



SUSQUEHANNA RIVER VALLEY

every turn a treasure®

Native Paths Driving Tour



Discovering
Native Paths of the
Susquehanna River
Valley's West Branch



Sego! (Greetings!)

Welcome to Otzinachson, the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. 270 years ago, during the colonial period, this place was on the southern edge of Iroquoia. It was here that Native Americans, colonists, and Europeans came together to trade, negotiate and live.



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Contact Us For More Information

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This tour will take you

along the Native paths that formed arteries of exchange, communication, hunting and war for Native peoples for centuries before the arrival of the European settlers.



Stop 1: Shikellamy Overlook

**Off Route 11,
South of Northumberland**

POINT A - East

From the top of the Blue Hill you can look towards three points of the compass – north, east, and south.

Below you, looking east, you can see Packer Island, now the Shikellamy State Park and Marina. During the 1740s and 1750s this island was inhabited by the Delaware or Lenni Lenape, who had been displaced from their traditional lands on Manhattan Island, in New Jersey and in eastern Pennsylvania. Here women, children, and the elderly planted small plots of corn, beans and squash for sustenance while husbands and brothers went westward to the hunting grounds of the Allegheny for beaver, deer, bison and bear. The path westward led across the River and along what is now Route 11, to your right at the bottom of the hill. Hunting trips could be as

long as three months in the cold of winter. But sometimes the snow was too deep to be gone for long, and the hunters returned empty-handed.

King of the Delaware, Teedyuscung, called Packer Island one of two sacred places in Pennsylvania for the Delaware in the mid-18th century. The other sacred place was the Wyoming Valley.

POINT B - North

Turn to your left, looking north, takes us along the Warrior's Path up the eastern shore of the River. This path was used for war parties and for trading by the Iroquois, coming down from their territory around the Finger Lakes and beyond up into Canada. Route 147 follows the path up to the important Native American village of Ostonwakin (Montoursville). We will be travelling along this path later.

POINT C - South

If you look south, to your right, across the River to present day Sunbury you can see a colonial yellow building behind the flood wall. This is the Hunter House Museum, home of the Northumberland County Historical Society and the site of the provincial Fort Augusta, built in 1756. Nearby is the site of the Moravian mission house and blacksmith shop. In 1747, these German missionaries were invited here by Chief Shikellamy, and the other chiefs of the Five Nations, with the permission of the provincial government in Philadelphia to build a smithy that could service the weapons and tools of the Iroquois. Tools and artifacts from this mission are on display there. Let's go!



From Left to Right: Iron/Chisel Scraper, a forged tool used for woodworking; Reaping Hook, used for cutting grass, grains, etc.; Blacksmith Tongs, used to hold hot items from forge while hammering/shaping. Note the fragment found at the Moravian Smithy.

 FriendsOfShikellamyStatePark.org

 NorthumberlandCountyHistoricalSociety.org

Stop 2 : The Hunter House Museum

**1150 North Front Street
Sunbury, PA 17801**

Welcome to the newly renovated museum. Here you can see the blacksmith's tools from the Moravian smithy, Indian tools, beads, and also a diorama of life in the Colonial fort.

The museum is open from March through December, Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1 to 4 p.m. Group tours are by appointment only. To make a reservation, call the office Monday through Friday, at **570-286-4083**.

A modest admission fee is charged.

 NorthumberlandCountyHistoricalSociety.org



Stop 3: Shikellamy State Park Marina

**Bridge Avenue
Sunbury, PA 17801-1005**

Welcome to the Island! This beautiful park offers opportunities for biking, kayaking, and walking. Rent a boat or kayak from Lake Augusta Outfitters and see the River from a new angle! Experience what it would have been like back in the colonial period to be able to travel across the River only by canoe. To get from the northern shore of the island to the southern shore you would need your own canoe, or you would have to borrow one just like today.

The fertile soil on the River island was good for growing the "Three Sisters" of the Eastern Woodlands Indians—corn, squash and beans. The Friends of Shikellamy State Park have recently started growing a small garden here near the point of the island.

Go to the "point" of the island and stand at the confluence. You are looking southwest, along the main branch of the River. Up and down this wide stretch of water, Native canoes would pass, full of warriors from the Iroquois travelling down to their annual frays against the Catawba in Virginia. Not all of them returned...

In the colonial period, the River also bore many displaced Native peoples from the Chesapeake Bay area up into Pennsylvania. Nanticoke, from the Eastern shore of Maryland, Tutelo from Virginia, and Conoy peoples from Maryland travelled up the River to settle along the North Branch of the Susquehanna.



Famous Native leaders and interpreters of the colonial period lived on this island for a while. Madame Montour, the important intermediary between the Iroquois and the colonial government, her son Andrew, another prominent interpreter, lived here in the 1740s and opened their house to the first Moravian missionaries to come to the area, Martin and Anna Mack.

Teedyuscung, King of the Delaware, also lived on this island, as did his predecessor, Nutimus.

Let's head up the Warrior's Path to the village of Madame Montour -- today near Montoursville.

 FriendsOfShikellamyStatePark.org

 LakeAugustaOutfitters.com

Check out this authentic, hand drawn map of the Montoursville/Williamsport area, circa 1756. It is certainly a treasured part of our past, and a cherished historical artifact! This map can be seen at the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, PA

Stop 4: Up the Warrior Path to Ostonwakin, home of Madame Montour

Montandon, Muncy, Montoursville & Williamsport

As you drive north on Route 147, you can turn off at 405 and pull in to the Chillisquaque boat ramp. This is a great place to put in a canoe or kayak and paddle down to Packer Island, which is about 6 River miles south of here. On the way you are likely to see some great egrets, blue heron, a bald eagle, and box turtles basking in the sun on a rock. Maybe even some eels!

The confluence of the Chillisquaque Creek and the Susquehanna River was a good spot for a native village. In the colonial period, this area was inhabited by Shawnee Indians, who had moved up from North Carolina to this area, to be under the protection of the Iroquois. Today you can camp at Yogi at Shangri-La and experience the secluded beauty of this place.

If we continue up Route 147 it turns into Route 180 and follows the bend of the River around Muncy to Montoursville.

Come off Route 180 at Muncy and take a look at this beautiful little River town that was the site of Fort Muncy in the colonial period and today home of the Muncy Historical Society's museum.

Hop back on Route 180 briefly and exit at Halls Pennsdale (Route 220) then continue to Lycoming Mall Drive to view the site of today's commercial trading -- the Lycoming Mall. As you drive through the town of Montoursville, you can stop at Country Ski and Sport to pick up a kayak or a canoe if you want to put in at the Montoursville access point. The stretch of the River along "the Long Reach" to Muncy is a short 7 River miles and passes by one of the



major raptor fly-through routes. Watch out for the River rapids right by Runway Island!

Follow the signs to Riverfront Park from Montoursville and pull into the parking lot. To the left of the lot, in a cornfield, is the site of Ostonwakin, the village of Madame Montour. That was abandoned in the 1740s as she moved down to Packer Island. There are regular archaeological digs held in the field that have yielded some artifacts and evidence of habitation. However, regular plowing and floods have washed much of the material evidence of the village away.

Follow the path to the Heritage Trail. Local amateur archaeologist and historian, Jim Bressler, created the path and the interpretative panels to guide us through life on the island and its environs during the contact period. Sit on the bench for a while that overlooks the River. Not much has changed in this view since canoes carrying the Iroquois traversed its waters.

If you have your bike handy, you can follow the bike path along the river into Williamsport and the River Walk. Safe and easily travelled, this is a great way to see the River!

 ShopLycomingMall.com

Stop 5: Scenic Overlook on Route 15

Route 15, South Williamsport

Get back onto Route 180 and join up with Route 15 South. You will cross over the Susquehanna on the Market Street bridge and follow the road up the Bald Eagle Mountain. As you approach the scenic overlook, pull into the parking lot at the summit and stop for a few minutes. Directly to your north you see the Loyalsock Creek flowing into the Susquehanna River. To the left you can see the cornfield that is the site of Ostonwakin and to its left the trail you were just on.



Please note that the Route 15 Overlook is only accessible when heading North on Route 15.

The view of the mountains north of Williamsport has changed little since the days when this whole area was populated and hunted by the Iroquois. From the Susquehanna River, along the creeks that run into here—Pine, Lycoming, Loyalsock, and Muncy—the Indian paths connected Canada with the Chesapeake Bay.

Stop 6: Central Oak Heights on Route 15 South: Overlooking Shikellamy's Town

75 Heritage Road West Milton, PA 17886

Continue south on Route 15. You are now on the shore of the River that was "off limits" for non-Native peoples in the colonial period. This was Iroquois country and Europeans lived here at their own risk.

As you cross White Deer Hole Creek you see where it runs into the River. This was a native village. Then as you head a little further south you will reach Central Oak Heights. Today, Central Oak Heights is home to private cottages and rental campsites. In the 1730s, this site overlooked Chief Shikellamy's town. He lived here with his family and people until asked by the chiefs of the Iroquois to move down to Shamokin, the Indian name for present day Sunbury.



Stop 7: Blue Hill: Skeeter's Pit BBQ for Lunch

**Intersection of U.S. Routes 11 & 15
Shamokin Dam, PA 17876**

As you drive south down Route 15 through Lewisburg's city limits and Winfield, you are passing the fishing grounds for many of the Native peoples. Many net weights and eel weirs can be found in the River here along the islands in Winfield especially.

Stop at the intersection with Route 11 for lunch at Skeeter's Pit BBQ and enjoy the view of the River from the restaurant's indoor or outdoor seating areas. What a great vantage point to view who is coming and going along these paths and waterways!

 SkeetersBBQ.com



Stop 8: Selinsgrove's Isle of Que

**508 South Front Street
Selinsgrove, PA 17870**

'A very old (oral) tradition is our sole authority for the statement that one day Shikellamy said to Conrad Weiser: 'I have had a dream. I dreamed that Tarachiawagon gave me a new rifle.'

Conrad, who owed much of his success to his strict observance of Indian etiquette (which believed all dreams would eventually come true), is said to have answered the dream with the rifle, and then to have spoken for himself.

'I, too, have had a dream,' he said. 'I dreamed that Shikellamy gave me an island in the Susquehanna,' and he indicated the Isle of Que at the mouth of Penn's Creek, on the site of what is now the town of Selinsgrove. The old chief, we are told, matched Weiser's politeness, but, 'Conrad,' he said, 'let us never dream again.'



If you would like to hear more stories about the area, take a trip down to the Isle of Que and make a date with Jim and Judie Charles, Isle of Que River Guides for a guided trip of the River.

 IsleofQueRiverGuides.com

**Thank you for travelling along the
Indian paths of the West Branch!**

Oh no!

Credits:

Many thanks to Dr. Katherine Faulk, Professor of German at Bucknell University, for providing much of the text for this brochure, as well as the two maps and stylized paintings of Chief Shikellamy. Funding for Dr. Faulk's research provided, in part, by the National Endowment of the Humanities through their "We the People" Program.

Special thanks to the Northumberland County Historical Society for providing the close-up images of blacksmithing tools.

Cover Image: Painting of Zizendorg and the Iroquois used with permission from the Moravian Archives Herrnhut, GS-389.

Additional Resources:

Moravian Women's Memoirs

VisitCentralPA.org/MoravianWomensMemoirs

Audio Interviews with Dr. Faulk

VisitCentralPA.org/DrFaulkInterviews



Central Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River Valley

Central Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River Valley

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