

The Little Buffalo Quest

Follow the rhyming clues and directions as you stroll through the historic area of the park. Make it to the end, collect the clues, and claim your prize!



To start your journey, park at the park office and walk across the street to the Blue Ball Tavern. There is one page that should be read at each designated location.

On each page, there will also be a clue help answer the question:
What was the most important resource for the development of the Little Buffalo Valley?

The clues will help you discover 1 word for each location – that will be your password to receive a prize! Stop by the office during business hours or email us at LittleBuffSP@pa.gov to claim your prize!

The Little Buffalo Quest

THE BLUE BALL TAVERN – STOP #1

This is where you start your hunt,
Go to the back and find the front.*

Now face the building, don't step on a toad,
Where you stand was once the "Great Road".**

From Carlisle to Sunbury this road did lead,
It carried a great number of travelers in need.

What happened here, what do you think?
Locals gathered for food and drink.
Here weary travelers found rest,
Or held a shooting contest.

In 1811 John Kough began to "keep" this tavern.
Public meetings allowed a person to voice their concern.

In the War of 1812 the Blue Ball did its part***
On horseback army dispatch riders flew
Carrying orders on a road they knew by heart.

A rider stopped on his way to Sunbury,
Had a short break for a drink and a bite,
Then raced to Newport and crossed the ferry.****

The new canal changed the way people traveled.
The tavern ceased to operate in 1841 -
The Tavern era soon came unraveled.

Look through the windows to see the tavern room.

Now walk back to the road and head north.
You'll cross Little Buffalo Road,
Be careful crossing, look back and forth.

You'll spy a small cemetery, that's where to head.
But just for a visit, your life is still going.
Let's look around and meet some of the dead.

Head across the main road to find the Sulfur Springs Cemetery. Don't forget to remember the clues to the puzzle along the way! You'll need the answer for your prize!

* In 1855, a cyclone damaged many buildings in the area. After this, the top portion of the Blue Ball was rebuilt in order to face the new road, the way it appears today.

** The "Great Road" and the taverns along it played a vital role in both the War of 1812 and the Civil War, serving as a point of rest for travelling soldiers and a place of militia recruitment.

*** The sound of a horn from the Blue Ball signaled to the nearby White Ball Tavern (located on Middle Ridge) to ready a fresh horse and a meal for an incoming soldier or militia.

**** An earlier name for Newport was Reider's Ferry. Newport was one of the first to hear about the outbreak of the Civil War. The telegraph operator at Charleston SC was cousins with the operator here, and they immediately heard of the attack at Fort Sumter.

You may visit the Blueball Tavern Museum on Sunday afternoons in the summer, it is operated by the Perry Historical Society. Call the park office for details – 717-567-9255.

Clue #1 – You may have gotten this to drink at the Tavern, but you would probably choose something else.

The Little Buffalo Quest

THE SULFUR SPRINGS CEMETERY – STOP #2

A light colored stone with a round top,
Its first in its row, that's where to stop.

It's John Kough* of the tavern, see his name in stone?
For giving this land to the church he was known.
Yes, there once was a church that stood very near,
Great age and decay have made it disappear.**

Now go down that row to the stone that's the tallest
Next to this obelisk is John B. Clay*** - he's at rest.
He joined the Union Army in 1861 & was shipped to Key West,
Back in those days the place was by no means the best.

Malaria, Yellow Fever, and terrible heat,
Lots of the soldiers were sickened and beat.
His Civil War service, down south it was spent,
To the Florida keys, South Carolina, & Louisiana he was sent.

In 1864 a disease affected this soldier's eyes,
In 3 different states the army had him hospitalized.
But John Clay made it home from the war,
He lived in this valley and had a small store.

Remember his name, you'll see it again.

They lived and they loved, they fought and they died,****
They built and they farmed, raised kids and survived.
We do well to remember the folks from the past,
Their labors and love made our great nation last.

Return to the front porch of the Tavern, no you're not done,
Head over the footbridge where two streams become one.
John Kough had a sawmill very near here.
It was powered by water, that should be clear.

Stay on the blacktop and cross the first road.
When you hit gravel, left you shall go.

Clue # 2 –Because of pollution in the form
of acid rain, this can destroy these
gravestones.

* John Kough sold a parcel of land from his "Sulfur Springs Farm" to the Church for \$1. He became very invested in his religion and stopped serving alcohol in 1841. The church was eventually turned into a large chicken coop and later demolished.

** John Kough (sometimes written as Koch, pronounced "Cook") is buried here with both his first and second wife.

*** John Clay was pensioned \$16 a month for his eye disease. He eventually died of heart failure. His estate, including 40 acres, house, stable, and horse, were valued at \$440.

****Several soldiers and many locals are also buried here. Cemeteries hold thousands of stories. We owe a debt to those who went before us.

Return to the Blue Ball Tavern and follow the paved path to the East Day Use Area. You'll see your next stop, the covered bridge!

The Little Buffalo Quest

CLAY'S BRIDGE – STOP #3

Yes it's a bridge, a bridge with a roof.*
Why would a bridge be made waterproof?
The stuff that its made of is liable to rot,
That's why the bridge is equipped with a top!

This type of a bridge is a Burr Arch Truss.
The arch on each side is what holds it all up.

This bridge wasn't always found here.
It was moved to this place in its 81st year.**

In 1890 built one mile west where the lake is real narrow,
It crossed the creek as straight as an arrow.

I tell you the truth, believe it or not,
School busses drove through it and did that a lot.

The bridge was moved to save it for you,
The new dam and the lake would have soaked it right through.

At the ends of the bridge whose name do you see?
Remember that John Clay and his family?
Next to their house the bridge crossed the stream,
His name is remembered when you look at its beams.

*Covered bridges were once very common, and many of them still remain today. Perry County has 14 that are still standing.

**Clay's Bridge was reconstructed twice – once in 1971 prior to the lake construction, and again in 1994 after snow collapsed the roof.

***Cross through the bridge, veer left
and proceed to the large round
stones***



Clue #3 – The need to cross this resulted in the building of covered bridges throughout the valley.

The Little Buffalo Quest

SHOAFF'S MILLSTONES – STOP #4

Great circles of stone,* what could they be?
Clearly they're mill stones, the sign you can see.
Millstones are heavy,** they grind up the grain.
Moving a millstone is really a pain.

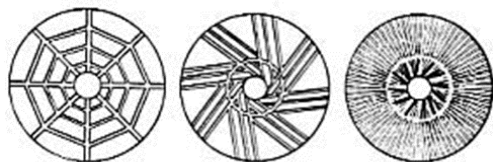
This 4 story mill is a genuine antique,
Its large waterwheel makes it unique

Walk toward the building up on the deck
There's plenty of things you'll no doubt want to check.
Go and read the sign by the door,
Look in the windows to see a bit more.

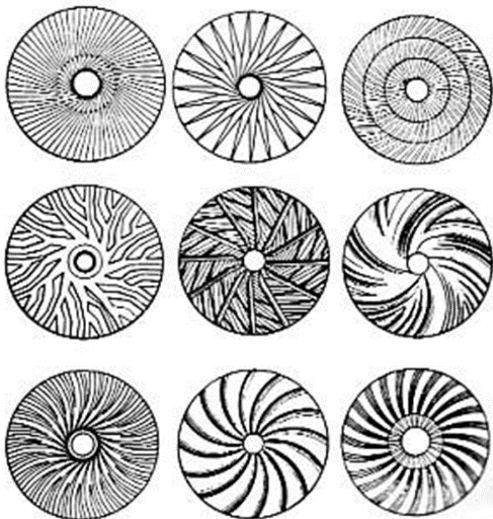
***Walk around the mill to find more information
about what happened here!***

*One type of composite grindstone was the French Burr stone. Prized for its hardness, they were shipped from Paris to Millstone makers in the United States and sold to millers for top dollar. There are several Burr stones here.

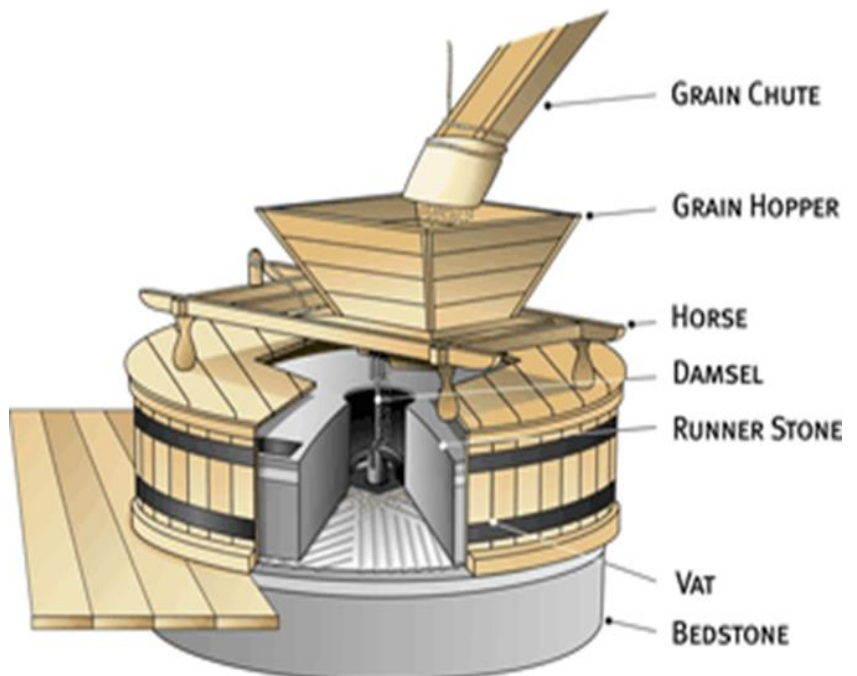
**The largest mill stones could way over 3,000 lbs. Stones could be solid or composite (made up of smaller pieces). A miller had to carefully sharpen these stones periodically in order to keep them grinding.



THE VERSATILE MILLSTONE
WORKHORSE OF MANY INDUSTRIES



CROSS SECTION OF THE MILLSTONES



**Clue #4 – It took a lot of this to move
one of these stones!**

The Little Buffalo Quest

SHOAFF'S MILL – STOP #5

The weight of the water* loads up the wheel.
This makes it turn and powers the stones
That grind customers corn into cornmeal.

It ran from ~eighteen forty to nineteen forty
Grinding cornmeal, making flour from wheat.**
They also pressed cider, isn't that neat?

Shoaff's Mill it is called and always shall be.
Three generations of Shoaffs made the wheel whirl
William, then Ellis then Ellis' son, Earl.

Now back to the stone road in front of the mill,
Once you are on it turn left if you will.
Stay straight on this path and don't you run loose,
The thing at the end will reveal this path's former use.

*Water is diverted from the gate at the end of the mill race trail into the channel at the top of the hill. Take a walk out the trail to follow the path the water takes in coming to the mill.

**The mill was originally built to serve the Juniata Furnace, which was located just west of here. William Shoaff bought the mill at auction in 1861, a few years after the furnace closed for good.



Clue #5 – Without this resource, the mill would not have been built here.

The Little Buffalo Quest

WAY CAR #12 – STOP #6

A large wooden box with 8 wheels on two rails?
It's Way Car number 12 and it has some tall tales!
The path you walked on once was a railroad
Several steam trains carried many a load.*

The tracks are made of rails and ties
Look under the car, use your eyes.

The ties are wooden and rails are steel.
Note the sign on the front that is real.

“Way car” is short for maintenance of way.
It hauled tools and men who worked many a day.
A way car was used to maintain the tracks.
This job surely gave them lots of sore backs.

The train ran from Newport and headed west,
Out to New Germantown before it could rest.
Freight, tanbark,** timber and passengers too,
These are the things the Grings*** had it do.

The tracks do continue past the Dam breast
But it's at this very spot, you end this Quest
Use this car's number to count out the ties
Look closely and thoroughly to find your surprise.



***Look underneath the railcar to obtain the last clue to your password. Stop in at the office during hours and tell the staff your passcode, or email us at LittleBuffSP@pa.gov to claim your prize!**

* This way car was once a part of the Sherman's Valley Railroad. This narrow gauge RR ran from 1890 to about 1937. Just off of park property is a water plug (water stop to refill steam engines) station for the RR. The stop was called Wahneta and still appears on maps today.

** Tanbark is bark from trees that was used to make an extract to tan leather.

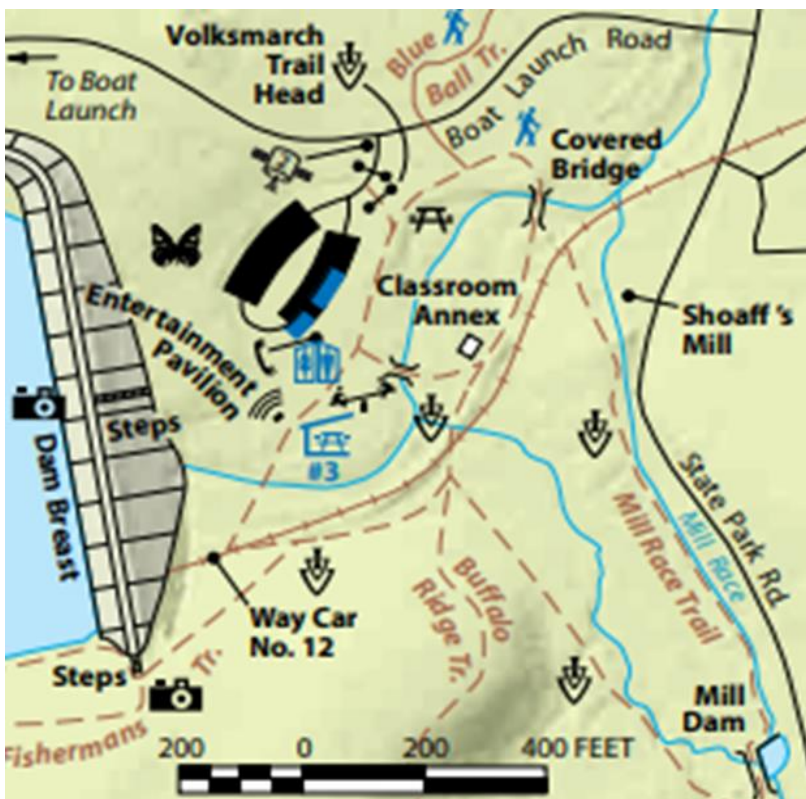
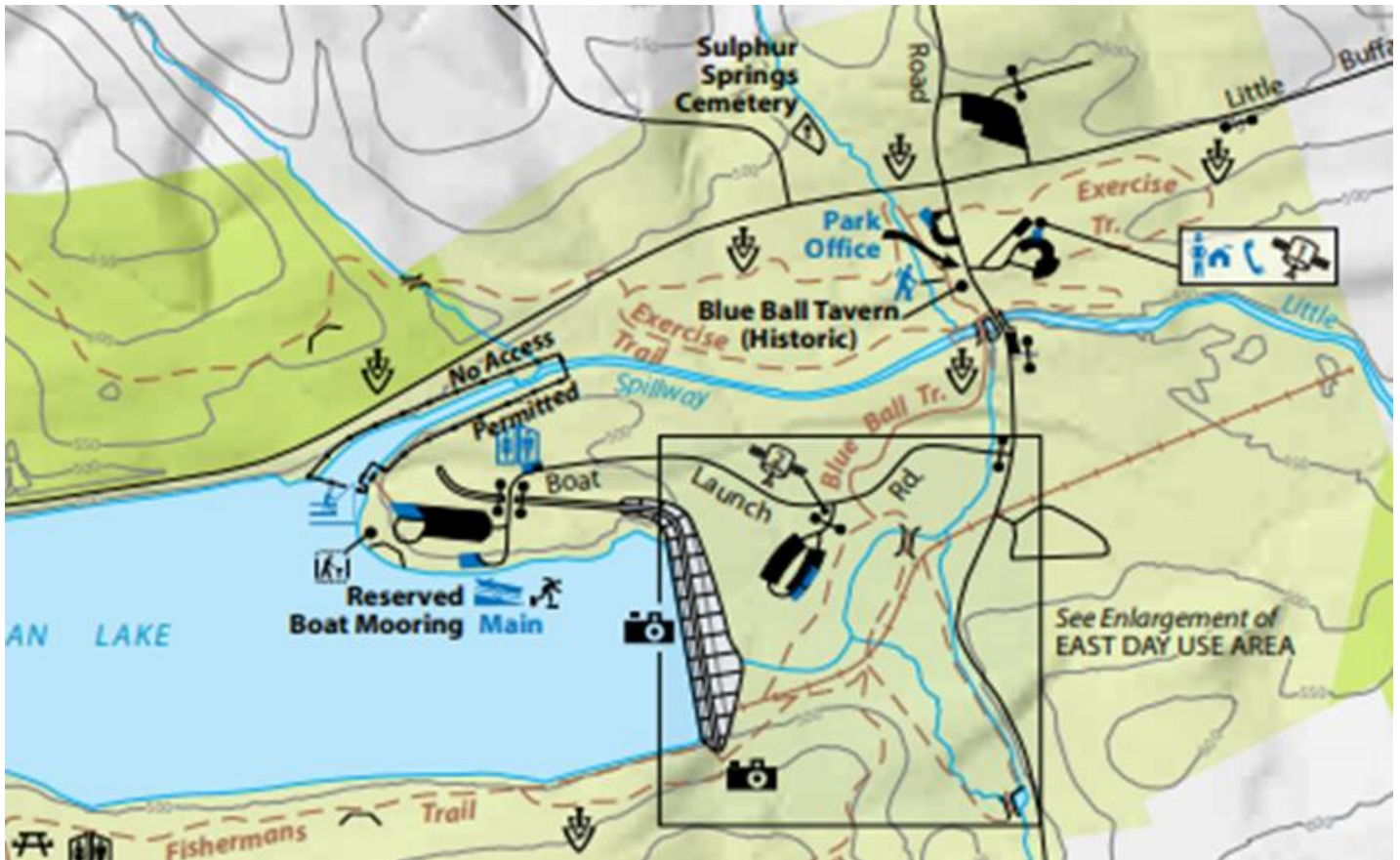
*** David Gring and his son Rodney ran the Newport and Sherman's Valley Railroad.

Make your way back to where you parked by crossing the cement walk over the creek - stay on the gravel road past the playground and find your way back to the paved path to the Blueball Tavern.

Shoaff's Mill & the Blue Ball Tavern are currently closed. The Mill's normal operating hours are weekends from 1:00 - 3:00 PM from the May - Oct. The Blue Ball Tavern operates on Sundays from 1:00-4:00 PM during the summer months. Check our Facebook page or call the park office at 717-567-9255 for details or opening dates.



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Map of the Historic East Area

Above – Entire East Area

Park office & Blue Ball Tavern, Sulfur Springs Cemetery

Left – Enlargement of East Day Use

Clay's Covered Bridge, Shoaff's Mill, Way Car #12

