



The Gazette



VOL 44
No. 7

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Sponsoring Historic Bristol Day—Third Saturday of Each October

BCHF is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit, all volunteer Organization.

SEPTEMBER 2026

President's Corner Dear Members:

BCHF is hard at work planning for Historic Bristol Day and other programs. After Historic Bristol Day, our general membership meeting will be held on November 18th at our building on Cedar Street. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our annual Peach Social event due to lack of locally available peaches. We look forward to having this event next year. This event raises

funds to support BCHF's annual high school student scholarships. Information about various BCHF programs and trips are included in this issue of the Gazette.

Sincerely Jesse Walker

UPCOMING TRIPS

Ride on the Strasburg Railroad

Register Now!!

To Register online go to <https://www.bristolhistory.org/Trips-.html>

or call Sue at 215-781-8591



Round-trip bus Service, departing the Grundy Rec Center 8:30 AM and returning approximately at 6:00 PM. Historic steam train ride through scenic Lancaster County including lunch at the Casey Jones' Restaurant aboard the train. Trip includes a visit to the Choo Choo Barn, a 1,700 square-foot toy train layout filled with intricate details and animated displays.

\$156 for members and \$166 for non-members.

Reservations close on September 25, 2026

Bristol Cultural & Historical Foundation

Last Call for Contributions to Bristol Day

September 1, 2026

Dear Friend of BCHF:

This year marks a very special milestone for our community. In 2026, Historic Bristol Day will celebrate its **50th anniversary (along with America250)**, continuing a tradition that began when residents first came together to showcase Bristol's rich history, beautiful homes, local organizations, and vibrant community spirit. The celebration will be **Saturday, October 17, 2026**.

For fifty years, Historic Bristol Day has been a celebration of the people, places, and stories that make Bristol such a unique town. As we prepare for this anniversary celebration, BCHF is working to make this year's event bigger and better, with additional entertainment, activities, and experiences for residents and visitors alike.

We are very fortunate to be able to host this favorite event once again. We also know it may be difficult for some to donate what they have in the past. However, a contribution of any size will be deeply appreciated, and will help our organization achieve another successful event.

As we plan this event, may we count on your financial contribution (no matter the size) that will assist us in achieving our goal of making Historic Bristol Day an outstanding community event? Your contribution will be acknowledged in BCHF's publications and again, will be greatly valued during these difficult times. We cannot pull off this major undertaking without your generous support and assistance.

A response **no later than September 30st** would be appreciated. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Nicholas A Rizzo

Nicholas A. Rizzo

Bristol Day Fundraising Chair

Please make a check payable to:

BCHF
P.O. Box 215
Bristol, PA 19007

Name as it is to appear in acknowledgement: _____

Donation: \$25_____ \$50_____ \$75_____ \$100 _____ Other _____

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty with dinner at the Cranberry Inn on June 24

Before record-breaking heat domes settled over the continental U.S., Canadian wildfire smoke blanketed the East Coast, and large crowds gathered to celebrate the semiquincentennial of Independence Day, we enjoyed an idyllic day on Ellis and Liberty Islands. The weather was nearly perfect—clear, sunny, and pleasantly breezy—and the only lines were for the ferry.

Right on schedule, our bus reached Liberty State Park Terminal on the shore of the Hudson River in Jersey City. We first walked through the NJ Empty Sky 9/11 memorial that was erected to memorialize NJ residents lost on September 11, 2001, and then proceeded through security in the Central Railroad of New Jersey Terminal to board the ferry. Once on the ferry, we were free to tour independently, choosing whether to visit Ellis Island, Liberty Island, or both.

I chose to spend most of my time on Ellis Island, in the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration - formerly known as the Ellis Island Immigration Station - where 5,000 – 7,000 people a day were processed during the peak immigration period of 1900 to 1914. According to the Park Ranger who conducted the tour I joined, the immigration staff of the day did their best to facilitate the entry of immigrants into the U.S.: when ill they were treated at the

large medical facility on the grounds and when they had legal issues, they were assisted by the staff. Following the tour, I watched a particularly poignant documentary, “Island of Hope, Island of Tears,” that features real audio and stories from immigrants who passed through the station. In addition to the tour and film, I visited the Records Discovery Center and tried to find my grandfather’s immigration record, had a pleasant (and surprisingly affordable) lunch, shopped at the gift shop, viewed several exhibits, and enjoyed the ferry ride to Liberty Island that eventually travelled back to Liberty State Park where we started. Those who chose to, could disembark on Liberty Island to walk around the base and visit the museum and gift shop in the base prior to returning to Liberty State Park.

It was a rich and memorable day, but our trip was not over. We continued to Cranbury, New Jersey, where we enjoyed a delicious meal at the Cranbury Inn and heard stories about its history, including the tale of a ghost who slams doors when not treated with proper respect. I will remember this trip fondly for the experience itself, for what I learned, and for the renewed appreciation it gave me for what the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island represent.

**Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning
to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your
teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless,
tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden
door!
-Emma Lazarus**



Pages from Bristol's Past

As Bristol prepares to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Historic Bristol Day, the Bristol Cultural & Historical Foundation Gazette will look back at some of the traditions, events, and moments that have helped shape the life of the borough. Bristol's history is not only found in its historic buildings or well known events, but also in the small neighborhood places where residents gathered and daily life quietly unfolded.

Bristol's Steamboat Era and Celebrations on the Wharf

By: Michael Crossan

Long before festivals and concerts filled the Bristol waterfront, the Delaware River itself brought the crowds.

In the early years of the twentieth century, steamboats and excursion boats regularly stopped along the riverfront near Bristol, carrying passengers from Philadelphia, Trenton, Wilmington, and other river towns. Many of those passengers were headed just across the river to Burlington Island, where a popular summer attraction awaited them.

What few people realize today is that Burlington Island once hosted a bustling amusement park. Originally developed as a picnic and swimming destination, the site grew into Island Beach Amusement Park during the early 1900s. Visitors arriving by boat would step onto the island to find rides, games, and entertainment. The park featured attractions such as a wooden roller coaster known as "The Greyhound," a carousel, Ferris wheel, dance hall, and midway games.

Thousands of visitors traveled the Delaware River each summer to spend the day at the island park, enjoying rides, picnics, and the sandy beaches along the river. For Bristol residents, the riverfront served as a gateway to recreation and excitement.

Unfortunately, the amusement park's success was short-lived. Fires in the late 1920s and early 1930s destroyed much of the park, bringing an end to what had once been one of the Delaware River's most popular attractions.

Even after the steamboats and the island amusement park were gone, Bristol's connection to the river as a gathering place never faded.

Over time, the Bristol Wharf and waterfront parks became the setting for community celebrations that

continued the tradition of bringing people together along the river. Cultural festivals began to take root along the waterfront, celebrating the many traditions that make up Bristol's community.

Events such as Italian Day, Celtic Day, Puerto Rican Day, and African American Day filled the waterfront with music, food, and dancing. Families gathered along the Delaware to celebrate heritage while sharing traditions with neighbors and visitors alike.

Italian Day, organized by the Bristol Lions Club, became one of the best known celebrations along the waterfront. The event features live music, food vendors, craft booths, and family activities, drawing thousands of visitors each year.

Puerto Rican Day brings vibrant Latin music, dancing, and traditional foods such as empanadas and plantains to the waterfront. Celtic Day celebrates Irish and Celtic heritage with bagpipes, traditional music, and Irish dance performances.

For many years the waterfront also hosted African American Day, a celebration honoring African American culture and heritage. In recent years that tradition has continued as Bristol's Juneteenth celebration, which commemorates the end of slavery in the United States and recognizes the contributions of African Americans to the community.

The Juneteenth celebration takes place near the Harriet Tubman statue along the waterfront, a monument honoring the famous abolitionist and conductor of the Underground Railroad. The statue serves as a reminder of the region's connection to the Underground Railroad and Bristol's place in the larger story of freedom and refuge.

These celebrations are reflected in several monuments along the Wharf, including a Celtic Cross monument,

a Columbus monument honoring Italian heritage, and the Harriet Tubman statue, each representing cultures that helped shape Bristol's identity.

The waterfront also became a place for music and entertainment throughout the summer. Many residents remember evenings when the Bristol Lions Club concerts filled the air with live music from the gazebo in Lions Park. Later events such as Doo Wop on the River continued that tradition, drawing crowds to the waterfront to enjoy classic songs while watching the sun set over the Delaware.

In recent years, improvements along the waterfront have also welcomed boaters back to Bristol. The addition of docks along the Wharf allows visitors traveling by boat to stop and enjoy restaurants, shops, and events in town. For many years a public boat ramp nearby provided easy access to the Delaware River, bringing fishermen, pleasure boaters, and

families to the waterfront to launch their boats and spend a day on the water.

From the days when steamboats carried passengers to the amusement park on Burlington Island to today's concerts, festivals, and boating along the Wharf, Bristol's riverfront has remained a place where people gather.

The boats may no longer bring crowds to an island amusement park, but the Delaware River continues to provide the backdrop for some of Bristol's most memorable celebrations.

Share Your Memory

Do you remember festivals, concerts, or boating along the Bristol waterfront? Share your memories of the Wharf, Lions concerts, Doo Wop on the River, or other riverfront celebrations with us.

www.bristolhistory.org/memories

Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation

(Non-Profit Organization)



**ONE DAY ONLY - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026
SHOP 8AM - 11PM**

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Susan Watkins (215)781-8591

Francine Leinheiser (267)251-9750

*Exclusions apply. For more details visit boscos.com/category/friends-helping-friends-event

Whale Watching on the Miss Belmar

July 29

The forecast for our whale-watching trip aboard the Miss Belmar, sailing from Belmar, N.J., looked uncertain—one day calling for storms, the next only drizzle. In the end, we had lovely weather, with no rain or heavy winds during our three-hour tour.

At the loading wharf, we were greeted by Trisha Devoe, head of the Miss Belmar naturalist and education department. Trisha holds a master's degree in Conservation Biology from Columbia University and founded Save Our Whales Now.org. During the tour, she shared insights about humpback whales, the birds we spotted, and the broader marine ecosystem.

Once everyone was aboard, the captain headed a few miles offshore to an area where humpbacks are often seen feeding on schools of fish. Most of us lined the lower and upper decks, watching for the telltale spout from a whale's blowhole. Before long, the captain received word from another boat about a nearby humpback, and we quickly made our way there. We were rewarded with repeated views of the whale breaching the surface. Eventually, it was time to begin the hour-and-a-half trip back to shore. To our delight, we encountered a pod of dolphins along the way, and the captain gave us plenty of chances to watch and photograph them.



Many passengers tried to photograph the whales—a challenge from a moving vessel, especially in the wake of other boats. Dave Zimmerman, an experienced photographer with specialized equipment, captured hundreds of images. Based on photos of the dorsal fins, he suspects that what appeared to be one humpback may actually have been two. His photographs also revealed a shark in the same area as the whale or whales. A closer look at the fin suggests it may have been a great hammerhead or a great white.

Overall, the trip was a success and one to remember. If you couldn't get a good photo—or couldn't join the trip—you can view and purchase Dave Zimmerman's nature photography at Bristol Art Galleria, located in the Mill Street parking lot behind 216 Mill Street.

Out Of The Past

The following items were excerpted from The Bristol Courier September 1926 2¢ a Copy

September 1 – Borough School Taxes are now due.

September 2 – Bristol public schools are ready to open on Sept. 8 with the exception of the new addition to the high school.

Mothers' Association of Bristol Public Schools has pledged to pay half the cost of gymnasium equipment for the schools.

September 3 – Asst. Secretary of War Davidson and General Gilmore of the U. S. Army Air Corp toured the Huff-Daland airplane factory where Army planes are being built.

September 4 – 161 acres of the "William Penn" farm at Penn's Manor was sold to the Van Sciver Sand Corporation for \$100,000.

September 7 – Pennsylvania State College will add 1,000 freshman this year.

On Tues. & Wed. "The Son of the Sheik" starring Rudolph Valentno will be shown at the Forrest Theatre on Mill St.

September 8 – Over 100 members of the Robert Bracken Post of the American Legion will attend the state convention at the Delaware Water Gap.

Pennsylvania Railroad has Niagara Falls excursions on Sept. 16 & 23 for \$16.80 round trip from Bristol.

September 9 – Rotary Club of Bristol entertained 31 college boys at a luncheon held at the Elks Home. This is an annual event.

September 10 – The Mothers' Assoc. of Bristol High School is holding a "Good Things to Eat" sale at 11 AM on Sat. Sept. 11 at the corner of Mill and Wood St.

September 11 – Norma Smallwood of Oklahoma was crowned Miss America.

3,000 students are enrolled in public and parochial schools in Bristol Borough.

September 13 – Bristol florist Jacob C. Schmidt has returned from a trip to Cuba and the south.

September 14 – Bristol Dental Clinic will be open on Thursdays for the treatment of the school children's teeth. There is a fee of 25¢.

September 15 – 25 musicians have joined the high school band directed by William Martini.

The T. J. Leedom and Paterson Parchment Company had 5 displays at the Sesquicentennial in Phila. Thousands saw these exhibits which advertised Bristol Borough.

September 16 – The North Radcliffe Addition, a tract of 30 acres north of Adams Hollow Creek between Radcliffe and Pond Streets known as the Plate Yard is being surveyed and subdivided. The lots will be offered for sale on Sept. 25, 1926. First payment is \$20 for \$200 lot, and \$40 secures a \$400 lot. This is not an auction. First purchaser has the best choice.

Quality Food and Lowest Prices – 40¢/LB Perfect Blend Coffee, Butter 55¢/LB, 3 can of Campbells' Tomato Soup 25¢, Stewing chicken 42¢/LB.

September 17 – Grand opening of Bristol's newest store – The Bristol Hardware Store opposite the Forrest Theatre on Mill St.

September 18 – Rev. Isadore Jenne, pastor of St. Ann's Italian Catholic Church returned from a 3-month visit to Rome where he had an audience with the Pope.

September 20 – 1,000 perished and 50,000 homeless after a hurricane wiped out Miami and the lower east coast of Florida.

September 21 – Fourth Annual Dahlia & Flower Show will take place on Wed. and Thurs. at the trades Hall on Wood St. under the auspices of the Bristol Dahlia Assoc.

A Card party is to be held at the Knights of Columbus Home on Sept 21. Admission 50¢

September 22 – The fourth anniversary of the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act is credited with the existing prosperity throughout the United States.

The fifth industry to locate here within a year purchased the balance of the shipyard property. It is said to be one of the largest firms of its kind in the world. The company was not named. They expect of hire 400 men.

September 23 – 150,000 fans are expected to see the Dempsey-Tunney Fight at the Sesquicentennial Stadium in Philadelphia.

September 24 – Tunney beat Dempsey to win the heavyweight title in 10 rounds.

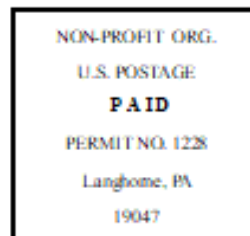
North Radcliffe Addition sale is tomorrow. Lots \$125 - \$375, except corners. Eastburn, Blanche & Hardy agents.

September 28 – The Card Party given by the Ladies Auxiliary of Harriman Hospital held at the Elks Home and was very successful.

September 29 – Bristol Fire Department will hold a benefit for the Uniform Fund at the Forrest Theatre tonight and tomorrow. There will be two shows each night.



**Bristol Cultural &
Historical Foundation, Inc.**
Post Office Box 215
Bristol, PA 19007



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar of Events For 2026

October 17, 2026 – Historic Bristol Day
10 AM – 4 PM Details in the October
Gazette

\$156 for members/\$166 for non-members.
Call 215-781-8591 to register. **More details**
in this Gazette.

October 28, 2026 - The Strasburg Railroad
and the Choo Choo Barn With Lunch at
Casey Jones' Restaurant.

November 18, 2026 @ 7 PM BCHF General
Membership Meeting

BCHF Headquarters are at 321 Cedar Street, Bristol.
For current information about activities and events, check our website at www.bristolhistory.org
Email us at bchf2157819895@gmail.com Follow us on Instagram - - [IG@bristol_historic_foundation](https://www.instagram.com/IG@bristol_historic_foundation)

THE GAZETTE is a publication of the Bristol Cultural and Historical Foundation, Inc. — Linda Rowan, Editor
Post Office Box 215 · Bristol · Pennsylvania · 19007 · 215-781-9895
Articles for this issue of THE GAZETTE contributed by: Jesse Walker, Michael Crossan, Deborah Pinney, & Nicholas Rizzo
