

Museums of the state of Delaware to feature 13 free programs in October 2015

(DOVER, Del.—Sept. 11, 2015)—The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs will be hosting 13 special events during the month of October 2015 at the museums of the state of Delaware. A full schedule is included below. All programs are free and open to the public.



Cast of “The Trial of William Penn.”
The play will be presented at the
New Castle Court House Museum on
Oct. 24.

Highlights of the month include “William Penn Day” at the [New Castle Court House Museum](#) and other locations in downtown New Castle on Saturday, Oct. 24. The event will feature a full day of activities commemorating the 333rd anniversary of Penn’s disembarkment at New Castle, his first landing in the New World. Programs will include a re-enactment of the Livery of Seizen ritual in which Penn received possession of New Castle and a 12-mile circle of land surrounding it at 10 a.m.; a performance by De Blokfluiters recorder/flute ensemble at 11 a.m.; “The Trial of William Penn,” a historical play exploring Penn’s trial on religious freedom and the rights of English subjects under the law at 12:30 and 3 p.m.; and “My Life With William by Mrs. Penn” at 1:30 p.m.

On Saturday, Oct. 3, between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., the division’s downtown Dover museums will present programs in conjunction with “Revealing the Ridgely Family,” the [First State Heritage Park’s](#) daylong series of activities exploring the influential Dover family and their contributions to the

community over the past 300 years. [The Old State House](#), located at 25 The Green, will present “Dates of Distinction: Birth and Re-Birth of a State House,” guided tours focusing on Charles Ridgely and the commission created to build The Old State House as well as Mabel Lloyd Ridgely’s efforts to restore it generations later. Meanwhile, the [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), located at 375 S. New St., will present “Signature Sounds: Entertaining the Ridgelys,” which explores the 78 rpm recordings that might have been played on Victor Talking Machines in the Ridgely home during the early 20th century.



The Old State House will be featured in the program, Dates of Distinction: Birth and Re-Birth of a State House,” on Oct. 3.

Finally, on Saturday, Oct. 3 at 2 p.m., the [Zwaanendael Museum](#), located at 102 Kings Highway in Lewes, will present “From Whales to War: A History of Lewes in the 17th Century,” a lecture by the museum’s lead interpreter Beth Gott on the history of the Lewes area in the 1600s from the Swanendael settlement to the English conquest and beyond. Held in conjunction with Lewes’ annual [Boast the Coast](#) festival, the event will also feature a day-long slate of maritime-history and -archaeology activities.



“Landing of the DeVries Colony at Swaanendael, Lewes, Delaware 1631” by Stanley M. Arthurs. Courtesy of the permanent collection of the University of Delaware. The

history of Lewes in the 17th century will be explored in a program at the Zwaanendael Museum on Oct. 3.

Administered by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the [five museums of the state of Delaware](#)—the John Dickinson Plantation, the Johnson Victrola Museum, the New Castle Court House Museum, The Old State House and the Zwaanendael Museum—tell the story of the First State’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. Go to the following for a [comprehensive, long-term calendar of museum events](#).

Special events at the museums of the state of Delaware, October 2015

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015

“Dates of Distinction: Birth and Re-Birth of a State House.” Guided tours focus on Charles Ridgely and the commission created to build The Old State House as well as Mabel Lloyd Ridgely’s efforts to restore it generations later. Part of the “Revealing the Ridgely Family” celebration. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015

“Signature Sounds: Entertaining the Ridgelys.” In the early 20th century, the Victor Talking Machine Company brought recorded music into people’s homes for the first time. In this program, visitors will enjoy 78 rpm recordings that might have been heard in the home of Dover’s Ridgely family, played on authentic Victor Talking Machines. Part of the

“Revealing the Ridgely Family” celebration. [Johnson Victrola Museum](#), 375 S. New St., Dover. 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3262.



Victor Talking Machines like the one pictured above will be featured in the program “Signature Sounds: Entertaining the Ridgelys” on Oct. 3.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015

[River Towns Ride and Festival](#). Festivals in historic New Castle and Delaware City frame a bicycling event between the two cities. Family-oriented festival held from 11:30 a.m.–5 p.m. at the [New Castle Court House Museum](#) and The Green in New Castle will feature food and craft beer, music, pumpkin decorating and children’s games. 302-323-4453.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015

“From Whales to War: A History of Lewes in the 17th Century.” Lecture by the museum’s lead interpreter Beth Gott on the history of the Lewes area in the 1600s from the Swanendael settlement to the English conquest and beyond. Held in conjunction with Lewes’ annual [Boast the Coast](#) festival, the event will also feature a day-long slate of maritime-history and -archaeology activities. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Program at 2 p.m. Museum open 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are required by calling 302-645-1148 no later than Oct. 2, 2015.

Saturday, Oct. 10, 2015

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.–4:30 p.m. Free admission. 302-739-3277.

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2015

“Stories of The Old State House–‘The Doctor is In: A Day with Dr. Sykes.’ ” Living-history theatrical performance by Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs historical interpreter Dennis Fisher portraying [Dr. James Sykes](#), an 18th to 19th-century Dover physician and statesman who served as Delaware’s governor for a short period. As part of the program, Sikes will discuss his career and 18th century medicine. Part one of a five-part series featuring true stories of people and events that took place in Delaware’s historic capitol. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Program 1 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are recommended by calling 302-744-5054. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2015

“Hollywood History at the Court House: ‘Legend of Sleepy Hollow.’ ” Screening of the film “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and a brief presentation on the world-renowned illustrator from Claymont, Del. [Felix Octavius Carr Darley](#) who illustrated the Washington Irving book upon which the film is based. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Film at 7 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are recommended by calling 302-323-4453.

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2015

“Stories of The Old State House–‘Women’s Words: The Civil War Told Through Delaware’s Female Diarists.’ ” Living-history theatrical performance by Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs historical interpreters Susan Emory, Courtney Lynahan and Chris Hall which brings to life the diaries of Elizabeth Dorsey and Anna Ferris, two Delawareans with opposite sympathies during the American Civil War. Part

two of a five-part series featuring true stories of people and events that took place in Delaware's historic capitol. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Program at 1 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are recommended by calling 302-744-5054. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 23, 2015

“Lantern Tours of the Plantation.” Programs explore the parties, games, dances and entertainment that would have abounded at the plantation during the nighttime in the 18th century. Activities will also include wagon-ride guided-tours conducted by staff of the [St. Jones Reserve](#) exploring the nocturnal life of the estuary. [John Dickinson Plantation](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Programs 6–7 p.m. and 7:30–8:30 p.m. 302-739-3277. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are required by calling the John Dickinson Plantation at 302-739-3277 no later than Oct. 22.



Autumn scene at the John Dickinson Plantation.

Saturday, Oct. 24, 2015

William Penn Day. Series of programs commemorating the 333rd anniversary of Penn's disembarkment at New Castle, his first landing in the New World. Activities at the New Castle Court House and The Green include a re-enactment of the Livery of Seizen ritual in which Penn received possession of New Castle and a 12-mile circle of land surrounding it at 10 a.m.; a performance by De Blokfluiters recorder/flute ensemble at 11 a.m.; “The Trial of William Penn,” a historical play exploring Penn's trial on religious freedom and the rights of English subjects under the law at 12:30 and 3 p.m.; and “My Life With William by Mrs. Penn” at 1:30 p.m. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New

Castle. 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Monday, Oct. 26, 2015

“7 Steps to Freedom.” Lecture by James F. Turk, Ph.D., on “7 Steps to Freedom,” a mobile-enabled, web-based story-telling program focusing on the history of the Underground Railroad and perspectives on race and enslavement in Salem County, N.J. Sponsored by the Underground Railroad Coalition of Delaware. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. 6:30 p.m. 302-576-3107.

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2015

“Stories of The Old State House—‘Courage and Freedom.’ ” Program features stories of courageous Delawareans whose fight for freedom and equality began at [The Old State House](#). Part three of a five-part series featuring true stories of people and events that took place in Delaware’s historic capitol. The Old State House, 25 The Green, Dover. Program 1 p.m. Free admission but, due to space restrictions, reservations are recommended by calling 302-744-5054. Museum open 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 31, 2015

“Mysteries of History.” Walking tour explores the unusual tombstones of St. Peter’s cemetery in Lewes. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Tour leaves from the museum at 2 p.m. Museum open 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-645-1148.

Exhibits and displays, October 2015

In addition to special programming, the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs is sponsoring the following exhibits and displays:

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

Ongoing

[“Delaware Mourns Lincoln: A Demonstration of Love and Sorrow.”](#) Utilizing graphics, clothing and memorabilia, the display explores how Delawareans expressed their deep sorrow upon the death of President Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865. From the collections of the state of Delaware. [The Old State House](#), 25 The Green, Dover. Mon.–Sat., 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. 302-744-5054.

Ongoing

[“Discovering Delaware’s Maritime Past.”](#) Display explores the DeBraak, a shipwrecked 18th-century British warship including a photo of the hull recovery, reproductions of items aboard ship, and a model of the vessel. [Zwaanendael Museum](#), 102 Kings Highway, Lewes. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. from April 1–Oct. 31. Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. from Nov. 1–March 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. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Sun., 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. 302-323-4453.

Ongoing

[Sculpture by Charles Parks.](#) Display of works by the noted Wilmington artist featuring historical and political figures including a Minute Man, and presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and George W. Bush. [New Castle Court House Museum](#), 211 Delaware St., New Castle. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 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. April 1–Oct. 31: Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. Nov. 1–March 31: Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. 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 many more-complicated machines are composed. [John Dickinson Plantation](#), 340 Kitts Hummock Road, Dover. Tue.–Sat., 10 a.m.–4:30 p.m. From April 1–Sept. 30, also open Sun., 1:30–4:30 p.m. 302-739-3277.

Ongoing

[“World War II Through the Lens of William D. Willis.”](#)

Designed by the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, the display features photographs taken in Western Europe from 1943-45. From the collections of the state of Delaware. [Legislative Hall](#), 411 Legislative Ave., Dover. Limited visitation hours; call 302-739-9194 before planning a visit.

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