

Museums of the state of Delaware to offer 10 special programs in December 2013

☒ During the month of December 2013, the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs will be offering 10 special programs at the [state of Delaware's six museums](#). Six of these programs will feature winter-holiday themed activities. A full schedule of events is listed below. All programs are free and open to the public. For additional information, call 302-744-5055.

Highlights of the month include “Starry Hospitality Night,” a holiday-themed evening of music, festive décor and refreshments capped off with star-gazing in celebration of Delaware astronomer Annie Jump Cannon. The event, which will take place at Lewes’ [Zwaanendael Museum](#) on Thursday, Dec. 5 from 6 to 9 p.m., will feature Bill Ayrey, lab manager and company historian from [ILC Dover](#), who will demonstrate the space suit that the company manufactures for NASA.

On Saturday, Dec. 14, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., one of Delaware’s most historic homes—the [Buena Vista Conference Center](#) south of New Castle—will be decorated for the holidays and will be offering craft activities presented by the [Delaware Nature Society](#) in which visitors can create their own holiday ornament utilizing natural materials. Intrepid travelers can then make the short trip to old New Castle for the annual [Spirit of Christmas in New Castle](#) which includes activities at the [New Castle Court House Museum](#).

Also on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Dover’s [John Dickinson Plantation](#) will present “Handmade for the Holidays,” a hands-on program in which visitors can learn to decorate cards through the art of paper quilling and

stenciling, write a personal note with a quill pen and create a sachet with herbs and spices.

Administered by the [Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs](#), the six museums of the state of Delaware—New Castle Court House Museum, John Dickinson Plantation, First State Heritage Park Welcome Center and Galleries, The Old State House, Johnson Victrola Museum and Zwaanendael Museum—tell the story of Delaware’s contributions to the history and culture of the United States. Through displays, exhibits and special programs, the museums explore how the state’s distinctive physical environment, in combination with the people who came to live there, gave Delaware an identity that is different from any other place.

Special events at the museums of the state of Delaware, December 2013

Thursday, Dec. 5, 2013

“Starry Hospitality Night.” Holiday-themed program includes star-gazing in celebration of Delaware astronomer Annie Jump Cannon plus Bill Ayrey, lab manager and company historian from [ILC Dover](#) demonstrating the space suit that the company manufactures for NASA. In addition, the evening will feature music, festive décor and refreshments. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. 6–9 p.m. 302-645-1148.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013

“The First State.” Guided tours explore why Delaware is known as the First State due to its role in ratifying the U.S. Constitution. [First Saturday in the First State](#) program. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5055.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013

“Tis’ the Season.” Guided tours feature holiday music recorded by Victor Records, played on authentic Victor Talking Machines. [First Saturday in the First State](#) program.

[Johnson Victrola Museum](#), 375 S. New St., Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5055.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013

“An Illegal Activity.” Utilizing the exhibit “An Illegal Activity: The Underground Railroad in Delaware” as a backdrop, guided tours will explore Delaware’s crucial role in the Underground Railroad and on two Delaware leaders who aided in this “freedom enterprise.” [First Saturday in the First State](#) program. [First State Heritage Park Welcome Center and Galleries](#), Delaware Public Archives building, 121 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dover. Tours at 10 a.m., Noon and 2 p.m. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5055.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013

“Tour Zwaanendael Museum.” Enjoy the museum’s festive holiday-décor. Event held in conjunction with the Lewes Historical Society’s [Christmas Tour of Lewes](#). [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. 302-645-1148.

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2013

“Annie Jump Cannon.” Celebrate the 150th birthday of the noted Delaware astronomer. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Program at 2 p.m. Museum open 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-645-1148.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2013

[Spirit of Christmas in New Castle.](#) One of the best preserved colonial-era towns in America will feature tours of historic homes bedecked in holiday decorations, activities at museums including the [New Castle Court House Museum](#), crafts, musical entertainment and more. Festivities will conclude at 5 p.m. with the annual Christmas tree lighting at Market Square. Downtown New Castle. 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. 302-328-3279.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2013

Buena Vista Holiday Open House. One-day-only event featuring

one of Delaware's most historic homes decorated for the holidays, plus craft activities in which visitors can create their own holiday ornament utilizing natural materials. Presented in partnership with the [Delaware Nature Society](#). [Buena Vista Conference Center](#), 661 S. Dupont Highway (Route 13), New Castle. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. 302-323-4430.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2013

“Handmade for the Holidays.” Seasonal program in which visitors can learn to decorate cards through the art of paper quilling and stenciling. write a personal note with a quill pen and create a sachet with herbs and spices. [John Dickinson Plantation](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Program 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Museum open 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m. 302-739-3277.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2013

Demonstrations by the Thistledown Fiber Arts Guild. Program explores spinning, weaving, knitting and other fabric arts. [John Dickinson Plantation](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Program 1–3 p.m. Museum open 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m. 302-739-3277.

Exhibits at the museums of the state of Delaware, December 2013

In addition to special programming, the museums of the state of Delaware are presenting the following exhibits:

Thru Summer 2014

“An Illegal Activity: The Underground Railroad in Delaware.” Exhibit explores the First State's role in the Underground Railroad by showcasing Thomas Garrett and Samuel D. Burris and the actions they took in following their consciences rather than the law. Presented in partnership with the Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware. [First State Heritage Park Welcome Center and Galleries](#), Delaware Public Archives building, 121 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Dover. Mon.–Fri., 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sat., 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun.,

1:30-4:30 p.m. 302-744-5055.

Ongoing

"Archaeology of the New Castle Court House." The exhibit highlights the many phases of archaeological investigations at the New Castle Court House including artifacts representing over 300 years of continuous use of the building. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Ongoing

"Delaware and the War of 1812." Exhibit examines the service and sacrifice of Delawareans of 1812 to 1815, and the important role that the state played in a conflict that helped shaped the development of the United States. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. from Nov. 1–March 31. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. from April 1–Oct. 31. 302-645-1148.

Ongoing

"Emeline Hawkins: Her Journey From Slavery to Freedom on the Underground Railroad." Exhibit chronicles the compelling story of Emeline Hawkins and her family and their 1845 odyssey on the Underground Railroad from slavery in Maryland, through Delaware to freedom in Pennsylvania. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Sun., 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Ongoing

"A Seaborne Citizenry: The DeBraak and Its Atlantic World." Exhibit utilizes artifacts recovered from His Majesty's Sloop of War DeBraak, a British warship that sank off the Delaware coast on May 25, 1798 to tell the story of the vessel, its crew and the historical context within which it operated in the Atlantic World of the late 18th century. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Wed.–Sat., 10

a.m.–4:30 p.m. from Nov. 1–March 31. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. from April 1–Oct. 31. 302-645-1148.

Ongoing

“Simple Machines.” Exhibit demonstrating the six “simple machines”—incline ramp, screw, wedge, pulley, lever and wheel —that constitute the elementary building blocks of which all complicated machines are composed. [John Dickinson Plantation](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–3:30 p.m. 302-739-3277.

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