

Samuel Shafer Mansion c1807
1551 Old Ridge Rd., Historic Coventryville, PA 19465

Coventry Forge and the village now known as Coventryville Historic District are among the most important treasures of northern Chester County, Pennsylvania. Founded in 1717, by early ironmaster Samuel Nutt, Coventryville grew around one of the very first iron forges in Pennsylvania and the first in Chester County. The village was built along the branches of French Creek, where water power, nearby iron ore, limestone, and timber made iron production possible during colonial America. It is steeped in history.

What makes Historic Coventryville so special today is how much of the original character remains. As you drive through the village, you will see stone homes, workers' houses, the old inn, Coventry Hall, and other buildings dating from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The road curves gently through the village much as it did over 200 years ago, giving visitors a rare feeling of stepping back into early Pennsylvania history.

Coventryville also played a valuable and important role in America's early industrial growth and the Revolutionary War era. The smokey noisy forge hammers and nearby furnaces supplied iron products and munitions during colonial times, and the area had connections to notable historical figures including Benjamin Franklin and John Potts family and Robert Grace and other notable ironmaking families. The colorful stories of the workers and the trades add to delight of living in such an important place. The association between Grace and Franklin includes the founding of the first free library and the invention and the casting of the first Franklin Stove in the Coventry Forge.

Today, Coventryville remains a peaceful, picturesque village; here history and everyday life blend together naturally creating an active community. Rather than feeling like a recreated museum, it feels authentic and lived in. A place where the stone walls, winding roads, and historic buildings quietly preserve the story of early American industry and rural Chester County life.

The property itself offers a setting that is both welcoming and thoughtfully designed for outdoor living. The 4.3 acres of property are roomy enough for the small-scale homesteader. Also, the terraced yard creates wonderful opportunities for gardening enthusiasts, with natural areas for flower beds, seasonal plantings, herbs, and landscape design that blend beautifully with the historic surroundings. Mature trees, stonework, and layered gardens give the property character of a Jane Austin novel.

Across State Rd Route 23 you will find miles of county parks, hiking trails and fishing spots along the French Creek. Notable in this area, the Shafer house property enjoys a rare sense of permanence bordered on all side with surrounding lands protected and preserved from future development through county and state conservation holding and private land trust.

Situated privately behind the home and barn is a beautifully designed pool and gathering area that feels like a resort retreat. The heated pool, spa water feature, and carefully integrated built-in are two Bose speakers which create a soothing atmosphere where the sound of moving water and soft music enhance relaxation and conversation. Whether hosting or simply enjoying a peaceful afternoon, the backyard is designed for all-day enjoyment, entertaining, and unwinding in complete comfort.

The significance of 1717 Historic Coventryville lies not only in its age, but in the feeling that it still carries the character and craftsmanship of an earlier American era. This remarkable Federal-period stone house was built in three distinct phases and was "federalized" in 1807 by George Christman, giving the home many of the graceful architectural details associated with the Federal style that remain admired today. Homes of this period are

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increasingly rare, especially those that have been thoughtfully preserved while remaining warm, comfortable, and livable for modern life.

The property reflects the layered history of Chester County, where generations of families lived, worked, gathered, and built lasting traditions. The stone construction, mature setting, and evolution of the home over time tell the story of early Pennsylvania architecture in a way that simply cannot be recreated today.

One of the home's most striking features is its wide and welcoming center hall entry, which immediately creates a sense of elegance and balance upon entering the house. Throughout the interior, the windows feature deep-set sills framed by thick stone walls, offering both beauty and a reminder of the craftsmanship of the period. Visitors quickly notice the warmth and authenticity found in the home's original architectural details.

While touring the house, special attention should be given to the many original built-in cabinets, period trim work, and preserved wood details throughout the home. Particularly rare is the survival of much of the original lock hardware, including many original keys still accompanying the interior doors — a remarkable feature seldom found intact in historic homes of this age. Also, take a minute to admire the early 19th c ledger that belongs to the home, from when it was a store.

The kitchen is especially memorable, centered around a large walk-in fireplace complete with its original cooking crane, offering a direct connection to the home's earliest days. Multiple fireplaces throughout the house create inviting focal points and contribute to the atmosphere of warmth and history that defines the interior.

The home's interior blends historic atmosphere with carefully integrated modern comforts. The thoughtfully updated kitchen and living spaces provide convenience while preserving the home's period charm. The rooms flow naturally from one to another, creating an environment equally suited for quiet evenings or large gatherings. Wide views of the terraced grounds and pool area connect the indoors with the beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Particularly special is the sense of craftsmanship visible throughout the home. The stone masonry, wood details, stairways, built-ins, and architectural lines reflect a time when homes were constructed with permanence and artistry in mind. Even the simplest elements carry character and history. The result is a home that feels both gracious and deeply rooted — a property that offers not only beauty, but a tangible connection to early American life, which has lasted over two hundred years.

Like many desirable Chester County locations, Coventryville also benefits from convenient access to modern roadways and nearby routes connecting residents to schools, shopping, dining, and surrounding towns. Depending on the time of day, there can be background hum in the front yard from traffic, but the sounds are more like white noise that most people quickly stop noticing over time. Importantly, inside the main stone house itself, the thick historic stone walls create a remarkably quiet cozy interior where outside sounds are largely hidden, offering a peaceful and comfortable retreat despite the convenience of nearby access.

Against the backdrop of the Shafer House historic importance, the house remains welcoming rather than formal. It is a home meant to be lived in and enjoyed a place where historic character, modern comfort, and the inviting community of Coventryville come together in a way that feels timeless and hospitable.