



PHOTOS FROM TOP: FORT LEWIS HISTORY MUSEUM, EVANGELISCHE LUTHERISCHE KIRCHE WITH MOUNT RAINIER RAILROAD, FORT NISQUALLY LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM

TRAVEL  
**TACOMA+**  
PIERCE COUNTY, WA

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# CULTURAL HERITAGE

Much of Tacoma + Pierce County's history is tucked away in its gateway communities. Hear stories of the area's early explorers and pivotal industries. Discover fascinating heritage about the first military post in Puget Sound and one of the nation's smallest churches. Get lasting memories of the culture and heritage of Pierce County, where history comes to life in the museums and historical sites throughout the region.

## PIERCE COUNTY HISTORIC SITES Steilacoom

The oldest incorporated town in Washington [1854]. Steilacoom has 32 historic buildings and monuments on the National Registry of Historic Places. You'll find Steilacoom Historical Museum, Nathaniel Orr Home, Bair Drug + Hardware store and Steilacoom Tribal Cultural Museum.

## DuPont

Founded as a company town by the DuPont Company, DuPont built the first industrial explosives plant in the Northwest, operating from 1906 to 1976. Because DuPont produced dynamite, drinking alcohol was prohibited within the city limits. The DuPont History Museum is in historic downtown DuPont and tells the entire story of the company era.

## Fort Lewis

Fort Lewis Military Museum is the only certified U.S. Army Museum on the West coast. The building was built in 1919 and originally served as an inn for soldiers and their families. The museum documents the Pacific Northwest from 1803 Lewis and Clark Expedition to the present.

## Gig Harbor

This charming, storefront-lined downtown was once a Croatian fishing village. Visit the Harbor History Museum to explore the heritage of its harbor, with exhibits that tell stories of the area's early explorers and settlers.

## Brown's Point Cottage + Lighthouse

On the National Registry of Historical Places with historic furnishings and buildings open for guided tours and overnight stays.

## Evangelische Lutherische Kirche

Visit Elbe, near Mount Rainier, to see this 1906 German Lutheran Church, one of the smallest churches in the nation.

## Fort Nisqually Living History Museum

This museum is a restoration of the Hudson Bay Company outpost on the Puget Sound. Relive the days of the Hudson Bay Company, a bustling center of trade, at the museum and visitor center.

The Candlelight Tour is an annual event at Fort Nisqually. Stars, candles and campfires light the evening during the re-enactment of life in 1859. Re-enactors portray laborers, servants, gentlemen and ladies of the Hudson Bay Company. Visitors travel back in time to experience life in Washington Territory during the Fur Trade Era.

## Fort Steilacoom

The Fort was built in 1849 as the first U.S. military post in Puget Sound. Fort Steilacoom's buildings later became an insane asylum and then the Western State Hospital for the Insane, which closed in 1965. Several buildings remain today and are on the National Registry of Historic Places. Take a tour and see live reenactments at the Fort.

[MORE]

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**RAILROAD HERITAGE**

Railroads played the leading role in the economic development of Tacoma + Pierce County. Tacoma's railroad history extends back to 1873 and is still observed and celebrated today.

**The Northern Pacific Railroad** designated Tacoma its Western terminus in 1873. The transcontinental route was fully linked to the rest of the nation by 1883. However, in 1980 Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad pulled out of the Pacific Northwest leaving miles of serviceable track.

**Mount Rainier Railroad [MRR]** began excursions between Elbe and Mineral Lake near Mount Rainier during the 1980s. Today, MRR offers various expeditions on a vintage train pulled by a 1920-era Mikado locomotive and a 1929 Alco Minerette tank engine. These excursions include specialized themed rides such as the Peanuts Great Pumpkin Patch Express, The Polar Express, the Washington Wine Express and the Hard Cider Steam Train.

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