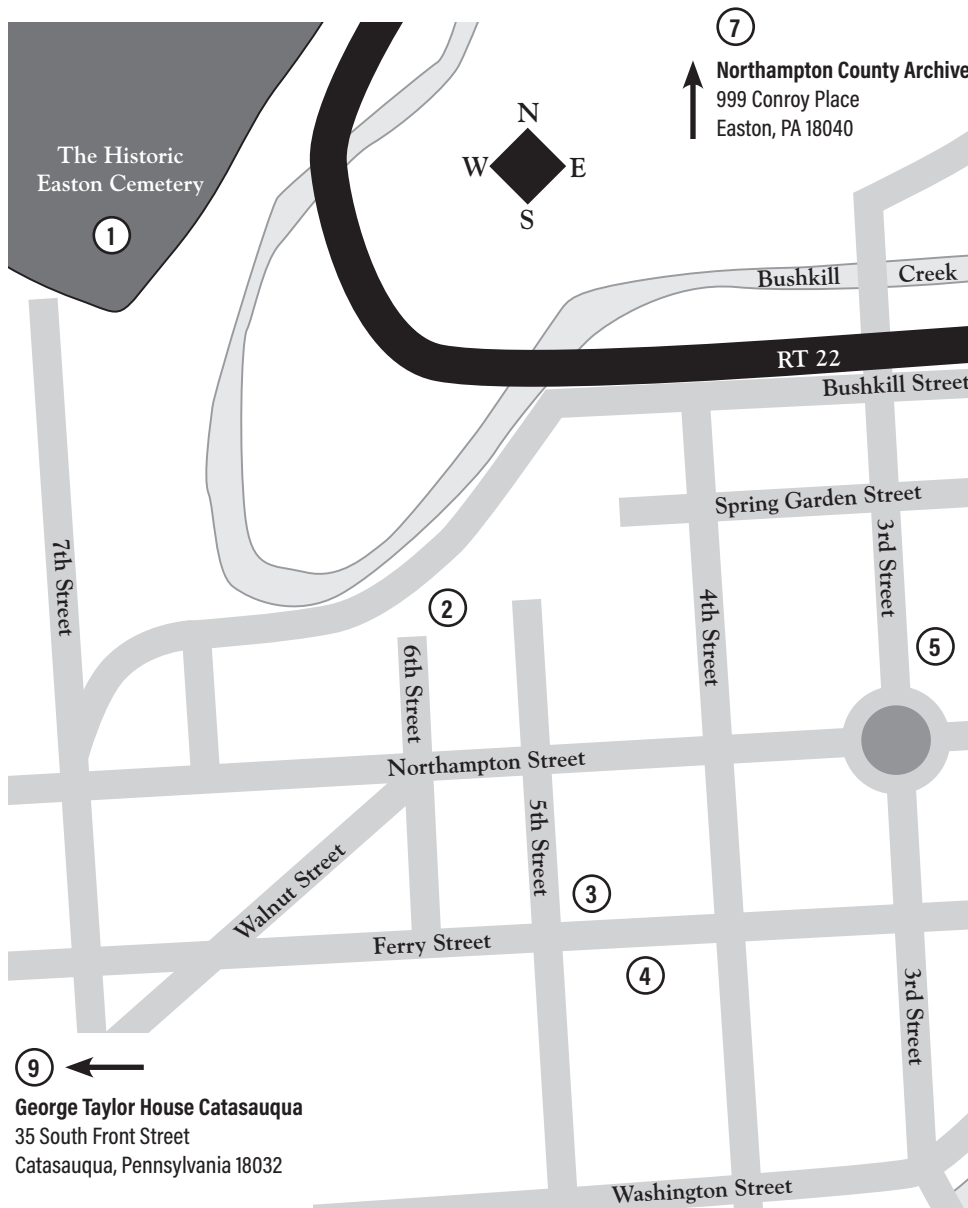
A pivotal moment in the house's history occurred in 1839 when David Thomas, a Welsh immigrant and pioneering ironmaster, met with local investors within its walls. This meeting led to the founding of the Crane Iron Works, marking the birth of the anthracite iron industry in the United States and the establishment of the town that would become Catasauqua.

In the late 19th century, the Wahneta Silk Company acquired the property and built a mill in front of the house around 1890. After years of neglect, the Lehigh County Historical Society purchased the house in 1945, initiating restoration efforts to preserve its historical significance. Today, the George Taylor House remains an enduring symbol of America's colonial and industrial past.

Visitors to the George Taylor House can explore the rich history of the Manor of Chawton and its colonial significance. Guided tours, led by knowledgeable volunteers from the George Taylor House Association—including the author of *George Taylor: Signer of the Declaration of Independence*—offer insights into the home's architecture, Taylor's life, and the era's broader historical context.

The house hosts engaging programs throughout the year. Special events feature hands-on experiences, including reenactor interactions, colonial trade demonstrations, and reproduction artifacts, enhancing the educational experience. Additional events, including theatrical murder mysteries and seasonal gatherings, offer unique opportunities to connect with colonial and Revolutionary War history. Set along the Lehigh River, the scenic grounds provide a peaceful glimpse into the past.

Written by: Candace Maxwell, George Taylor House Association



# George Taylor Trail Stops



1. Historic Easton Cemetery
2. Easton Area Public Library
3. Parsons-Taylor House
4. St. John's Lutheran Church
5. First United Church of Christ
6. 1753 Bachmann Publick House
7. Northampton County Archives
8. Durham Iron Furnace
9. George Taylor House - Catasauqua



Photo Courtesy: Marx Room/  
Easton Area Public Library

# Historic Easton Cemetery



**Name of Site:** Historic Easton Cemetery

**Address:** 401 N. 7th Street Easton PA 18042

**Phone Number:** (610) 252-1741 Cemetery Office

**Website:** [www.thehistoriceastoncemetery.org](http://www.thehistoriceastoncemetery.org)

**Contact Person:** [friends@thehistoriceastoncemetery.org](mailto:friends@thehistoriceastoncemetery.org)

**Open:** everyday from 8:00 am to dusk, weather-permitting.

**Events:** Visit our website, Instagram: [@thehistoriceastoncemetery](https://www.instagram.com/thehistoriceastoncemetery) or Facebook: [historiceastoncemetery](https://www.facebook.com/historiceastoncemetery) for more information.



# Historic Easton Cemetery

Easton Cemetery is an excellent example of the rural cemetery movement which was so important in America in the mid-1800s. Most burials at the time were in churchyards or family graveyards. As towns grew there arose a need for more burial space and more sanitary standards to be followed. In Easton, Dr. Traill Green was very much aware of this problem and the need for outdoor recreation space for the citizens. When Easton Cemetery opened in 1849 through his efforts, the city had both.

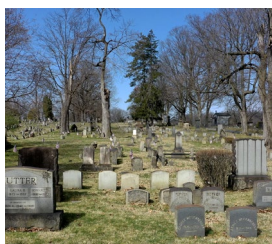
Today, cemeteries from this era are special places that are more like outdoor museums and history books rolled into one. Church records are often lost, destroyed or non-existent, but, unless damaged by vandals, pollution or other forces, cemetery monuments remain permanently.

The cemetery was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Of more significance is the monument and burial site of George Taylor, signer of the Declaration of Independence. There is no group of names in the history of our country which attracts more special attention than the names of those who signed that document. This simple act created immortality, but if the rebellion had failed it would have been their death warrant. Of the 56 signers, Taylor was one of only eight who were foreign born, the only one who had been an indentured servant and the only one to hold the position of ironmaster.

In 1854 there was money left from a fundraising campaign to pay for a formal celebration of the opening of the Belvidere and Delaware Railroad. That money, plus additional fund raising efforts, was enough to build the first monument in the country honoring a signer and paid for with public funds.

The monument occupies one of the most prominent points in the cemetery, in front of the chapel. The monument is over 20 feet tall, made of Italian marble and was carved by the Henry S. Tarr company in Philadelphia at a cost of \$2500. The monument dedication was quite the event as the town shut down and a large parade, complete with flags, several bands and military units, marched from Centre Square to the Cemetery. More than 10,000 people attended; businesses and the courts were suspended for the day.

At that time George Taylor's remains were in the cemetery of St. John's Lutheran Church at 4th and Ferry Streets in Easton. On April 20, 1870, his remains were moved to Easton Cemetery in front of his monument when the cemetery land was sold.



# Marx Room – Easton Public Library



**Name of Site:** Marx Room/Easton Area Public Library

**Address:** 515 Church Street, Easton, PA 18042

**Phone Number:** 610-258-2917, ext. 309

**Website:** [eastonpl.org](http://eastonpl.org)

**Open:** Marx Room Open: Mon-Fri. 10:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00 p.m.  
Sat. 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-5:00 p.m.

# Marx Room – Easton Public Library

Do we really know George Taylor's image?

In 1912, Dr. M. S. Seip, a resident of Easton, PA, gave a talk on George Taylor and his many portraits. He mentioned that when he was visiting Independence Hall and seeing NO portrait of Taylor among the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Dr. Seip decided to seek out a likeness. Thinking it would be easy, he soon found it was far more difficult than he expected! Dr. Seip found many head sketches of Taylor, but most of them were profiles. He searched many books and places but found no real history or solid information behind these sketches.

Dr. Seip had a conversation with a local resident descended from Taylor, Joseph Litsinger, who mentioned that his aunt, Mrs. Ella Custard, owned a “sketch taken indirectly from an oil painting of Taylor and several silhouettes.” Family lore was that this sketch came from another drawing known as the Silcox sketch, named after the family that had ownership. Around 1860, the Silcox sketch was supposedly copied from a long ago destroyed painting of Taylor. In the end, Independence Hall agreed the sketch that Mrs. Custard owned could be used for the official portrait of George Taylor.

Miss Laura Schneider, artist, of Easton, was chosen to paint the portrait. On December 7, 1912, the portrait was taken to Philadelphia and presented to Independence Hall with great fanfare. The painting was the gift of Washington Camp No. 47, Patriotic Order, Sons of America, of Easton. The parade had representatives from all the camps from Philadelphia and vicinity along with more than 200 men from Easton followed by a program at Independence Hall with several speakers.

In 1917, the Rotary Club of Easton, commissioned Miss Schneider again, to paint the same portrait of George Taylor and it was presented to the Easton Area Public Library. It may be viewed today along with the Easton Flag in the Henry Marx Historical Room at the Easton Area Public Library.

The Library itself has quite a history. The Easton Library Company was formed in 1811 when 100 shares of stock were sold to the public. Four years later a red brick building still standing on the corner of Second and Church Streets was constructed. In 1901 Andrew Carnegie donated \$50,000 for the construction of a new building at the present location, at that time the oldest cemetery in Easton which no longer was in use.

The Marx Room is part of the Easton Area Public Library and is named in honor of Henry Marx, the director of the library when the new building opened. He held that position until 1936. Marx recognized the importance of preserving the past and he set aside a small room in the new library to house his collection of pictures, manuscripts and newspapers related to local history. He continued to add materials after his retirement and a room was dedicated in his honor in 1950. In his later years he served as secretary, president and historian of the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society. He is buried in Easton Cemetery.

# Northampton County Archives



**Name of Site:** Northampton County Archives

**Address:** 999 Conroy Place, Easton, PA 18040

**Phone Number:** 610-829-1220

**Website:** <https://norcopa.gov/archives>

**Contact Person:** Sarah Ferry, Archives Officer

**Open:** Monday - Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Closed on holidays

# Northampton County Archives

The first mention of the Northampton County Archives dates to a 1791 Court document: "...for erecting a building for the safe keeping of the public records of the County of Northampton"

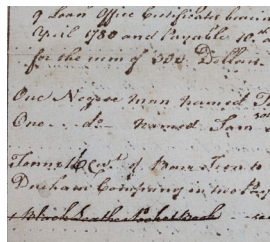
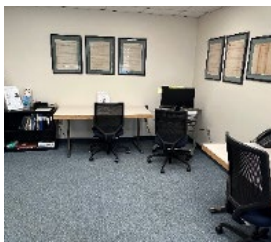
At Northampton County Archives, we hold the county's legal historical records and serve as a records center for modern day county records. We have 270+ years' worth of records, with many that pre-date the American Revolution. Alongside our oldest records, lives the Estate record of George Taylor.

When looking at George Taylor's Estate record, you will find various legal documents such as an inventory and a settlement; but there is one crucial document that was discovered missing in 1925- the Last Will and Testament. It wasn't until many years later that we learned the Last Will and Testament of George Taylor, ended up in the collection of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet. Dr. Emmet eventually sold his collection to the New York Public Library, where the will remains to this day.

In addition to being a repository for legal historical records, we help researchers, members of the public, and county offices daily with their records request. Some of the oldest records we have in our inventory are Tax Assessments, Deeds, Estate Records, Court Records, and our copy of the Oath of Allegiance, taken by colonists to prove they were patriots, not loyalists to the Crown.

We can help with researching family history, deed searches, finding documents to submit for The Sons/Daughters of the American Revolution application, and other historical documentation needs.

We are open Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm, closed on holidays. If you have a more in-depth research project, we suggest calling ahead or sending us an email so our staff can better assist you.





# Parsons-Taylor House



**Name of Site:** Parsons-Taylor House/DAR

**Address:** 60 South Fourth Street, Easton, PA 18042

**Website:** [www.georgetaylordar.org](http://www.georgetaylordar.org)

**Contact:** [parsonstaylorhousetours@gmail.com](mailto:parsonstaylorhousetours@gmail.com)

**Open:** Heritage Day in Easton, PA

**To schedule a tour :** [parsonstaylorhousetours@gmail.com](mailto:parsonstaylorhousetours@gmail.com)

Learn more about the George Taylor Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution by following us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.



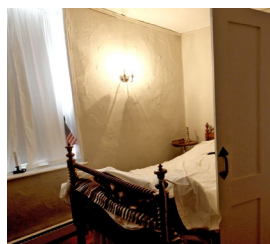
# Parsons-Taylor House

The Parsons-Taylor house was constructed on town lot No. 176 by William Parsons between 1753 and 1757. The house is a simple two bay Georgian stone structure that is 2 1/2 stories high, with a gable roof. The three windows on the first story are shuttered while the four upstairs are not. Twin chimneys are located on the north side of the building and are set flush with the outer wall. There are two doors which give access to the single room of the first floor. The house was built using random cut stone from a nearby quarry and is bonded by burnt limestone mortar.

William Parsons was born in England 1701 and arrived at Philadelphia in 1720, where he practiced the cobbler's trade. He accumulated enough funds to marry Christiana Zeidig and to also pursue the study of mathematics. Parsons soon displayed a great proficiency in mathematics and became a close friend of Benjamin Franklin. Parsons helped Franklin found the Junto Debating Club, which later became the American Philosophical Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the Union Fire Fighting Company.

Parson's abilities as a mathematician enabled him to become a successful surveyor. In 1741, he became the Surveyor General of Pennsylvania. Among his most notable accomplishments was the laying out of Reading. As the agent of Thomas Penn, he later laid out the site of Easton and established the new county's government in 1752. Parsons served as Justice of the Peace and School Commissioner. During the French and Indian War, he organized the frontier defense against attack and cared for displaced settlers. Parsons died in his new house on December 17, 1757.

In 1780, **George Taylor** leased this stone dwelling and once more brought it into the historical limelight. Pioneer industrialist, civic leader and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, George Taylor played a large role in the early development of the Lehigh Valley. Born in 1716, he arrived in Pennsylvania in 1736 and entered the burgeoning colonial iron industry. Through hard work and a fortunate marriage, he became the manager of the Warwick Furnace in 1742 and the Durham Furnace in 1775. Taylor did much to help the industrial development of the Upper Delaware Valley. Due to a dispute over the seizure of "Tory" properties, Taylor lost control of some properties in 1778. Although he later resumed operations with new partners, he was never able to bring back profitability. Moving to New Jersey, Taylor operated the Greenwich Forge, near Philipsburg until his death. During his final year, he returned to Easton where he leased the Parsons house. He died in the upstairs bedroom of this structure on February 23, 1781.



# St. John's Lutheran Church



**Name of Site:** Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

**Address:** 330 Ferry Street Easton, PA 18042

**Phone Number:** 610-258-6119

**Website:** [www.stjohnseaston.org](http://www.stjohnseaston.org)

**Open:** Archives, Grave Cellar, and Building Tours, by Appointment

# St. John's Lutheran Church

Many early settlers at the Forks of the Delaware were Lutherans coming to this area from Germany at William Penn's invitation to escape religious persecution. Records show a Swedish Lutheran minister, the Reverend Andreas Rudman, traveled the area and provided Lutheran worship as early as 1702. A large influx of German speaking immigrants arrived in the Lehigh Valley between 1730 and 1740. The first records of an established congregation of German Lutherans is dated 1740, ten years before Easton was established. The first building was a small log building on Philadelphia Road about one mile south of Easton.

The German Reformed and German Lutherans jointly built a log structure at the northwest corner of Church and Sitgreaves Streets in 1755 which was used as a church and a school. The local Moravians built a stone brother house on S. Pomfret Street (now 3rd Street) south of Ferry Street in 1762. The Moravians never used the building and in 1763 sold the property to the German Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Lutherans used the building as a parsonage and church until the completion of the Union church building (today First UCC) on North 3rd Street in 1776. A Lutheran Cemetery was established on the west-end of the Moravian property. Many prominent Easton residents were buried in the cemetery including George Taylor at his death in 1781.

As the Lutheran Congregation grew and hoped for additional programs and ministry, the construction of the present brick building occurred during 1830 and 1831. The building was consecrated January 1, 1832. For the first time the congregation was called St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The first Sunday School was organized.

The building was erected over a portion of the Lutheran Cemetery. To this day the 'grave cellar' is still the resting place of early members buried in that portion of the Cemetery. The western portion of the Cemetery was sold to the Easton School Board in 1870. At this time, bodies were exhumed and moved to the Easton Cemetery, including the body of George Taylor. The proceeds from the sale were used to purchase the Zion Lutheran Church building at 5th and Church Streets for use by members who wanted to worship still in German.

In 1873 the Easton School Board opened an elementary school on the cemetery site named the Taylor School. The building was used by many St. John's neighborhood children until its destruction in 1962. It was then repurchased by St. John's after a heated debate with a contractor who wanted to build an apartment building. At this time, Zion Lutheran Church closed and their members returned to St. John's. The sale of their building helped to repurchase the area west of the present church building. This plot of ground became a parking lot and a city playground. Later the playground was closed and the whole area became the parking lot.



Photo Courtesy: Marx Room/  
Easton Area Public Library



**This booklet was made possible  
by a 2024 Northampton County  
Hotel Tax grant and  
contributions from George Taylor  
Trail participants. Thank you.**

---

**For more information, go to  
[discoverlehighvalley.com/georgetaylortrail](https://discoverlehighvalley.com/georgetaylortrail)**