

## About the Zimmerman Center



The Zimmerman Center for Heritage is owned and managed by Susquehanna Heritage and open to the public year-round. Visitors may arrive by land or water to experience a variety of heritage and outdoor activities.

- ◆ Discover the John Smith Chesapeake Trail
- ◆ Get your National Park Passport stamped
- ◆ Become a National Park Junior Ranger
- ◆ Learn about the Susquehannock Indians
- ◆ View river art and history exhibits
- ◆ Attend a river history program
- ◆ Tour the historic house
- ◆ Launch or land a paddle craft
- ◆ Hike into Native Lands County Park



1706 Long Level Road, Wrightsville, PA 17368

Questions? Call (717) 252-0229 or  
e-mail [info@susquehannaheritage.org](mailto:info@susquehannaheritage.org)

Published by:

**SUSQUEHANNA HERITAGE**

Susquehanna Heritage is a non-profit organization and Pennsylvania Heritage Area advancing a vision for the Susquehanna Riverlands as a national destination for outdoor fun and cultural discovery.

Visit us online to learn more:

[www.SusquehannaHeritage.org](http://www.SusquehannaHeritage.org)

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### Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail

The Zimmerman Center for Heritage is designated by the National Park Service as Pennsylvania's Visitor Contact & Passport Station for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. Our history programs and exhibits have a special focus on the Susquehannock who lived in this area at the time of Smith's explorations of the Chesapeake Bay and traveled to meet with him near the mouth of the Susquehanna in Maryland in 1608.

America's first water-based National Historic Trail, the 3000-mile long John Smith Chesapeake Trail highlights the natural history and 17th-century American Indian societies of the bay and its rivers, along with Captain Smith's voyages on these waterways in 1607-1609. The trail stretches across much of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and includes the entire Susquehanna River from its headwaters at Lake Ostego located near Cooperstown, New York, through all of Pennsylvania and Maryland.



### VISITOR INFORMATION

#### Public Hours

Tuesday through Sunday  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Grounds Open Dawn to Dusk Every Day

#### Programs

##### NATIVE LANDS

Take a short hike into Native Lands County Park to discover how the Susquehannock Indians lived along the river.

##### INSPIRING SUSQUEHANNA

Explore the Visions of the Susquehanna River Art Collection to learn how the river inspires artists, authors and poets.

##### NATURAL SUSQUEHANNA

Venture to the waterside pavilion to explore the nature of the river and how it has impacted us over the centuries.

See our website for current program schedules:  
[www.SusquehannaHeritage.org](http://www.SusquehannaHeritage.org)

#### Visit Us by Boat

Paddlers may land and launch kayaks and canoes at our riverfront paddle craft landing year-round. Sail and power boaters may tie up at our seasonal floating dock. Use of dock is limited to one boat at a time for a maximum of two hours.



The Zimmerman Center is funded through private donations and grants from the National Park Service; Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation; PA Heritage Areas Program; and the York County Tourism Grant Program through the York County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

## ZIMMERMAN CENTER FOR HERITAGE GUIDE



*Official Visitor Contact  
& Passport Station*



**SUSQUEHANNA RIVERLANDS**

PLAY. EXPLORE. EXPERIENCE.

[www.SusquehannaRiverlands.com](http://www.SusquehannaRiverlands.com)

## A Lasting Tribute to Civic Leadership



The Zimmerman Center for Heritage presents a unique setting for Susquehanna Heritage programs and is a lasting tribute to the civic leadership of its namesake donors. For over half a century, John and Kathryn Zimmerman committed their time and resources to improve the York community. In the late 1990's, they saved this special place and restored the home as a historic jewel on the riverfront.

In 2007, the Zimmermans donated the property to Susquehanna Heritage as a place for storytelling, inspiration, and outdoor adventure.

In 2014, with public and private funding, Susquehanna Heritage enhanced the site with a waterfront pavilion, boardwalk, floating dock, paddle craft landing, accessible pathways, historical displays, improved parking, native landscaping, and a wetland and rain garden for better storm water management.



In 2016, the National Park Service designated the Zimmerman Center for Heritage as the first-ever Visitor Contact & Passport Station for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, bringing well-deserved national recognition to the Zimmermans' legacy.



## A Land & Home at the Center of History

This landscape was valued by Native Americans and early settlers alike as a crossroads for land and water travel. One of the last known Susquehannock settlements, dating to 1676, was on the hilltop behind this site, in what is now Native Lands County Park. The area played a key role in the long-time border disputes between the British colonies of Maryland and Pennsylvania. English King Charles I granted the second Lord Baltimore a charter for Maryland in 1632, with an upper boundary at the 40th parallel, two miles north of here. In 1681 King Charles II granted William Penn's charter for Pennsylvania. The 40th parallel did not follow natural features, so the boundary was difficult to define.



European settlers first moved here in the early 1700s. John Wright, a Pennsylvania Quaker, established the town of Wright's Ferry across the river to the north. Marylander Thomas Cresap arrived in 1730, buying 150 acres on the west shore, including this site, which he named "Pleasant Garden". Cresap built a "fort", established the Blue Rock Ferry, collected taxes for Maryland, and remained loyal to Lord Baltimore. He was despised by Pennsylvanians, became known as the "Maryland Monster" for his aggressive actions towards settlers, and was arrested in 1736 after bloody skirmishes known as "Cresap's War."

King George II restored peace in 1737, but disputes continued until 1750, when the issue was heard in British courts and decided for Pennsylvania. Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon surveyed Pennsylvania's border with Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia in 1763-1767, marking it with ornate boundary stones. Native



American opposition delayed a final resolution until 1784. The new boundary, 15 miles south, became known as the Mason-Dixon Line and symbolized the border between the North and South, the Free states and Slave states.



The construction date for the Zimmerman Center's stone house is not known, but historians date the home to about 1750, after Thomas Cresap left the area. Owners included John Meyer, Jacob Dritt, Margaret Bonham, Jacob Detwiler, David March, Barton Gnaw, Byrd Leibhart, Kenneth Wallick, and the Zimmermans. The house is known as the Dritt Mansion for Jacob Dritt, who lived here from 1783 until 1817, when he drowned in the river. Dritt served in the Revolutionary War and was a Major General of the Commonwealth Militia. His house was a residence and a place of business. Dritt operated a ferry and engaged in wine and liquor trading, farming, and milling. He founded the village of Washington Boro across the river and planned a bridge from there to his proposed town of Pleasant Garden at Long Level, but neither was built. Dritt had eleven children with his wife, Maria Elizabeth, and the house remained in the family until 1851. The Dritt Cemetery is now part of Native Lands County Park. Jacob Dritt is not buried there, but his wife and descendants are, with graves dating from 1824 to 1879.

The property remained a farm into the 1930s, with a barn south of the house and pastures and fields along the river and hillsides. The hilltop land was sold off after Safe Harbor Dam was built in 1930 and created Lake Clarke, establishing Long Level as a place for respite and water recreation.



The home's architecture reflects English and German influences. Original features include four fireplaces and a vaulted basement. Excavations revealed over 10,000 artifacts, including hardware, coins, pottery, and prehistoric relics. The summer kitchen and bake oven, likely torn down in the 1800s, were reconstructed based on archaeological findings.

## Visions of the Susquehanna



The Susquehanna River flows 444 miles from its source in New York state to the Chesapeake Bay. Throughout history, this river has been a place of respite and inspiration—especially for America's artists.

Susquehanna Heritage honors this cultural legacy at the Zimmerman Center through

the *Visions of the Susquehanna* river art collection.

In 2006, York County artist Rob Evans curated *Visions of the Susquehanna: 250 Years of Paintings by American Masters*, a travelling exhibit of historic and contemporary art showcasing the Susquehanna River. The exhibit examined the rich tapestry of art created by the great number of renowned artists, past and present, who have been attracted to this waterway. When its journeys ended in 2008, Evans and Susquehanna Heritage collaborated to acquire key contemporary pieces from the exhibit to create the first-ever permanent collection of Susquehanna River art. Funding was provided by private donors and the Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program. Since the original exhibit opened at the Zimmerman Center, additional contemporary and historic art works have been added to this unique collection through generous private contributions.

*Visions of the Susquehanna* interprets the river's heritage with over a dozen permanent and several loaned paintings. Artists include Michael Allen, Rob Evans, Mark Innerst, Phylis Koster, Carol Oldenburg, Robert Patierno, Mark Workman, and Scott Wright.

