

Buchanan's Birthplace

Pennsylvania State Parks Mission

The primary purpose of Pennsylvania state parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education. In meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic and historical values of parks should be given first consideration. Stewardship responsibilities should be carried out in a way that protects the natural outdoor experience for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

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BUCHANAN'S BIRTHPLACE STATE PARK



Buchanan's Birthplace State Park is an 18.5-acre park nestled in a gap of Tuscarora Mountain in Franklin County. The park and the surrounding forested mountains offer an abundance of beauty throughout the year.

In addition to the president's memorial are two picnic pavilions, picnic tables, restrooms and drinking water. Buck Run

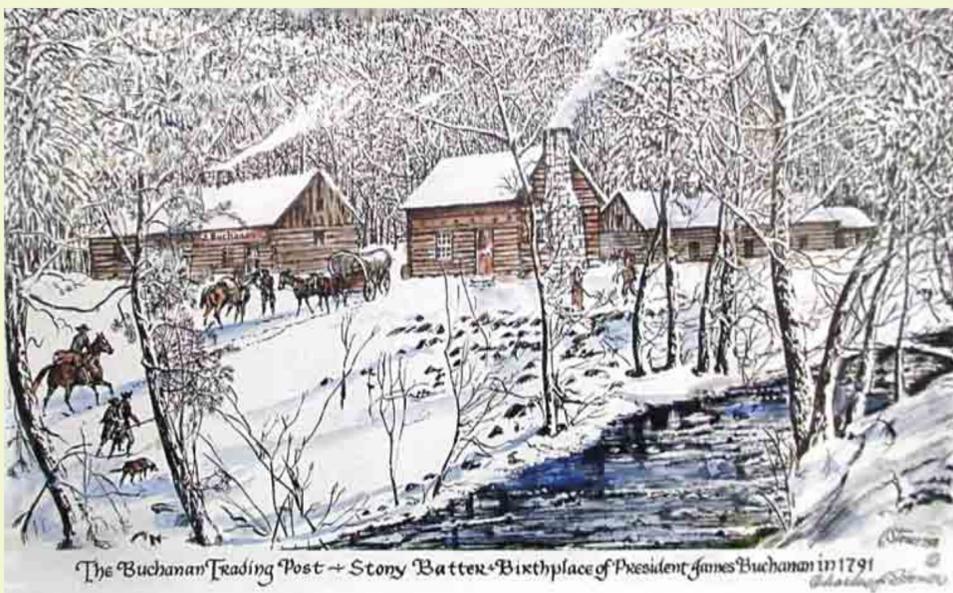
flows through the park and hosts a population of native trout. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regulations on approved trout waters apply to Buck Run.

The Tuscarora Trail passes to the west of the park. The trail serves as a bypass to the Appalachian Trail and follows the crest of the Tuscarora Mountain.

Directions

The park is between McConnellsburg and Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, near the village of Cove Gap along PA 16. From U.S. 30 at Fort Loudon, take PA 75 south and follow signs to Cove Gap and the park.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF A PRESIDENT



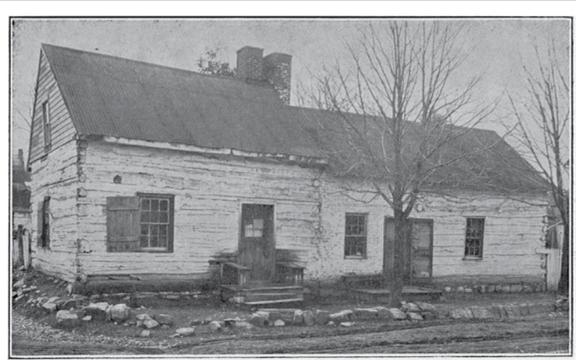
The Buchanan Trading Post - Stony Batter - Birthplace of President James Buchanan in 1791

Today, Cove Gap is a quiet and remote place, but on April 23, 1791, the day of James Buchanan's birth, Cove Gap was on the western edge of civilization - a place alive with the sights and sounds of a center of commerce. Although the surrounding Allegheny Mountains provided a formidable barrier to those seeking the way to the west, Cove Gap cut through two of the three parallel mountains, making the westward journey a little easier. During those days, anyone seeking a route west passed through this gap and the last mercantile store for many miles.

James Buchanan's father bought Tom's Trading Place during its heyday in 1789. The outpost had cabins, barns, stables, storehouses, store and orchard. He renamed it Stony Batter after the Buchanan home in northern Ireland and operated the business until moving it to nearby Mercersburg when young James reached the age of six. Though young when he left Stony Batter, Buchanan's first home left a lasting impression. In 1865, the owner of the site invited the former president to visit his birthplace. Buchanan wrote in reply, "It is a rugged but romantic spot, and the mountain and mountain stream under the scenery captivating. I have warm attachments for it..."



Stony Batter, Pa. time unknown



Mercersburg, Pa., 1908



Mercersburg, Pa., 2012

THE MAN FOR THE JOB

James Buchanan's education and career of public service shine brightly when compared to other presidents. Historians often rate his training for presidential service as perhaps second only to John Quincy Adams and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Buchanan graduated from Dickinson College in nearby Carlisle and became a lawyer in the state capital of Lancaster, at the young age of 21. While in Lancaster, Buchanan became active in the Federalist Party, the predecessor of the Democratic Party.

Once nominated, Buchanan never lost an election during his political career.

2 Terms as a Pennsylvania Assemblyman
1814 - 1819

- ★ Member of the Judiciary Committee.
- ★ Member of the Committee on Banks.

10 Years as a U.S. Congressman
1821 - 1831

★ While serving as the chairman of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee in 1831, Buchanan prevented the repeal of a section of the Judiciary Act of 1789 that would have given each state the right to interpret the constitutionality of state and federal laws and treaties instead of the Supreme Court. The repeal of the act would have meant a collapse of the Supreme Court and severely weakened federal laws.

★ Became leader of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party.

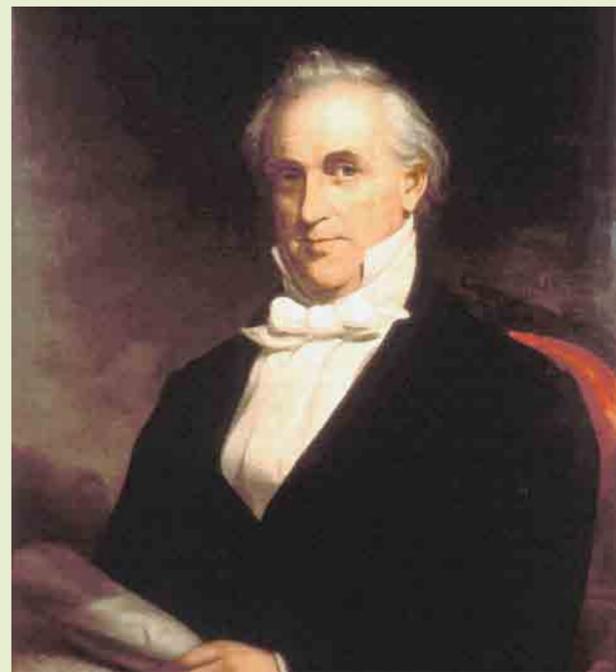
2 Years as the Foreign Minister to Russia
1832 - 1834

★ Buchanan's foreign diplomacy enabled him to secure a trade treaty with Russia that had eluded others for several years.

10 Years as a U.S. Senator 1833 - 1843

★ Became chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

★ Left as one of the most powerful senators.

4 Years as U.S. Secretary of State
1845 - 1849

★ During Buchanan's term he annexed one-third of the territory of the continental United States under his signature.

- ★ He negotiated the Oregon Territory with Great Britain in 1845. This included the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and parts of Montana.

★ He signed the annexation of the Republic of Texas, an area that included the state of Texas, one-half of New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Oklahoma and Kansas.

★ In 1848, Buchanan concluded the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo which annexed the remainder of the southwest from Mexico around Texas and north to the old Louisiana Purchase Line.

4 Years as Foreign Minister to Great Britain
1853 - 1855

★ Buchanan won Queen Victoria's favor while serving as the foreign minister to Great Britain. This relationship grew stronger when the anti-British press attacked the motherland. Because of Buchanan's endearing relationship with Queen Victoria, the queen sent her son, the Prince of Wales, to visit the president. This marked the first time British royalty had visited the United States. The Buchanan/Queen Victoria friendship proved beneficial during the Civil War. Queen Victoria opposed the strong movement in parliament to recognize the Confederacy in a move designed to bring needed cotton to Britain. Had the Confederacy been recognized by Britain, the outcome of the war may have changed.


15th President of the United States 1857-1861

In the Presidential election of 1856, Republican Millard Fillmore's re-election bid was overshadowed by the conflict over the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Whig candidate John C. Fremont had violently antislavery supporters who wanted the North to withdraw from the slave states. Buchanan ran with John C. Breckinridge as his vice president on a "Save the Union" platform.

Buchanan's solid reputation both at home and abroad led to his election as the 15th President of the United States on March 4, 1857. Once in office, Buchanan excluded extremists from his cabinet, choosing conservative and nationalist politicians.

★ Buchanan personally opposed slavery, but as a public official was bound to sustain it where sanctioned by law. Buchanan governed on three fundamental convictions:

- ★ only by compromise between parts could a federal republic survive;
- ★ citizens had to obey the law even when they thought it unjust;
- ★ the question of morality could not be settled by political action.

★ Buchanan understood the Constitution nearly as well as its author James Madison. Buchanan held Madison's views of how the Constitution was supposed to work, not

as a logical document or as a consolidating document, but as a human document with interpretation that depended upon current wisdom to succeed. Buchanan was also instrumental in having Madison's notes on the 1787 Constitutional Convention turned over to the federal government and eventually printed.

★ Three states joined the Union under Buchanan's signature; Minnesota in 1858, Oregon in 1859 and Kansas, its citizens having defeated a proslavery constitution, as a free state in 1861.

★ In December of 1860, Buchanan presented his 4th Annual Message to Congress in which he explained his basic policy. The northern press condemned his policy as weak, vacillating, pro-southern and even treasonable. On March 4, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln gave his inaugural address. Some newspapers said his policy was forceful, brave, patriotic, manly, decisive and firm, even though Lincoln's inaugural address repeats in some places the same terminology used in Buchanan's earlier policy statements.

★ Lincoln's election triggered the secession of South Carolina on December 20, 1860. Buchanan, now a lame duck president, urged Lincoln to join him in a call for a

constitutional convention in order to gain time and place the matter of secession before a body more responsible than congress. When Lincoln rejected the proposal, southern members of Buchanan's cabinet resigned and seven deep south states formed the Confederate States of America.

★ President Buchanan remade his cabinet of strong Union men, most of whom later served in the Lincoln administration. Republican legislators blocked anything Buchanan proposed, believing that their party would gain credit for settling the crises after the change of administration on March 4. However, Buchanan did succeed in finishing his term, retaining eight of the 15 slave states in the Union and finished his term without bloodshed.

★ During Buchanan's term as President: his policy kept peace; the armed forces were on alert; he suggested a Constitutional Convention on slavery; and he pledged the federal government would enforce the law where practical, but not commit armed aggression against the South. Lincoln followed the same policy until the firing on Fort Sumter which required a military response and brought on the American Civil War.

POST PRESIDENCY

After Abraham Lincoln's inauguration, James Buchanan retired to his home, Wheatland, in Lancaster. On May 30, 1868, Buchanan gave his last public statement from his bed the day before he died.

"My dear friend, I have no fear for the future. Posterity will do me justice. I have always felt, and still feel that I discharged every public duty imposed upon me conscientiously. I have no regret for any public act of my life and history will vindicate my memory from every unjust aspersion."



Wheatland is operated by the James Buchanan Foundation and is open to the public. www.wheatland.org



HARRIET LANE JOHNSTON (1830-1903)

The youngest child of James Buchanan's sister Jane, Harriet Lane lived a life of great triumphs and heartbreaking tragedies. She was born May 9, 1830, in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. At age nine, she lost her mother. In November 1840, her father died. Harriet and her older sister were allowed to choose who they wished to live with. Harriet chose her favorite uncle, James Buchanan. Harriet's cousin, James B. Henry, also orphaned, soon joined Buchanan and Harriet. James Buchanan became guardian of Harriet in 1842.

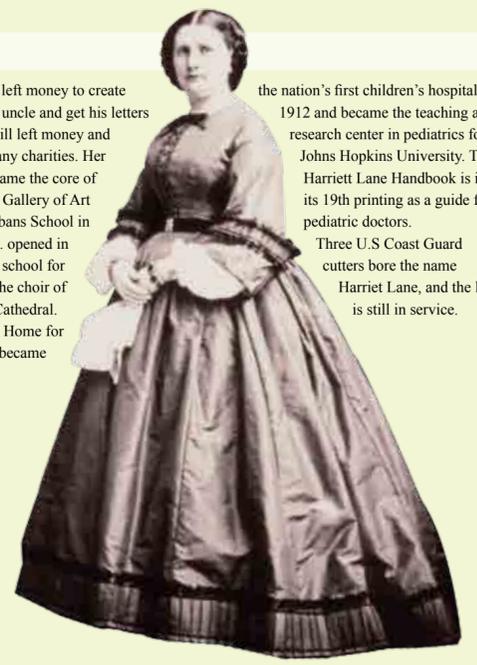
Buchanan arranged for Harriet's education and refinement. First, a year at the Maiden Crawford Sister's Boarding School in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, then on to a Charleston, Virginia, boarding school run by her cousin, which was also attended by her sister. To round out her education, Harriet spent two years at the Georgetown Visitation Convent. In 1854, Harriet joined her uncle in England where she was well-liked by Queen Victoria. James Buchanan became the 15th President of the United States in 1857. Since Buchanan never married,

Harriet acted as first lady. It is said that she filled the White House with gaiety and flowers, guided its social life with enthusiasm and discretion, and had a captivating mixture of spontaneity and poise. First lady Harriet also pursued humanitarian causes such as hospital and prison reform and better treatment of the American Indians. The Chippewa Indians named her "the Great Mother of the Indians." During the Civil War, Harriet volunteered for four years as a nurse in the Division of the Unknown Heroines. In 1866, at the age

of 36, she married Henry Elliot Johnston, a Baltimore banker. Tragedy struck soon after. Her beloved uncle James died in 1868. In the course of three years, she lost her immediate family. Her sons, ages 13 and 14, died 19 months apart in 1881 and 1882 from possible rheumatic fever. In 1884, her husband Henry died of pneumonia. Harriet moved to Washington D.C. and worked for humanitarian purposes. She financed the publishing of the two-volume biography of James Buchanan by George Ticknor Curtis in 1883. At the age of 73, on July 3, 1903, Harriet Lane Johnston died.

In her will she left money to create memorials to her uncle and get his letters published. The will left money and provisions for many charities. Her art collection became the core of the new National Gallery of Art in 1906. Saint Albans School in Washington, D.C. opened in 1909 as a private school for boys to serve in the choir of the Washington Cathedral. The Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children became

the nation's first children's hospital in 1912 and became the teaching and research center in pediatrics for Johns Hopkins University. The Harriett Lane Handbook is in its 19th printing as a guide for pediatric doctors. Three U.S Coast Guard cutters bore the name Harriet Lane, and the last is still in service.



A QUEST FOR HONOR



Harriet Lane Johnston's quest to honor her uncle through the creation of a monument began in the early 1880s. She made several attempts to purchase James Buchanan's birthplace, Stony Batter, but was unsuccessful throughout her lifetime. In 1895, at the age of 65, Harriet Lane Johnston prepared her will with a provision for two monuments. Her will stated that upon her death \$100,000 would be used to set up the James Buchanan Monument Fund. She chose a four-member board of trustees before her death to pursue her dream of a lasting tribute to her uncle. The will stipulated that the board had 15 years to build a monument at Stony Batter and/or receive permission from Congress to erect a statue in Washington D.C. If unsuccessful in the allotted time, the funds would go to the Harriet Lane Home for Invalid Children.

At Harriet's death, the will was executed and the process was sent into motion to build the two monuments for her beloved uncle. Unfortunately, by the time of the will's execution, two of the trustees had passed away. The task of securing a lasting tribute to James Buchanan rested with two men - E. Francis Riggs, a Washington, D.C., banker, and Lawrason Riggs, a Baltimore lawyer. Lawrason became the driving force in making Harriet's dream a reality. **Stony Batter** Mr. D. Shannon acquired Stony Batter in 1865. He refused several offers by Harriet to buy the land. In 1906, the Shannon heirs agreed to sell Stony Batter to the James Buchanan Monument Fund. Harriet's will stated that the trustees were to erect a monument with "proper inscriptions" and suggested the monument be a huge rock or boulder in its natural state. In December

1906, the Baltimore Sun stated, "an agent of the trustees is even now searching the mountain range to find a native boulder." Why a boulder was not used for the monument is unknown. Perhaps the difficulty in moving such a large stone made it impractical. The architectural firm, Wyatt & Nolting of Baltimore, Maryland, designed the monument in pyramid form, 38 feet square and 31 feet high. The inscription tablet, sill, seat and cap are constructed of 50 tons of hammered American gray granite. The pyramid structure contains 600 tons of native rubble and mortar. All faces of the stone show the original weathered surface. Work began on the monument in October

1907 with a work force of 20 men. A small railroad was built to help the workers move the stone from the mountainside to the monument site. By November, the work force had increased to 35 men, and on November 15, 1907, the monument was complete. The final instructions of the will for Stony Batter requested that the monument be enclosed in an iron railing for protection. The remaining grounds were for the enjoyment of the people of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Legislative Session of 1911 gave authorization for the Commonwealth to accept from the only surviving trustee, Lawrason Riggs, the 18.5-acre James Buchanan Monument.



A MONUMENT OF THE CAPITAL



"The incorruptible statesman whose walk was upon the mountain ranges of the law."
— Jeremiah S. Black 1868

The most difficult task given to the trustees was left to Lawrason Riggs, alone. He sought permission from the U.S. Congress to erect a monument to James Buchanan in Washington, D.C. Harriet's will stated that a quote from friend and former cabinet member, Jeremiah S. Black, about James Buchanan, be placed on the pedestal of the statue. The trustees met soon after the reading of the will to select a sculptor and architect for the Washington, D.C. statue. The National Commission of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C.,

approved the trustees' selection and plans for the monument, and suggested the south end of Meridian Hill Park as a site. The resolution to create the Buchanan's memorial passed congress on June 18, 1918, by a vote of 51 to 11, six days before the will's 15-year deadline. World War I and the Great Depression brought many delays, and progress on the memorial was slow. On June 26, 1930, the memorial was unveiled, a 9.5-foot bronze statue on a granite pedestal in front of an 82-foot panel with two carved figures at each end representing law and diplomacy. President Herbert Hoover accepted the monument for the citizens of the United States.



BUCHANAN'S BIRTHPLACE STATE PARK

Restrooms
Picnic Pavilion
Picnic Area
Blue Symbols Mean Accessible
Parking
Walking Path
State Park No Hunting
CONTOURS ARE ON 50 FT. INTERVALS

Rev. 7/21/14

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Access for People with Disabilities
This publication text is available in alternative formats. If you need an accommodation to participate in park activities due to a disability, please contact the park you plan to visit.

In an Emergency
Call 911 and contact a park employee. Directions to the nearest hospital are posted on bulletin boards.

Information and Reservations
For More Information Contact
Buchanan's Birthplace State Park
c/o Cowans Gap State Park
6235 Aughwick Road
Fort Loudon, PA 17224-9801
GPS DD: Lat. 39.86813 Long. -77.95282
717-485-3948
email: cowanssp@pa.gov
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www.visitPAparks.com

Information and Reservations
Make online reservations at www.visitPAparks.com or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS (888-727-2757), 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Saturday, for state park information and reservations.

Nearest Hospital
Fulton County Medical Center
214 Peach Orchard Road
McConnellsburg, PA 17233
717-485-3155

Nearby Attractions
Information on nearby attractions is available from the Franklin County Visitors Bureau. www.explorefranklincountypa.com
Nearby Cowans Gap State Park offers swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking, hiking, hunting, camping, rustic cabins, organized group camping, visitor center and environmental education programs.

Trash Disposal & Recycling
Buchanan's Birthplace State Park participates in a carry-in/carryout trash disposal program for small parks. There are no trash collection or recycling facilities. Visitors are asked to limit the amount of disposable items brought to the park and to take all trash and recyclables home.

Protect and Preserve our Parks
Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

- Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Prevent forest fires by having a fire in proper facilities and properly disposing of hot coals. Do not leave a fire unattended.
- Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be controlled and attended at all times and on a leash, caged or crated.

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