

# War of 1812 Heritage Trail

## Lewes, Delaware



*Additional information*

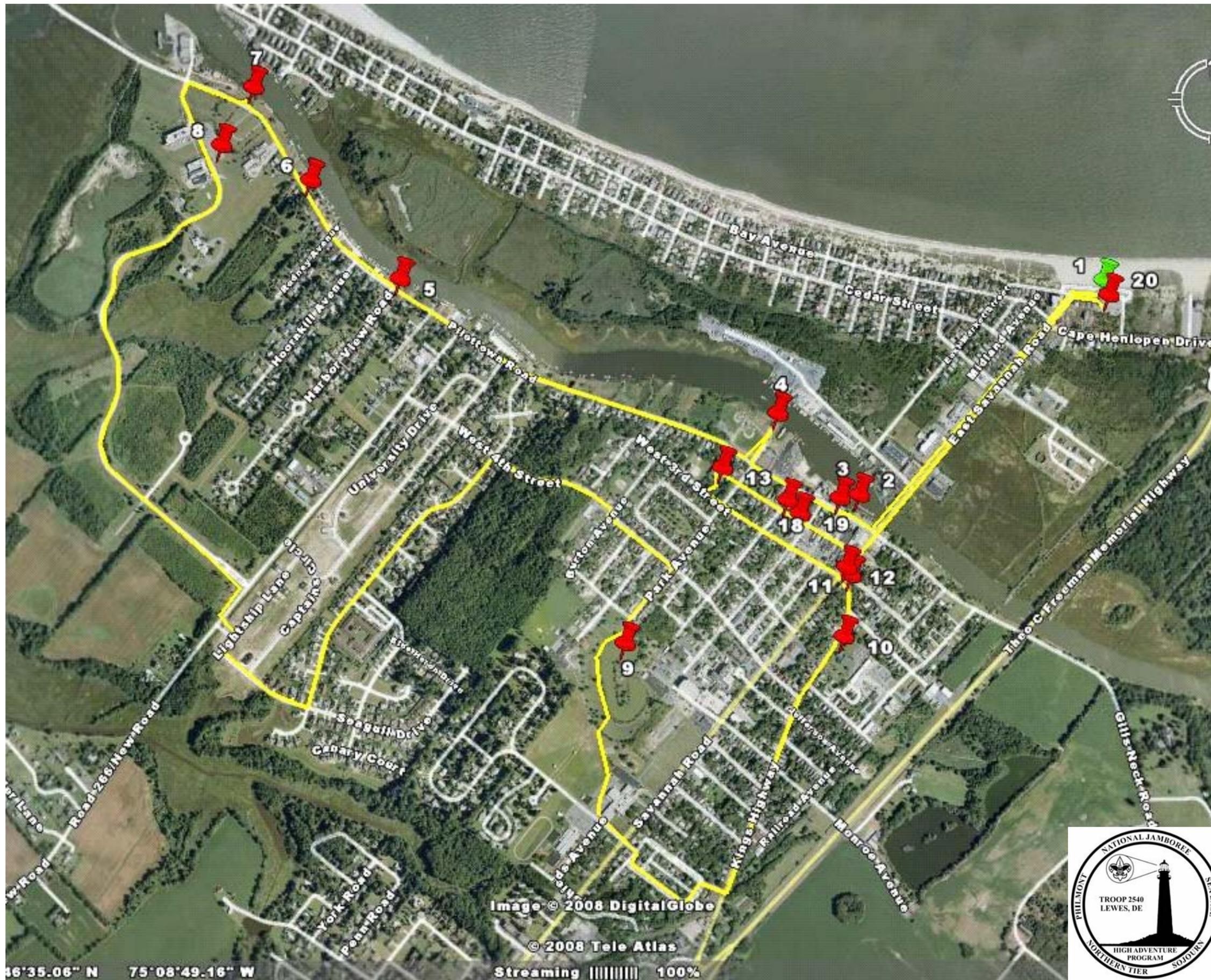
1. *This trail was establish as an Eagle Scout project by Coner Smalls from Troop 254*
2. *This trail was established with the assistance of The Lewes Historic Society. For more Lewes Historical information call (302) 645-7670*
3. *For Additional information about Historic Trails in the Delaware Council call (302) 622-3300*
4. *Troop camping is available at Cape Henlopen State Park located at the end of Cape Henlopen Drive. Call (302) 645-8983 for reservations and availability.*

Trail Information:

1. Start Trail at **Lewes Public Beach**- Parking is metered during the spring & summer. Travel Southwest on Savannah Road, cross over the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal Bridge and take a right on Front Street.
2. On your right you will see the **1812 Memorial Park**-This was a defense battery during the War of 1812 and the site is marked by a granite monument placed by the National Society, U.S. Daughters of 1812. Four large guns on the upper lumps were contributed by the government. Between them is a small gun believed taken from a pirate vessel abandoned in the creek. A three-inch naval gun on the lower terrace, used during World War 1, was placed by the American Legion in 1930.
3. Across the street is the **Cannonball House**-Erected prior to 1797, the building is sheathed with cypress shingles and was the home of David Rowland. It is known as the Cannonball House because it was struck by a cannonball in the War of 1812 during the bombardment of Lewes by the British on April 6-7, 1813. The building has been restored by The Lewes Historical Society and contains the Marine Museum, which houses an ever-increasing number of nautical exhibits. The garden was planned and landscaped by the Sussex Gardeners. Continue west on Front Street.
4. Adjacent to the baseball field is the **Overfalls Lightship**-The Lewes Historical Society accepted from the U. S. Coast Guard in 1973 one of the last lightships which functioned on the East Coast. It stood for years off Boston and upon being brought to Lewes was rechristened Overfalls for the lightships which from 1892 to 1961 marked the entrance to the Delaware Bay. The ship's move to Lewes, its preparation for a museum role, and its relocation to a permanent berth made available by the city in 1975, have all been major undertakings overseen by The Lewes Historical Society and later by the Overfalls Maritime Museum Foundation (OMMF). OMMF is now working to preserve and restore the ship so this national treasure (one of only 17 surviving lightships of a U.S. fleet that at one time numbered 179) will be available for future generations. Next to the ship you will find;
5. The **Life-Saving Station**- This station, dating back to the late 1800's, used to be located just north of the Lewes-Cape May Ferry terminal. It contains antique lifesaving equipment and a pictorial collage of rescues at sea. Continue west on Front Street until it turns into Pilottown Road.
6. The **Maul House**- Owned and restored by the Colonel David Hall Chapter, DAR, this historic house is an early type of Dutch house built about 1739. According to legend, it is here that Jerome Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon, and his bride Betsy, found refuge on a stormy night in 1803 when their ship had put into Lewes harbor for repairs. Betsy is remembered locally for refusing to be seated at a bountiful roast goose dinner until her silver candlesticks had been brought from the disabled ship. Continue west on Pilottown Road.
7. **Henry Fisher House**-Major Henry Fisher, the pilot patriot, built Fisher's Paradise between 1780 and 1790. Fisher, a fervent patriot, figures prominently in Lewes' colorful history. At the request of the port wardens of Philadelphia, he selected the site for the Cape Henlopen Lighthouse. It was Major Fisher who informed the Continental Congress and General George Washington that Lord Howe's fleet had been sighted off Cape Henlopen and was headed toward the Chesapeake. He was empowered by Congress to raise a company of 100 men for the defense of the Cape and the river country; he armed them at his own expense. Fisher's daughter sold the house to Colonel Samuel Boyer Davis who lived there when he commanded the town's defense in the War of 1812. Continue west on Pilottown Road.
8. **DeVries Monument** -In 1631 on this site, 28 Dutch settlers

- under the direction of deVries established the whaling colony of Zwaanendael and erected a fort. The following spring, Indians burned the stockade and massacred the settlers. Although the ill-fated settlement endured only briefly, its existence was significant in Delaware's becoming a separate state. The monument honoring the significance of the settlement was erected in the center of what was once the North bastion of the fort (apparently by coincidence). In 1964 members of the Sussex Society of Archaeology and History found the post mold patterns of the South bastion as sketched by deVries. This discovery culminated several years of effort to determine the exact location of the fort. Continue west on Pilottown Road.
9. Turn left onto University Road, the **University of Delaware**, College of Marine studies complex will be on your right. Continue on University Road, turn right on New Road and then left on Forecastle Lane, right on Lightship Lane and left on Seagull Drive. Turn left on Ocean View Boulevard, then right on 4th Street. Turn right on Park Ave. which will lead you to;
10. **Blockhouse Pond** - This was the site of the American encampment for much of the War of 1812. Follow the path along the pond to the south, then proceed through the gate into the athletic fields of the school. Turn left onto School Lane, then cross Savannah Road to DeVries Circle. Turn left on Kings Highway, follow to;
11. **Presbyterian Church**-The Lewes Presbyterian Church was founded in 1682, and the present building was dedicated in 1832. It replaced two previous buildings on the same site, one built in 1707 and the other, a brick edifice, begun in 1727. A beautiful Communion Service was presented to the Church about 1851 by Colonel Samuel Boyer Davis, Lewes-born commander of the troops at Lewes during the bombardment of the town in 1813. There are many interesting tombs in the churchyard, including those of two Delaware governors, Colonel David Hall and Ebe W. Tunnell. Continue north on Kings Highway to the:
12. **Fisher-Martin House**-Circa 1730, this charming gambrel-roofed house was moved from the country at Cool Spring in 1980 as part of the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the first European settlement on Delaware soil. Just when it was built and by whom is uncertain. The tract at Cool Spring was owned in 1695 by Thomas Fisher, a wealthy merchant, and was left to his son Joshua who became famous for charting the Delaware Bay. It was sold in 1736 to Rev. James Martin, a minister of Cool Spring, Indian River, and Lewes Presbyterian churches. It stayed in the Martin family for over two hundred years. The Lewes Chamber of Commerce information center is located in the house.
13. **Zwaanendael Museum**-Built in 1932, this adaptation of the old Stadhuis (City Hall) in Hoorn, the Netherlands, houses permanent and changing displays and exhibits, including a timeline of Lewes history, and the material culture of the surrounding area. Cross Savannah Road and follow Fourth Street northwest to;
14. **Lewes Historic Society Complex** – Stops 14 - 17 are located within the complex.
15. **RABBIT'S FERRY HOUSE**- This house was moved from the Rabbit's Ferry area of rural Lewes in 1967 and restored by The Lewes Historical Society. The smaller portion is an early eighteenth century one-room farmhouse with a sleeping loft, and contains original cypress shingles and brick nogging in walls, woodwork and fireplace paneling. The larger portion, added in the middle of the eighteenth century, boasts doors, chair rail, window and door trim, mantle and paneling that are all original and intact.
16. **THOMPSON COUNTRY STORE**- Built in Thompsonville, Delaware, about 1800, this store was operated continuously by the Thompson family from 1888 to 1962. Given to The Lewes Historical Society by Harvey Thompson, it was moved, repaired and reopened by the Society in 1963. The store has many of its original appointments and has remained essentially the same as when it

- served its original purpose on a full-time basis. The Ellegood House (behind the Country Store) contains a gift shop with souvenirs and hand-crafted, country-type items, which are sold to benefit The Lewes Historical Society. Trail Patches can be purchased at the store.
17. **EARLY PLANK HOUSE**- This small building, originally located in the rear of the Orton property on Pilottown Road, was moved in 1963 to its present site. Experts hold construction to be of early Swedish type and while no construction date has been agreed upon, it is one of the area's earliest buildings. The wood floor and hand-carved clothes pegs point to its use as a dwelling. It has been restored and finished as an early settler's cabin.
18. **THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE**- This handsome Greek Revival structure was built about 1850 by Dr. David Hall on Savannah Road across from Second Street. Dr. Hall practiced medicine until just before 1900 when he sold the building to Dr. W. P. Orr, Jr., who moved it to the Northeast side of Second Street and used it until 1904. The next occupant was Joseph Shek who operated his tailor shop there. In 1945 it became Clifton's Newsstand and survived the Lewes Fire of 1971. The Clifton's donated the building to The Lewes Historical Society. It has been restored and outfitted as a museum showing a doctor's office at the turn of the century. Exit the complex on Shipcarpenter Street, cross and follow Second Street east to;
19. **Ryves Holt House**-This dignified shingled house is believed to be the oldest house in the state. It is known to have been standing on its present site in 1685 and has recently been dated at 1665 through the analysis of borings taken from the wood used in the structure. Once a colonial inn, this is the house to which Ryves Holt came in 1721 when he arrived at "Port Lewes". Holt (1696-1763) became the Naval Officer of the Port and was also many times High Sheriff of Sussex County. With other appointments and offices to his credit, he was made the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in The Three Lower Counties on the Delaware in 1745 and served in this capacity until his death. Commodore Jacob Jones also lived in the house. Following the death of his mother, his father married a daughter of Ryves Holt. Commodore Jones won acclaim when his ship *Wasp* captured the more heavily armed British warship *Frolic* during the war of 1812. Continue east on Second Street to;
20. **Saint Peter's Episcopal Church**- The present building, consecrated in 1858 and restored to its original beauty in 1948, was preceded by two prior structures, the first one having been begun before February 14, 1707. A congregation of the Church of England existed in Lewes prior to 1681. There are many interesting stones in the churchyard, the oldest being that of Margaret Huling, born 1631. Four governors of Delaware are buried here. The bronze tablet on the outside of the brick wall calls attention to the site of the Old Court House, erected when Lewes was the County Seat of Sussex. Continue east on Second Street, turn left on Savannah Road to;
21. **Lewes Public Beach**



*The War of 1812 was fought between the United States and Great Britain from 1812 until 1815. The war had several causes. During the late 1700s and the early 1800s, England was at war with France. England began to face a shortage of skilled sailors. To acquire more men for its navy, Great Britain began to stop American and other ships and impress (take by force) sailors from them. England also tried to prevent the United States from trading with the French. Finally, English soldiers continued to occupy territory belonging to the United States, despite Great Britain's promise to remove these soldiers in the Treaty of Paris (1783) at the end of the American Revolution. Most of the soldiers were located along the Great Lakes, providing Indians, like the Shawnee leader Tecumseh, with support in their struggle against American settlers. In 1812, President James Madison asked the United States Congress to declare war.*

