

# Marking history

*"IT'S A long, drawn-out process, but an important process."*

**Colleen Chambers,**  
historical society director

## Signs reflect county history

Continued from Page E-1

Nominations must be made by Jan. 5 of each year, and the commission decides in March which to approve.

"It's a long, drawn-out process, but an important process," Chambers said.

When all is said and done, a date for the dedication is set — usually within a year of nomination — and dignitaries and the public are invited.

But no one is permitted a sneak peek.

"They are very secretive. Each one has its own velvet cover," Chambers said.

Marker dedications have been occurring since 1946. Before that, between 1914 and 1933, the Pennsylvania Historical Commission — the predecessor to the PHMC — dedicated bronze plaques.

But, with the acceleration of automobile speeds, the plaques became impossible to read from the road.

Some 2,000 markers tell the stories on a number of historical topics.

The commission's next dedication, according to its website, is scheduled for April 30 in Chester County, for Eusebius Barnard, a Quaker abolitionist who was involved with the Underground Railroad.

Chambers said anyone is welcome to recommend a person or place for a new marker and, if the historical society agrees it is worth pursuing, it will file an application as the sponsor.

To be eligible, Chambers said, a person must be considered "regionally significant," meaning that their contributions had an impact on more than just Indiana County, and they must have been deceased for at least 10 years.

Dr. Jim Dougherty and students in his Sociology of Native Americans class at IUP are hoping to provide some of that community support.

They are in the process of raising money for the dedication of a marker to commemorate the confluence of two trails used by Native Americans in the mid-18th century. The Kittanning and Catawba trails intersected where Pratt Drive is now on the Indiana University of Pennsylvania campus.

The Kittanning Trail served as a connection from modern-day Altoona and Hollidaysburg to Kittanning, one of the largest Delaware villages in Pennsylvania.

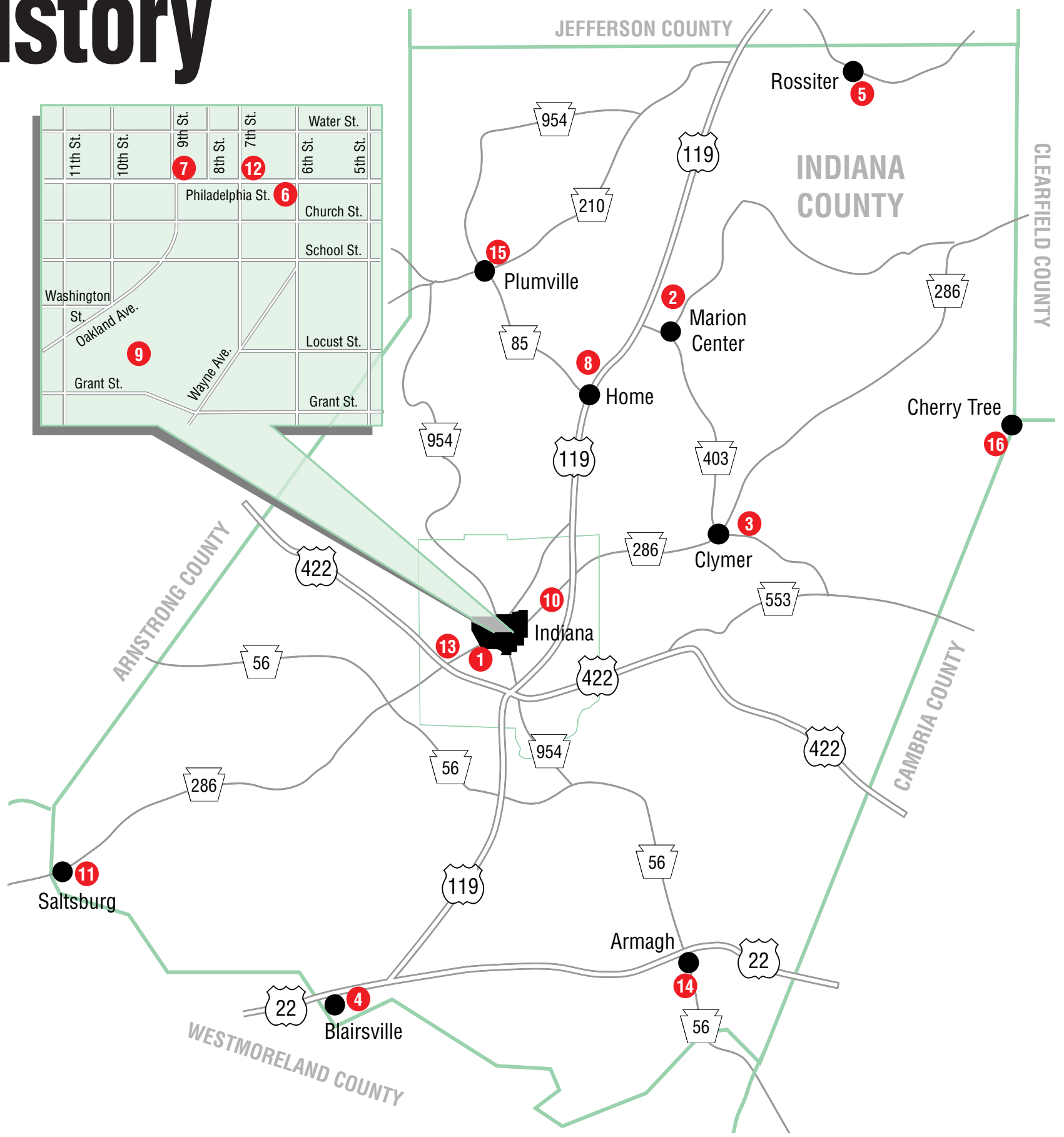
Col. John Armstrong used the trail en route to destroying Kittanning in 1758, represented with a plaque in the Co-op Store at IUP.

The Catawba Trail was a major route between western New York and North and South Carolina, Dougherty said.

The Kittanning Trail, he said, ran from present-day Washington Street to Route 422; the Catawba Trail ran along where Pratt Drive is now.

"The new marker will provide the opportunity to inform the public of how the IUP campus and local area are connected to regional history of Native Americans," he said.

Dougherty said he hopes to have the marker, at a cost of \$1,600, erected sometime next year — complete with a powwow.



## The county's historical markers

**1. Absalom (Albert) Hazlett**  
Dedicated: March 27, 2009

Location: South Sixth Street extension (near PA Barbeque), Indiana  
Text: A staunch abolitionist, Hazlett became a lieutenant in John Brown's provisional army and participated in the raid on Harper's Ferry Arsenal in 1859. He was captured, tried, convicted, and hanged for his involvement following the failed Harper's Ferry attack. This incident, intended to arm slaves to fight for their own freedom, was a major catalyst for the outbreak of the Civil War. Hazlett was born and raised near here.



**ABSALOM HAZLETT**

**2. Linton Park**  
Dedicated: Sept. 27, 2008

Location: Linton Park, Main Street, Marion Center  
Text: Born and raised in Marion Center, Park is recognized as one of the most significant American folk painters. His realistic depictions of rural life, most notably "The Flax Scutching Bee" (1847), provide invaluable documentation of 19th century frontier traditions in western Pa. With his logging illustrations, Park also afforded historians a clear understanding of the early development of the lumber industry.

**3. Dr. Robert Mitchell**  
Dedicated: Oct. 17, 2007

Location: Route 286, Clymer, just over Cherryhill Township border  
Text: Outspoken opponent of slavery, Mitchell was widely known as an abolitionist. In September 1845, he harbored five fugitives from slavery on his property here. Following a raid by bounty hunters, two men escaped; three were returned to slavery. Mitchell was tried and convicted for violating the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, and suffered heavy financial losses. The incident contributed to the more restrictive Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

**4. Fugitive Slave Rescue**  
Dedicated: April 17, 2004

Location: Market Street at Liberty Street, Blairsville  
Text: In April, 1858, citizens of Blairsville rescued a fugitive slave,

Newton, from arrest by a U.S. Marshall and Virginia slave hunters. Lewis Johnson, a local black abolitionist and conductor on the Underground Railroad, housed Newton. Indiana County was an important UGRR stop.

**5. Rossiter Strike Injunction**  
Dedicated: Sept. 6, 2004

Location: Shaffer Field, Central Street, West Side Street, Rossiter  
Text: On April 1, 1927, 200,000 bituminous coal miners nationwide struck to protest wage reductions. In November, strikers in Rossiter were prohibited from assembling, marching, and hymn singing by a sweeping injunction issued by Indiana County Judge Jonathan Langham. The injunction and mine-workers' conditions drew national interest and a U.S. Senate inquiry that included Senator Robert Wagner, key architect of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act.

**6. Rescue of Anthony Hollingsworth**  
Dedicated: Sept. 27, 2002

Location: Sixth and Philadelphia streets, Indiana  
Text: On June 26, 1845, this 12-year-old fugitive slave was captured by slave hunters. Armed residents surrounded the hotel where he was held & demanded his release, defying federal law. Judge Thomas White freed him in the old courthouse on this site.

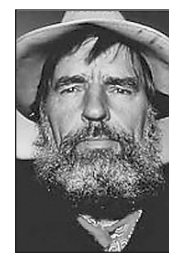
**7. James Maitland Stewart**  
Dedicated: July 2, 1998

Location: Ninth and Philadelphia streets, Indiana  
Text: Legendary American actor, born & raised in this town. During his long career, 1932-91, Jimmy Stewart achieved fame on stage, screen, and TV. He won an Academy Award for his role in "The Philadelphia Story." Other films included "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," "It's a Wonderful Life," & "Harvey." He flew 20 combat missions in World War II; rose to Brigadier General, Air Force Reserve; and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, 1985.

**8. Edward Abbey**  
Dedicated: Sept. 28, 1996

Location: Route 119, north end of Home  
Text: Author and defender of

wilderness, most famous for his two books, "Desert Solitaire" and "The Monkey Wrench Gang." Born in Indiana, Pa., in 1927, Abbey grew up in and around the village of Home. Although he moved to the western U.S. in 1948, books such as Appalachian Wilderness, The Journey Home, and The Fool's Progress describe his native county, where he learned to love nature. Abbey died in Tucson, Arizona, in 1989.



**EDWARD ABBEY**

**9. William H. Sylvis**  
Dedicated: Sept. 1, 1990

Location: Keith Hall, IUP campus  
Text: American labor pioneer. Born in Indiana County, 1828. Founder, National Union of Iron Molders, 1859. President, National Labor Union, 1868-1869. Sylvis strove for unity among working men and women regardless of race or nationality. He died, "labor's champion," 1869.

**10. Rural Electrification**  
Dedicated: 1988

Location: Airport Road, just off Route 286, east end of Indiana  
Text: In 1936, 75 percent of Pennsylvania farms had no electric service. During the next five years, with Federal support, 14 consumer-owned cooperatives were formed in this State. Southwest Central Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation, serving users in seven counties, was incorporated March 4, 1937.

**11. Saltsburg**  
Dedicated: Feb. 4, 1984

Location: Route 286 at Canal Street, Saltsburg  
Text: First salt well in the vicinity was drilled, 1813-14. By the 1830's this area had become a leading U.S. salt producer. Important to its shipment was the Pennsylvania Canal's Western Division. The canal crossed here, 1829-1864, and was the lifeline of this small town.

**12. Indiana County**  
Dedicated: Sept. 10, 1982

Location: New Courthouse Square, Eighth and Philadelphia streets, Indiana

Text: Formed March 30, 1803, from Westmoreland and Lycoming counties, and once densely forested. Its name memorializes the first inhabitants. County seat, Indiana, was laid out in 1805 on land given by George Clymer, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

**13. Moorhead's Fort**  
Dedicated: July 9, 1951

Location: Philadelphia Street, 0.6 miles west of Indiana  
Text: About 1781, Fergus Morehead, pioneer settler, built a fort near the buildings about 200 yards south, to protect his family and neighbors from hostile Indians. It was the first permanent settlement in this vicinity.

**14. John B. McCormick**  
Dedicated: Sept. 15, 1951

Location: Route 22 just west of Armagh (missing)  
Text: Designed the first of the modern mixed-flow type of water turbine, thus making an important contribution to American industry. Began his experiments in 1868 on the water wheel of a sawmill at nearby Armagh. He died near Smicksburg in 1924.



**JOHN MCCORMICK**

**15. John S. Fisher**  
Dedicated: Sept. 14, 1950

Location: Routes 85 and 210, east of Plumville  
Text: Governor of Pennsylvania, 1927-1931, was born on a farm, 1 mile NE of here, in 1867. He supported an extensive State building program, revised the State fiscal system, and promoted the conservation of natural resources. Died in 1940.

**16. Purchase of 1768**  
Dedicated: July 2, 1948

Location: Route 219 at Cherry Tree  
Text: The northern corner of the Indian land purchase based on the Fort Stanwix Treaty was a huge cherry tree at Canoe Place, now Cherry Tree village. This point is now the junction of the counties of Cambria, Clearfield, and Indiana.