

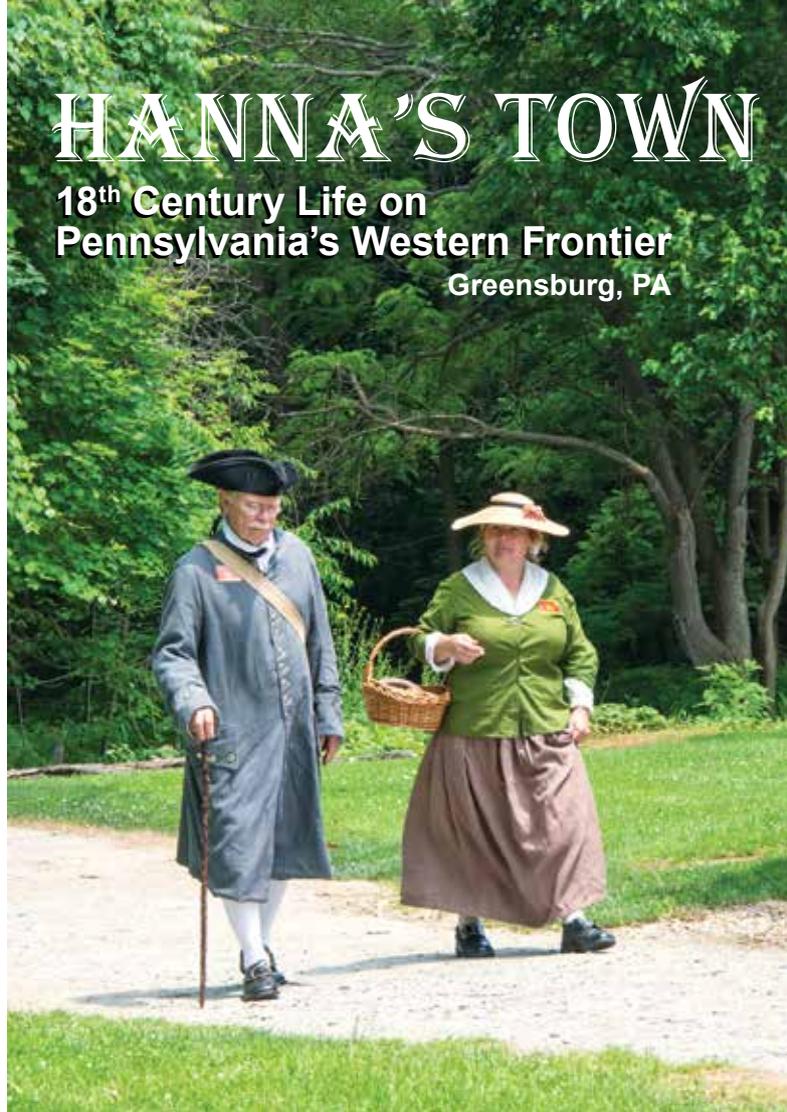
# HANNA'S TOWN

18<sup>th</sup> Century Life on  
Pennsylvania's Western Frontier  
Greensburg, PA

Back in the days when American colonists were taking up arms against the British government, the fledgling community of Hanna's Town, located in the western frontier of Pennsylvania, played a significant role during a critical period in our nation's history. It was a turbulent time, when settlers formed militias to safeguard the colonies – and their homes – from Native American attacks. With the onset of the Revolutionary War, militia groups were organized to fight the British and their Indian allies in the western campaign.

Hanna's Town began in 1769 as a small settlement along the Forbes Road that bore the name of its founder, Robert Hanna, who built a tavern and created lots for a new village. In 1773, the settlement became the first county seat of Westmoreland County and thus the site of the first English courts west of the Alleghenies. Hanna's Town became a popular stop for travelers seeking comfort and rest along the otherwise rugged, heavily forested terrain of the road over the Allegheny Mountains.

Others seeking a new life sought refuge from the surrounding wilderness to establish homes. In 1775, the town's size rivaled that of Pittsburgh. Many of these newcomers shared a fierce passion for independence; "They were bold, aggressive, hardy, courageous and self-reliant. They often had little respect for authority or title. Having experienced arbitrary and capricious government in England, they were zealous defenders of personal liberty and self-government." (Westmoreland County Historical Society) In May of 1775, many of these folks gathered in town to adopt the Hanna's Town Resolves, a document challenging British authority



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*unless otherwise noted*

and asserting the settlers' commitment to protecting their rights, in armed conflict if deemed necessary, against British oppression. This was more than a year before the Declaration of Independence. The town became a recruiting center for militia fighting in the western campaign against the British and allied Native American tribes. On July 13, 1782, during one of the final battles of the war, several hundred Seneca and a few British allies raided and set fire to Hanna's Town and its surroundings, and killed most of the livestock. The devastation obliterated the

town, and with no source of sustenance remaining, those who survived soon abandoned the area.

The former town's site conversion to a single family farm in the early 1800s turned out to be a fortuitous circumstance for future generations. "Because the site became farmland, it was protected from development and so its archaeological history was preserved," says Lisa Hays, executive director of the Westmoreland County Historical Society. In 1969, Westmoreland County acquired the property, and the site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Historians and archaeologists, aware of the site's significance and potential, soon converged on the site to begin excavations and research. Ongoing work from these professionals, assisted by trained students and volunteers, continues to shed light on the story of Hanna's Town.

Today, Historic Hanna's Town celebrates the original town's legacy as a partially reconstructed 18th century village, a county park now managed by the Westmoreland County



**Above: Members of Proctor's Militia conduct musket drills.**  
**Right: Gail Barrell demonstrates spinning wool into yarn.**

Historical Society. "We tell the story of how people lived on the frontier during the crucial period surrounding the Revolutionary War," says Lisa. "Hanna's Town also tells the story of the western campaign. Everyone already knows the story of the eastern campaign." Structures include the Hanna's Tavern/Courthouse, a fort, three log homes, and a wagon shed that houses an authentic 18th century Conestoga wagon.

Visitors can learn more about Hanna's Town and its historic impact through guided tours describing life on the western frontier and the challenges facing its hardy settlers during the American Revolution. Special events feature various aspects of 18th century life.

Opening day this year is set for May 6, with hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Highlights include an encampment by the Proctor's Independent Battalion in the fort and two seatings in the early 19th century Klingensmith House

for full tea accompanied by "savories, scones, sweets and pastries." Seating for the tea is limited and reservations are required.

For children ages 7 through 11, Colonial Camp offers a taste of daily life on the frontier of Southwestern Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary War. This year's camp will be held from June 12 – 16. Campers learn through activities related to the town's period in history and include music, dance, crafts,



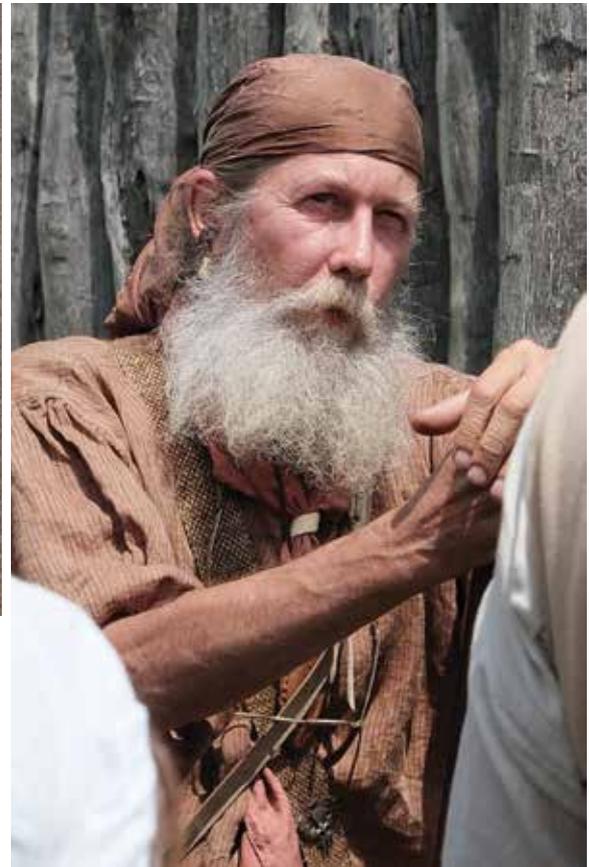


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Step back in time to the early days of Hanna's Town for a deeper understanding of our nation's heritage.

Hanna's Town signature event is Frontier Court Re-enactments – June 24 & 25 this year. Experience militia encampments, living history demonstrations, drill and musket demos, reenactments of court cases, music, kids station, food and more.



open-hearth cooking, trades, games and Native American life.

Hanna's Town's signature event is Frontier Court Re-enactments, on June 24 & 25 this year, which includes militia encampments, living history demonstrations, drill and musket demos, colonial kids station, kitchen garden talk, and the reenactment of court cases heard at Hanna's Town 1773-1786. Other interesting special events include "Three Centuries of Christmas in America," and "Stimulating Beverages."

From July 17 through August 19, visitors can observe archaeologists at work during the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's 2017 Archaeology Field School. The Tavern Kitchen Garden features vegetables and herbs typically grown during the Colonial period, usually in raised beds. Visitors can purchase souvenirs and gifts in the Museum Shop.

Volunteers are always welcome to help as tour guides, Museum Shop clerks and garden helpers.

2017 marks the 44th season of the famous Hanna's Town Antiques & Collectibles Sales, beginning May 14 and continuing on the second Sunday of each month through October 8. Bargain hunters can enjoy browsing through items displayed by 100 to 180 vendors. Proceeds from parking and vendor fees support the Forbes Road Volunteer Fire Department and the Westmoreland County Historical Society. Pets are not permitted.



Hanna's Town invites the public to take a trip back in time to gain a deeper understanding of our nation's heritage. The park is open to the public, with a small admission charge, according to the following schedule:

**May, September and October** – Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sunday from 1 – 4 p.m.

**June, July and August** – Wednesday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Sunday 1 – 4 p.m.

**October 28** – The final weekend for guided tours.

A special evening Candlelight Tour features fears of the 18th century frontier.

**November 2** – Candlelight Open House in the Museum Shop and Tavern.

For more information see [www.westmorelandhistory.org](http://www.westmorelandhistory.org)