

## Architecture

As you walk around Sunbury, you will see historic buildings representing most of the major styles of architecture since 1772. Few of these were designed by formally-educated architects, but by local master builders, familiar with the various builders' guides published on the east coast throughout the nineteenth century. Others are products of pattern books from the second half of the century; owners could purchase plans from architect-prepared pattern books and local builders would complete the actual construction. Sunbury has changed greatly over the years since 1772. This change and transformation is manifest in the various architectural styles of its buildings. The historic district of Sunbury contains some of these designs which are no longer constructed on a regular basis. The district runs from Front Street to Fifth Street in the east-west direction, and from Arch Street to Chestnut Street in the north-south direction. An hour's walk through this district will present a good opportunity to survey the structures and get acquainted with the history of the place.

The Historic District of Sunbury is constantly changing in a continual process of construction, renovation, remodeling, and destruction. Many of the buildings mentioned in this survey have been greatly altered, yet have managed to survive as part of the architectural heritage of the city. Through the years, real estate owners have changed over and over again. In most cases, this tour gives the name of the original owner or the most prominent owner of the various buildings highlighted. When no specific individual is associated with the property, the address is used as identification.

The tour begins at the corner of Market and Second Streets. Parking is available in the vicinity. Metered parking is suspended on Sunday. The tour takes approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.

Welcome to Historic Sunbury! As you walk through Sunbury's Historic District on this self-guided tour, you will have the opportunity to learn about the history and architecture of a frontier city, which has served as an important transportation route since prehistoric times. Its architecture reflects the more than 225 years that Sunbury has been in existence. This is a community proud of its heritage and committed to preserving it for future generations.

## History

The City of Sunbury has a history as long as that of Northumberland County. Both were erected in 1772. Sunbury was laid out by William Maclay by order of Richard Penn, Jr., grandson of the founder and governor at the time. Sunbury was the last of seven proprietary towns, surveyed and laid out by the proprietors during the Colonial period. These towns became the personal property of the Penn family and all lots were sold by them. Sunbury takes its name from a parish of the same name in England. In the will of Richard Penn, Sr., is found this statement made in 1750, "I am possessed of an house called 'Batavia House' in the parish of Sunbury, in the county of Middlesex."

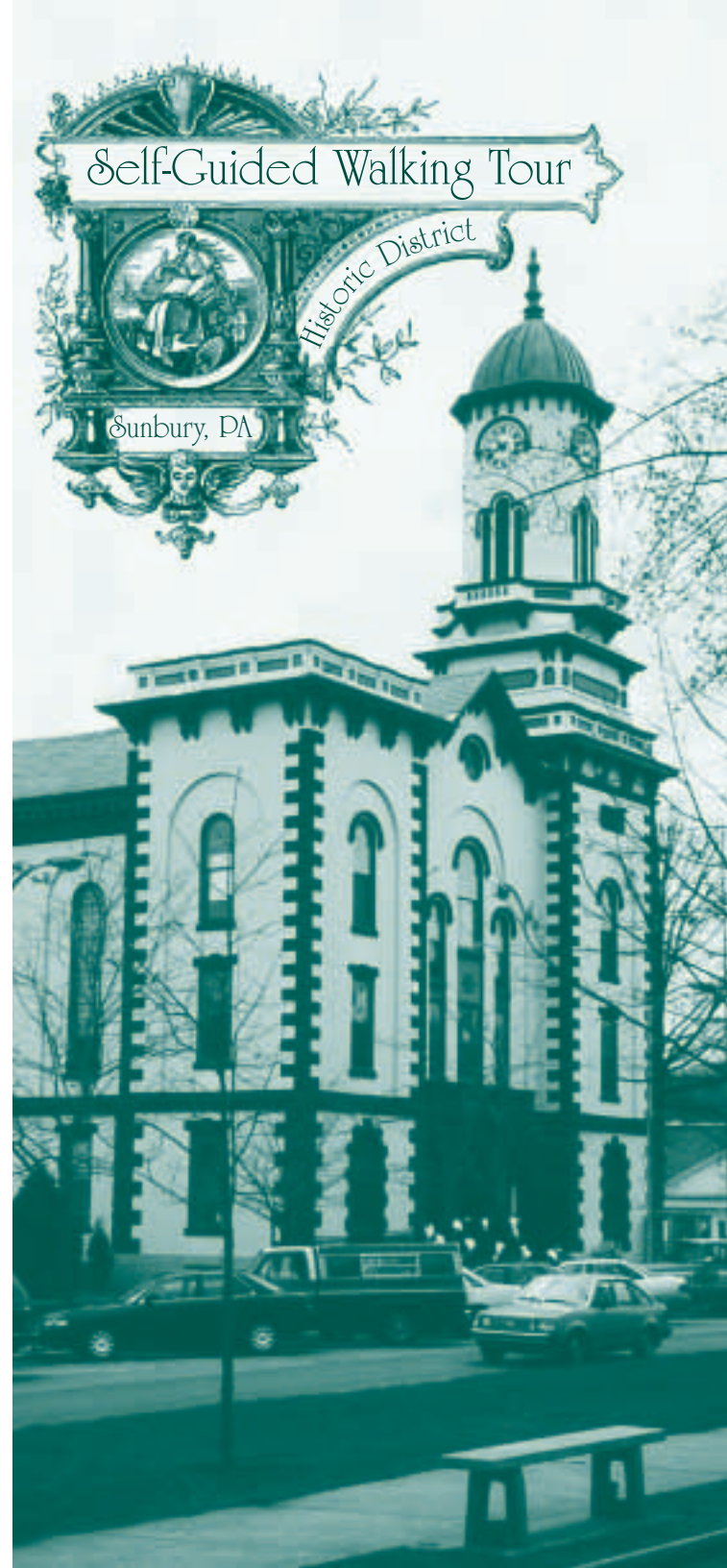
Before the arrival of the Europeans, generations of Native Americans have lived at these strategic crossroads. French traders were among the earliest Europeans to reach this frontier. Conrad Weiser was sent here in 1736 to negotiate with the Indians. Count Zinzendorf founded a Moravian Mission at the Indian Village of Shamokin (present Sunbury) in 1742. And the English built the frontier stronghold Fort Augusta in 1756.

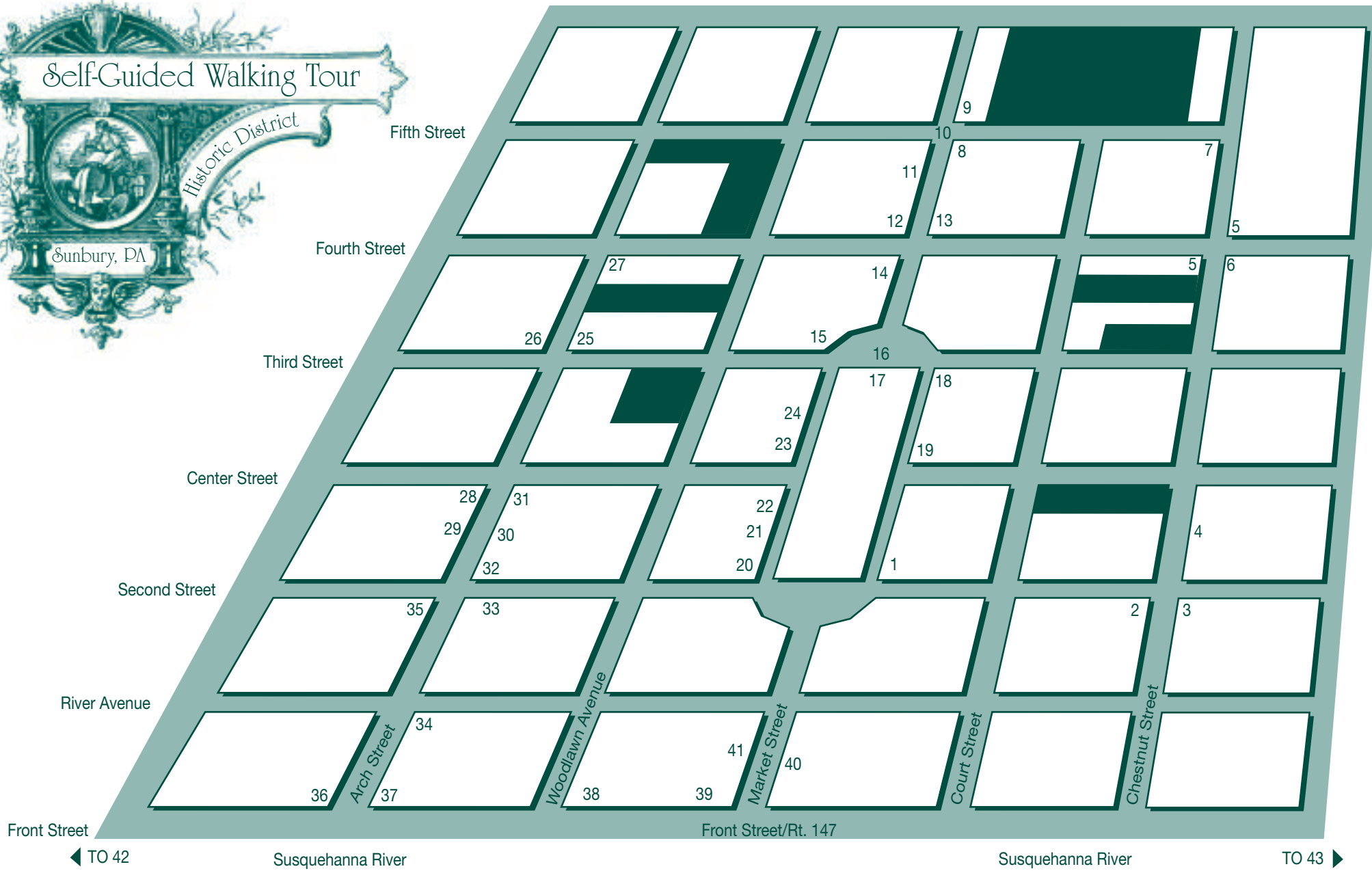
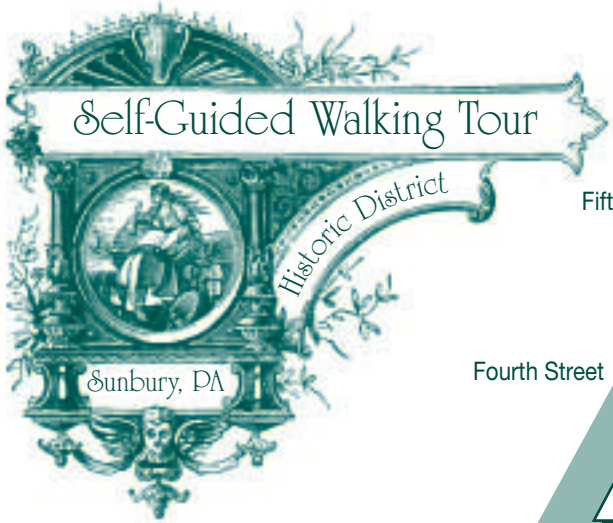
## Acknowledgments

If you would like to learn more about Sunbury's history, visit the Northumberland County Historical Society located at the site of old Fort Augusta, in the Hunter House, 1150 North Front Street, (#42 on the walking tour.) It is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is free; donations accepted.

Please respect the privacy of the owners of these properties. The residences featured on this tour are not open to the public.

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Municipal Parking Lots

◀ TO 42

Susquehanna River

Susquehanna River

TO 43 ▶



1. The first building, located on the east corner of the junction of Market and South Second Streets, is the Northumberland County Courthouse. The present building is the fourth structure to be built for the purpose of holding a court. The first county court was held at Fort Augusta on April 9, 1772. This continued to be the site of the county court, both regularly and at occasional intervals, until about 1775. In 1774, the colonial legislature passed "an act for lending the sum of 800 pounds to the County of Northumberland for building a courthouse and prison in said county." The construction of this new building was evidently begun in 1775, and finished a year later. Located at the southeast corner of Market Street and Center Alley, it served as both the courthouse and the jail. Sometime between 1797 and 1802, the third courthouse was built at the west end of the public square near Second Street, facing the river. A two-story building, its courtroom was for several years the only public meeting place of any size in Sunbury, except for the two churches located there at the time. Therefore, in addition to court, the Sunday school and religious services of denominations having no building of their own were conducted there. Finally, in 1865, the present courthouse was built. It was extensively remodeled about 1910, and its exterior has undergone maintenance and repainting since then.

2. Proceed south on Second Street. At the northwest corner of Second and Chestnut Streets is The First Reformed United Church of Christ. The First Reformed Church was organized in 1784. For a time, services were held in a small log schoolhouse on the north side of Walnut Street. The congregation eventually outgrew this meeting place and, together with the

Presbyterians, built a church on the present location in 1793. In 1840, the Presbyterians decided to build a church of their own, and this partnership was dissolved. In 1847, the Reformed Congregation constructed a church on the same location. The congregation continued to grow, and, in 1885, this building was enlarged and a second story added. In 1911, the adjoining home and another lot were acquired. In 1923-24, a new parsonage and a three-story Sunday school building were erected. In 1957, this older church was torn down, and the present building erected on the same site.

3. On the southwest corner of Second and Chestnut Streets is the Zweier Funeral Home. Originally built by Isaac Zeigler in 1825, it has been greatly altered.



4. Proceed east along the north side of Chestnut Street. Looking south, near Center Street, you will see Cole's Hardware Store. This is the site of the Chestnut Street Opera House, which opened on September 12, 1901, and could seat up to one thousand people. Records indicate that from 1915 to 1935, 571 road shows and 440 vaudeville acts were performed. However, due to the flood of 1936 and the growing popularity of movies, the Opera House was closed down. Cole's has kept the exterior of the building intact, and its form is unmistakable. Some of the actors and actresses who played at the Opera House later became famous on Broadway and in Hollywood: Helen Hayes, Francis X. Bushman, Sophie Tucker, Marie Dressler, Walter Huston, and Tyrone Power.

5. At the northwest corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets is an older home, built around 1810 by Jacob Weimer. On the northeast corner are two double townhouses of the Federal Period. The house on the southeast corner, with later woodwork and additions, was built by George Young also about 1810.



6. The First Baptist Church is located on the southwest corner of Fourth and Chestnut Streets. Early records indicate that Baptists resided in Sunbury as early as 1794. Except for an occasional service by an itinerant minister, there were no Baptist services in Sunbury until May 1830. In 1842, the First Baptist Church of Sunbury was organized with eighty-one members. This congregation met in the courthouse and private homes until 1848, when a lot was purchased on Fourth Street between Penn and Walnut Streets. A church was erected there, marking the first time the Baptists held services in their own building in Sunbury. A lot at Fourth and Chestnut Streets was purchased in 1872, and, in 1874, a new brick building was erected there. It was transformed into a parsonage in 1908, and a new church and Sunday school were erected at the present location. In 1956, a new educational unit was added to the building on Chestnut Street.

7. Continue east on Chestnut Street toward Fifth Street. The Albright United Methodist Church is on the northwest corner. The Reverend George Moore was sent to Sunbury in 1872 to care for the needs of the Evangelical people in the area. In 1873, the Reverend A. W. Maxwell came to Sunbury for the same purpose and organized a group of about 20. Services were held in a schoolhouse on Spruce Street, and later in what was then Caketown. The first church was built at Fourth and Vine Streets in 1890. In 1899, a new church was constructed at the corner of Chestnut and Awl Streets and dedicated in 1900. In 1922, the church purchased the property on Fifth and Chestnut Streets and erected the current building, which was dedicated in 1929.

8. Continue north on Fifth Street toward Market Street. On the southwest corner of Market and Fifth Streets is the Zion Lutheran Church. German Lutherans were in Sunbury by 1769, the year they built a log church on the corner of Walnut Street and River Avenue. It served as both a church and a school. In accordance with German custom, the pastor preached on Sunday and taught school during the week. In 1792, funds were collected to build a church at Church and Third Streets. This second log church was completed in 1793. Here, Sunbury's Memorial Service for George Washington was conducted on February 22, 1800. A Stall's pipe organ, one of the first in central Pennsylvania, was installed in 1815. The first day it was played, it drew such a large crowd that the floor collapsed. In 1854, the congregation decided to build a new brick church on the same site; it was completed in

1855. In 1885, the Pennsylvania Railroad was nearing its peak of activity. The noise and vibration of passing trains was deemed too competitive with the church, and the decision was made to find a new location. The lot at Fifth and Market Streets was purchased, and the new church and adjoining Sunday School building were completed in 1888. This building was used until 1923, when the present church was constructed on the same site. A new religious education annex was added in 1963.

9. On the southeast corner is the Cadwallader Building. Built in the 1870s or 1880s, it was recently bought with the idea of making it into apartments. This idea was defeated, largely due to the efforts of the Northumberland County Historical Society, because of its location within the historic district. It remains an office building as it has been for many years.



10. Turn the corner and proceed west on Market Street. As you walk along Market Street, note the facades of the business buildings. Their turn-of-the-century architectural embellishments have been retained, though owners and businesses have come and gone. Many of the facades have been restored and repainted recently.

11. The Market House is located about halfway between Fifth and Fourth Streets on the north side. In 1789, the town council resolved to erect a market house. The present structure, the second of its kind in Sunbury, was built in 1800 and situated on the public square, east of the courthouse. In 1834, a resolution was passed giving permission to build scales for weighing all articles of produce sold by the ton. It was constructed beside the market house in the park. In 1843, both the market house and the scales were sold. Thereafter, a curb market was held on Market Street between Third and Fourth Streets, and extended to both sides of Market Street. In 1901, the present Market House was erected by local dairymen,



Charles and Isaac Rockefeller. Today, there is still a weekly curb market, and business is also conducted on Friday and Saturday in the Market House. The Market House complex received a face-lift in 1998.



12. The First National Trust Bank occupies a prominent position on the northeast corner of Fourth and Market Streets. Formerly the Bank of Northumberland, it moved to Sunbury in 1864, due in large part to the shift of business activity from the canals in Northumberland to the railroads, manufacturing plants, and lumber mills of Sunbury. At that time, the bank building was located on the north side of Market Square, between Second and Third Streets. On July 1, 1865, the Bank of Northumberland became a National Bank by giving up its State Charter. It then changed its name to the First National Bank of Sunbury, and in 1866 moved to a newly constructed headquarters on the corner of Front and Market Streets, land now owned by Saint Monica's Roman Catholic Church. On August 23, 1905, it relocated to the structure at the southeast corner of Market and Center Streets, known then as the Harrison Building, but later as the old Y.M.C.A. Building. In 1923, The First National Bank purchased the assets of the Sunbury National Bank. The old building at Fourth and Market Streets was then torn down and the present building was erected on that site. On June 4, 1932, the old Sunbury Trust and Safe Deposit Company became a part of the First National Trust Bank of Sunbury.

13. On the southeast corner of the same intersection is the Edison Hotel. Originally called the City Hotel, it was built by E. J. Drumheller in 1870. It caught fire on January 14, 1914, after which it was repaired and rebuilt. It became the first building in the world to be lighted with incandescent electric lights, which were installed by Thomas A. Edison in 1883. On

July 4, 1922, the anniversary of this event, it was renamed the Edison Hotel at a ceremony attended by Edison himself. There is a historic plaque to the right of the entrance door.



14. Continuing west on Market Street, the building on the north side at No. 340 formerly housed Keithan's Inc., a popular local bakery and ice cream parlor. The late John A. Keithan established it in December 1881, in the building originally known as the Red Lion Inn, which dates to about 1811. Renting the property at first, Mr. Keithan later purchased it and remodeled it extensively in 1933. A concrete block addition housing the bakery and manufacturing plant was added in the rear. Specializing in baked goods and homemade ice cream, a soda fountain and luncheonette were added in 1934. Keithan's was famous for its clear toy lines (a colorful hard candy in many shapes), using molds over 100 years old which had been purchased by Mr. Keithan early in his career. The business was closed in June 1976.



15. On the northeast corner of Third and Market Streets is the site of the Central Hotel, which was torn down in 1996. The original building was the residence of John B. Packer. In 1859, he sold it to James Van Dyke, the county sheriff at the time. Mr. Van Dyke remodeled it, adding the third floor, and opened it as the Central Hotel. The Social Security building is now located on the site.

16. Here Market Street is divided by Cameron Park, located on a portion of the land that Thomas and John Penn set apart for public use when they laid out the town of Sunbury. However, the appearance of Cameron Park has changed since the early days. Until at least 1873, the Park was a grassy piece of land with fewer trees than it has today. In 1872, an iron fence was erected around a portion of the Park in order to prevent cows from grazing in this area. This fence was later moved to the Sunbury Cemetery.

**17.** Entering the Park at the east end, you find the Northumberland County Soldiers' Monument. It was dedicated in 1879, in memory of all the county's Civil War dead. The Park was named in honor of Colonel James Cameron, the first officer from Northumberland County to be killed in the War. His statue is atop this monument. In 1997, the monument was restored and the iron fence surrounding it was added. It was rededicated during Sunbury's 225th Anniversary celebration that year. At one time a whipping post stood in the center of the Park. A second war memorial is at the western end of the Park.



**18.** Walking along the south side of the Park, stop at the corner of South Third and Market Streets, the site where the famous librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte once lived. Da Ponte, born in 1749 near Venice, Italy, was later appointed "Poet to the Italian Theater" by the Austrian Emperor Joseph II. While at the Austrian Court, he met Mozart. Subsequently, they collaborated on three of the world's most famous operas: *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan Tutte*. Mozart composed the music, and Da Ponte wrote the libretti.



Da Ponte came to America on June 4, 1805. After trying several ventures in New York and New Jersey, he received a letter from his sister-in-law, who was living in Sunbury with her father—the father of Da Ponte's wife. He and his family moved to Sunbury in 1811. While here he was a grocer and a distiller as well as a tutor to one of Sunbury's prominent families.



Overall, however, his ventures in Sunbury failed, and he left in 1818. The original Da Ponte house burned down in 1870, after which the present structure was erected. A historic marker commemorating Da Ponte is located close to the Soldiers' Monument.

**19.** On the east corner of Center and Market Streets is what used to be known as the Harrison building. The First National Bank moved into this structure in August 1905. Later, it served as the Y.M.C.A. until the new "Y" was built on North Fourth Street.

Turn at the memorial monuments and walk up the north side of the Park.

**20.** On the northeast corner of Second and Market Streets is The Daily Item. Though the building is not historic, the legacy of newspapers in Sunbury is. The first newspaper published in Sunbury was the *Sunbury and Northumberland Gazette*. The first issue was published on June 2, 1792. There have been numerous newspapers throughout the history of Sunbury. Some were printed in English, while others were in German. In 1890, five newspapers were published in Sunbury. Two of them were daily papers, while the other three appeared weekly. On July 1, 1937, the two major newspapers still in existence, the *Daily* and the *Item*, merged to become *The Daily Item*. Since 1800, Sunbury has not been without a newspaper, and has had a daily paper for almost a hundred years.



**21.** Next to The Daily Item is the Donnel house, named for the Hegins-Donnel family who owned it from 1817 to 1923. Constructed in sections, the oldest of which dates to 1779 by Jacob Preisinger, this house is the oldest brick house in Sunbury. The eastern portion of the structure was built in 1832, and served as an office. From 1865 to 1866 the prothonotary and register and recorder rented apartments in the house until the new courthouse was finished. In addition to a private home, this building has also served as a hotel and a tavern. At least two duels were fought

here, the second of which, fought by General Hugh Brady and Captain Daniel Levy in 1812, was the last fought on Pennsylvania soil. It is said that no one was sure of the cause, and no one realized what was happening until they suddenly heard the heavy clash of steel swords. Brady and Levy battled each other until Samuel Awl and the tavern keeper Michael Kutzner had thrown enough of the room's furniture between the two to separate them. Captain Levy suffered a wounded shoulder, and for nearly fifty years, until the property was remodeled, there remained a deep gash—caused by General Brady's sword—in one of the windowsills.

**22.** The Masonic Temple is located between Center and Second Streets. The Masonic Lodge at Sunbury is as old as the town itself, and the oldest Masonic Lodge in northern Pennsylvania. No other fraternal organization of any kind in the entire area has been in existence as long. The origins of the Lodge began with a meeting at Fort Augusta of nine officers of General Sullivan's Army. During its first 30 years, the Lodge met at the homes of members. From 1809 to 1866, the meeting place was in the Grand Jury room in the old Courthouse. In 1866, they bought the old Courthouse and the old schoolhouse that was located on South Third Street. These were torn down and the brick was used to erect a Masonic building on Third Street. The Lodge met there until 1906. At that time, the present building was constructed, and the Lodge moved in in 1908.



**23.** At the east corner of Center and Market Streets is the First Presbyterian Church. Presbyterianism in this area can be traced to the time of Fort Augusta. There are records of preaching at the Fort by various Presbyterian ministers. When the revolution ended and the Fort fell into disuse, the Presbyterian soldiers resolved to build a church in town. The date when the church first started is not known. However, it must have existed before 1787, because in that year Reverend Hugh Morrison was called as pastor. Around 1793, they united with the German Reformed congregation to erect a log church on the northwest corner of Second and Chestnut Streets. These two remained together until 1841. At that time the Presbyterians sold their interest in the log church and property to the Reformed congregation and bought a

lot on Chestnut and Third Streets. They built a small one-story brick church on that site. In 1869, the deed for the present site was executed and building operations began. The small brick church was used until 1870, when they moved into the newly constructed house of worship. In 1909, the church was remodeled. Fire almost destroyed the building on December 12, 1911. In 1922, a large addition for the Sunday School and other activities was erected. The original steeple, which had stood for 56 years, was condemned and removed in 1926. In its place, a brick tower was constructed on each corner of the front of the building. Renovations have also been carried out on the interior.

**24.** Situated next to the First Presbyterian Church is the Paul Baldy house, built in 1820 by Paul Baldy, a blacksmith and a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Mr. Baldy had maintained his smithy on the site of the Presbyterian Church. After his death in 1823, the property was purchased by Samuel J. Packer. Mr. Packer was a young attorney, publisher of the *Public Inquirer*, and postmaster of Sunbury from 1822 to 1824. His wife, Rachel Black Packer, was appointed postmistress after Mr. Packer's death in 1834. She held this position from 1835 to 1855, and the house served as the Post Office during those 20 years.



Turn north at the corner of Third and Market Streets.



**25.** The former Aldine Hotel is located on the southeast corner of Arch and North Third Streets. This brick structure was built in the 1880s to serve the many train passengers arriving in Sunbury at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. For many years, it was considered the finest hotel in the city. The restaurant

located there was a Sunbury landmark, famous for its baked beans. The hotel has undergone extensive restoration and now has also been converted to office space.

**26.** On the northeast corner of Arch and North Third Streets is the Penn Central Railroad Station. Built in 1872, by the Northern Central Railroad, it has in recent years served as a bus station. It has now been carefully restored and serves as office spaces.



Cross Third Street and make a brief detour east to the corner of Fourth and Arch Streets.

**27.** The house of worship at the southwest corner of Arch Street and North Fourth Street dates to a meeting in the year 1885. This meeting took place on the first Sunday of October in that year, at the hall of the Hook and Ladder Company on Fourth Street. Regular meetings were continued and eventually steps were taken to erect a church building for the Church of Christ congregation. Construction on the original structure began on September 17, 1890. At this time the group had a membership of 38. The building was constructed of soft clay brick and tin, and the sanctuary had a cathedral ceiling with hand hewn timbers. It was eventually remodeled as it appears today. No longer the home of the Church of Christ, it is now a house of worship for the Moslem faith.

**28.** Return to Third and Arch Streets and continuing west, the house on the northwest corner of Center and Arch Streets was built in 1889. Victorian in style, it is constructed of brick with a tower and a slate roof.

**29.** The idea for a public library began on February 15, 1935. On that date the Sunbury Business and Professional Women's Club sponsored a combined dinner and meeting with Kiwanis, Rotary, and other civic groups to present the idea for a public library. The public subscribed money to purchase books and equipment. The City Commission and School Board



promised \$2,000 a year to pay for other expenses. Half a double house at 235 Arch Street was rented and the Sunbury Public Library held a formal opening on February 27, 1937. In 1940, the property at 228 Arch Street was purchased by John R. Kauffman, Jr., who remodeled it for library use. The library has since been known as the John R. Kauffman, Jr. Public Library. In 1960, a much needed addition was added to the back of the building.

**30.** The home across the street from the library is the Grant House. It has distinctive Second Empire styling, popular 1860-1880, as well as Victorian styling. The mansard roof, named after the French architect François Mansart, was prevalent across the country from 1870 to 1890. The dormer windows in the roof allowed light into the large, high attic story. This structure also has a center entrance tower with massive wooden arches.

**31.** Near the corner of Center and Arch Streets is the Temple Beth-el. This assembly was founded in Northumberland in 1921. It was made up of a group of local Jewish citizens who were involved in the hat manufacturing business. The congregation moved to its present location in 1924, after purchasing the premises from what was then Saint Michael's Catholic Church, or Saint Monica's as it is now known.

**32.** On the southeast corner of Arch and North Second Streets is Saint John's Methodist Church. The first mention of preaching by Methodists in Sunbury is in 1793, when Bishop Francis Asbury traveled here to preach an afternoon sermon. Since many of the inhabitants of Sunbury were German Lutherans, the Methodist preachers rarely secured many listeners. During the following years there is record of only one Methodist family in Sunbury. However, Methodist membership eventually began to grow, and by 1837, there was a society of 30 people, who resolved to erect a church. The first Methodist Church was built at the present site of Congregation Beth-el in 1839. They bought the present property and built a new church in 1870, and in 1871 sold the old building to the Roman Catholic Church. This building was used until 1918 when the present church was dedicated. Renovations were made to the church after a Capital Fund drive in 1967.

**33.** On the southwest corner is the county jail. The present structure is Sunbury's fifth. The first public prison in Northumberland County was located at Fort Augusta in the Powder Magazine, which served as a prison from 1772 to 1774. About 1774, Robert McBride built the second jail on the northeast corner of Market and Fourth Streets. A new jail was erected around 1776 on the corner of Market Street and Center Alley. This building also served as the courthouse. When it was decided that a separate courthouse should be constructed, the idea of a new and separate jail also began to circulate. In 1801, a lot was acquired at Arch and Second Streets, where the fourth prison was built. Smaller than the present structure, it was located closer to Woodlawn Avenue. However, there was apparently a defect in the title to this lot. The jail was put up at a sheriff's sale and bought back by the County in 1820. Over time, this prison proved to be inadequate, as the following story indicates. Jake, imprisoned for assault and battery, and John, a chronic chicken thief, were prisoners at the same time. On the night before Christmas, hearing bells and the general commotion, they went out into the prison yard. Since they weren't chained, they dug a hole in the prison wall and left. First, they went to the lower end of town and then to a party on Market Street. They were not in the house long before being accused of tampering with some whiskey. A fight began, and John was thrown out and hit his face on a tree stump. The two made it back to jail, and Jake went to get a doctor. When the sheriff saw the two in their cells, they explained what had happened. The wall was repaired, and the incident soon forgotten. But, in 1876, the present jail was constructed and was first used on August 7, 1877. It has been in continuous use ever since.



**34.** Another example of an architectural style of years past is the home located on the southwest corner of Arch Street and River Avenue. It is a Victorian frame structure with ornate gingerbread woodwork on the porch. It has turrets as well as a round tower with French windowpanes and stained glass.



**35.** On the northwest corner of Arch and Second Streets is the Clement House, built in the Federal style, popular from 1780 to 1800 and named for the new republic. Constructed of brick, it has ornate brackets and simulated corner quoins.



**36.** On the northeast corner of Front and Arch Streets is the Maclay or Wolverton house. When William Maclay first came to this area, he resided in a log home at Fort Augusta. However, according to some of his written records, he was making preparations to build a new house at the present site as early as April 1773. But, it appears that he did not move into this house until after January 1774. The house is constructed of dressed limestone quarried on the farm he owned, near Sunbury. It was built in a rectangular shape, with two stories and an attic. On the first floor was a big center hall with a large room on each side. Both had sizable fireplaces. On the second floor, there was one major room on the south side of the house and two rooms on the north side. Due to the Indian attacks upon the settlers in this area, and after the Big Runaway in July 1778, Colonel Thomas Hartley came to this region with his regiment. Their purpose was protection for the frontier. For some reason he was not satisfied with the strength of Fort Augusta, and built a stockade at the rear of the Maclay house, which he used as a magazine for the storage of arms and ammunition. It was probably at this time that the underground passage from the river to the cellar of the house was constructed. In July 1779, General John Sullivan led an expedition against the Indians in New York. The supplies for his army were also stored in the stockaded portion of the Maclay yard. Maclay served as one of the first two United States Senators from Pennsylvania from 1789 to 1791. During this term, in 1790, he moved

from Sunbury to his farm north of Harrisburg. William Maclay died in 1804. In his will he gave the house in Sunbury to his daughter Jane. The house passed through a variety of different owners and served an assortment of diverse functions. At one time it was a school. It was also a hotel, and at various occasions a tavern. In 1865, it was sold to Simon P. Wolverton, who remodeled it extensively in 1888 and added a rear wing.

**37.** On the southeast corner of this intersection is the Scott House, a home built in 1796 by Jeremiah Simpson. Mr. Simpson was the County Register and Recorder from 1796 until his death in 1804.



The story is told that the stones used to construct this dwelling were taken from the Susquehanna River. During this heavy work of dragging stones, one of the oxen broke a leg and had to be killed. At this point an ox roast was declared, and a large feast took place the next day. Everyone was apparently at this sizable gathering.

**38.** Continue south on Front Street to Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church in Sunbury can trace its roots back to 1812. It was in that year that the Reverend Caleb Hopkins held services for a few families in town. On January 1, 1825, the Sunday school was organized and gathered at a house on Third Street near Chestnut. This was the first denominational Sunday school in Sunbury. In 1826, the Reverend James Depui, rector of the Episcopal Parish at Bloomsburg, conducted monthly services here. The group which gathered at these monthly services decided that they wanted to establish a parish in Sunbury. In 1836, a church was completed on the present site. In 1854, a Sunday School room was erected on the same lot, but was not connected to the main church building. In 1886-87, an extension was constructed joining these two buildings together. Again, in 1894, the church was enlarged, and the main Sunday School building was started in 1904, and opened in 1905. Though many improvements have been made through the years, the church building is basically still the same one that was dedicated in 1886. If time allows, enter the church and admire the impressive memorial stained glass windows.

39. At the northeast corner of Front and Market Streets are two historic houses located next to each other. The section on the north side is the Tilghman house, and



the section on the south side which extends east on Market Street is the Hall house. Local historians generally agree that the Tilghman house was the first house built after the survey of 1772. It was constructed between 1772 and 1774 by James Tilghman, who was the Secretary of the Land Office. On May 20, 1795, the executors of his estate sold this lot to Charles Hall, Esquire. About the same time Mr. Hall married Elizabeth Coleman, whose father, Robert Coleman of Cornwall Furnace, was one of the wealthiest men in the state. According to legend, Mr. Coleman ordered the construction of the home on the corner in 1795, and gave it to them as a wedding present in 1796.

40. On the southeast corner of Front and Market Streets is Saint Monica's Roman Catholic Church, formerly known as Saint Michael the Archangel. In the fall of 1863, Father John Joseph Koch organized the mission of Saint Michael in Sunbury. Mass was celebrated once a month at a home on Third and Chestnut Streets, and later at a home on Fourth Street. During his time here, Father Koch managed to raise \$300, which became the nucleus of a building fund for a church. At the same time a Major James Malone traveled along the railroad and collected funds for a church as well. In 1872, the old Methodist Church on Arch Street was purchased and blessed under the patronage of Saint Michael the Archangel. In 1921, this property was sold to Congregation Beth-el, and the Packer mansion, once located on the present property, was purchased. This was renovated and served as a church, hall, and rectory until 1950, when the church-auditorium and school building were erected. The older building, the former Packer mansion, was severely damaged by fire and torn down in 1965. The school was opened in September 1950. In 1995, the name was changed to Saint Monica's.

41. The large building on the north side of Market Street across from Saint Monica's is an example of many different architectural forms. Georgian, popular in residential and public



buildings by 1720, as well as Victorian and Second Empire styles, can be observed on the exterior of the house. This mansion has balconies and a mansard roof with wrought iron and ornate woodwork. The extension is made of stucco and brick.

You should be back at your parking place. We hope you enjoyed the tour of Historic Sunbury!

Two sites, not part of the Historic District, are also of historic interest and worth a visit. They are the site of Old Fort Augusta and Keithan's Blue Bird Gardens.

42. The site of Old Fort Augusta is located at 1150 North Front Street (Route 147). Pennsylvania's stronghold in the upper Susquehanna Valley, from the days of the French and Indian War



to the close of the American Revolution, was Fort Augusta. The construction of this fort in 1756, near the former Indian village of Shamokin where the Susquehanna divides into the North and West Branches, was the British reply to the French advance into the Allegheny Valley. Due to its strength and position, Fort Augusta was never forced to endure a siege. Nor was it attacked during the Indian uprising of 1763.

During the War of the Revolution, Fort Augusta was the military headquarters of the American forces in the upper Susquehanna Valley. After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the fort gradually deteriorated. It was demolished by order of Congress in 1796.

The Hunter House, built in 1848 by the grandson of the last commandant, is a property of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, managed by the Northumberland County Historical Society. It houses a museum of archaeological artifacts relating to the pre-history of the Native American settlement, the Moravian mission and blacksmith shop, and Fort Augusta, as well as artifacts relating to the history of Northumberland County. Two original features of the Fort are the Powder Magazine and the well.

At the Hunter House, the Historical Society also operates an excellent historical and genealogical library. Hours of operation for the museum are Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m. The library is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 1 to 4 p.m. For information on programs and membership, call 570-286-4083. Genealogical questions should be directed to the library during open hours.

43. Keithan's Blue Bird Gardens are located on a 1.5-acre tract between South Front and South Second Streets. The gardens were created by the late Charles R. Keithan, a member of the family whose firm was known locally for its ice cream, baked goods, and clear toy candies. He purchased the vacant lot in 1936, and through his



untiring efforts and at his own expense, transformed it into a place of rare beauty. Scenic paths wind through trees of rare species and mountains of azaleas and rhododendrons, with an infinite variety of brilliant colors. Visitors may wander through the gardens at will. The peak of bloom and color is the month of May, but the peace and quiet make the gardens a place of repose throughout the year. The adjacent band stand is the scene of weddings, concerts, and other functions.

The Historic District of Sunbury is always changing. It is a continual process of construction, renovation, remodeling, destruction, and alterations. Most of the buildings mentioned in this survey are still standing, though they may have been greatly altered. A few of them are no longer standing due to the effects of time, acts of God, or neglect. The purpose of this tour is to make you aware that Sunbury has a history which is both abundant and distinctive.

