

# Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway

## *At a Glance*

- LOCATION:** The Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway, also known as the "Jacob's Ladder Trail," is a 33-mile stretch of U.S. Route 20 designated as a scenic byway by the state of Massachusetts in 1992. The route is a state highway, not a hiking or walking trail, and it winds its way through five towns in the Berkshire Foothills. It begins in downtown Lee, Massachusetts and continues along Route 20 through Becket, Chester, Huntington and Russell, ending at the Westfield border. From the Boston area, it takes only about two hours to reach the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway; from New York City, it is about 2½ hours.
- ADDRESS:** Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway  
P.O. Box 508  
Huntington, MA 01050
- PHONE:** (413) 667-3346
- E-MAIL:** [info@JacobsLadderScenicByway.org](mailto:info@JacobsLadderScenicByway.org)
- CONTACT PERSON:** Steve or Linda Hamlin
- HISTORY:** Jacob's Ladder Trail is a 33-mile route traversing the scenic and little-known foothills of the Berkshire Mountains. Originally traveled by native Americans of the Mohican and Woronoake tribes, Jacob's Ladder Trail was the main route between the Connecticut and Hudson River valleys. In 1910, the road was opened as the first highway built specifically for the revolutionary new horseless carriages. Billed as "the First of the Great Mountain Crossovers," the Trail attracted motorists from far and wide to test themselves and their machines against the rugged terrain. A few years later, the Trail had become a part of a continent-spanning highway linking Boston and Oregon, known as the "Yellowstone Trail."
- The railroad has played an important role along Jacob's Ladder Trail since its arrival around 1840. It brought industry and prosperity to the region,

leaving a legacy that includes a series of hand-crafted keystone arch bridges of awe-inspiring proportions. Trains continue to use the tracks along the Trail to carry freight and passengers, attracting railroad buffs to photograph or simply see them against the backdrop of the Berkshire hills.

The rugged terrain of the region has always nurtured Yankee individualism. A wealth of artists and artisans have set up shop in the hills surrounding the Trail. These range from stonecutters and potters to dancers and playwrights; from crafters of wood products to crafters of words. This stoic heritage is also carried on by a new generation of farmers raising everything from blueberries to Herefords and horses.

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION:**

**Greater Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau.** Serving Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley. [www.valleyvisitor.com](http://www.valleyvisitor.com). Two Locations:

1) Riverfront Visitor Information Center at 1200 West Columbus Avenue, Springfield, MA 01105. Open daily 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 413-750-2980.

2) Main Street Visitor Information Center at 1441 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103. Open Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call 1-800-723-1548 or 413-787-1548.

**Berkshire Visitors Bureau.** 866-444-4028. [www.berkshires.org](http://www.berkshires.org).

**Lee Chamber of Commerce.** 3 Park Place, P.O. Box 345, Lee, MA 01238. Call 413-243-0852, e-mail [info@leechamber.org](mailto:info@leechamber.org), or visit [www.leechamber.org](http://www.leechamber.org).

**Lee Information Center.** Year-round tourist information booth located at Exit 2 off the Massachusetts Turnpike. Call 413-243-4929. For further information, e-mail [info@leechamber.org](mailto:info@leechamber.org), or visit [www.leechamber.org](http://www.leechamber.org).

**Jacob's Ladder Business Association.** P.O. Box 19, Huntington, MA 01050. E-mail [JLBusinessAssoc@netscape.net](mailto:JLBusinessAssoc@netscape.net) or visit [www.jlba.org](http://www.jlba.org).

**The Hidden Hills of Western Massachusetts.** [www.hidden-hills.com](http://www.hidden-hills.com).

**Berkshire/Folkstone Bed & Breakfast Homes.** 1-800-762-2751 or 413-731-8785. [www.berkshirebnbhomes.com](http://www.berkshirebnbhomes.com).

**Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism.** [www.massvacation.com](http://www.massvacation.com).

**DIRECTIONS:**

**From the Berkshires and New York,** take the Massachusetts Turnpike to Lee, Exit 2. Go left onto Route 20 (the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway). A

sign indicating the entrance to the Byway is located just before the Prime Outlets shopping center.

**From Connecticut**, take Route 7 north to Route 102 east in Stockbridge. Route 102 intersects with Route 20 (the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway) in Lee; go east on Route 20. A sign indicating the entrance to the Byway is located just before the Prime Outlets shopping center.

**From the Boston or Springfield areas**, take the Massachusetts Turnpike to Westfield, Exit 3. Go right onto Route 202 south, into Westfield Center. In Westfield Center, go right on Route 20 west. You will travel eight (8) miles on Route 20 to the border with Russell, where a sign indicates that you are on the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway (note the vast span of the Massachusetts Turnpike bridge passing overhead at this point).

# Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway

## *Attractions*

From the rocky heights of Mount Tekoa in Russell to the picturesque village green in Lee, the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway winds through the small towns of Russell, Huntington, Chester, Becket and Lee, providing views of the Wild and Scenic Westfield River along the way. Each town has its own distinctive character, from the quiet, tree-lined Main Street of Russell Village, the classic New England village of Huntington, the hints of industrial grandeur in Chester, to the restaurants and shops of downtown Lee. Known also as the "Jacob's Ladder Trail," the route was designated a Massachusetts Scenic Byway in 1992.

**The Appalachian Trail** intersects the Jacob's Ladder Trail in Becket. The Appalachian Trail is America's longest walking trail – 2,175 miles long, 90 miles of which pass through Massachusetts. The Appalachian Trail (AT) was established during the 1920s partly as a reaction to the burgeoning of auto-tourism. To the north of Jacob's Ladder Trail, the AT passes through October Mountain State Forest, Massachusetts' largest state forest. To the south, the AT travels past scenic Upper Goose Pond.

**Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.** America's premiere international dance festival is located on the site of Becket's historic Carter Farm, which dates from 1790. The "Pillow" is an international venue for dance performance and education, founded in the early 1940s by modern dance pioneer Ted Shawn. Today this 150-acre facility is open to the public from June through August. For information on current programs and events, call 413-243-9919. [www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org)

**Jacob's Ladder Trail Summit and Stone Cairn.** Jacob's Ladder Trail ascends to a height of 1,775 feet at Morey Hill, in the town of Becket. The summit is marked by a stone cairn originally placed there for the gala inauguration of the highway in September 1910. The cairn and the former summit house are all that is left of what was a very popular destination in its heyday. Nearby were Jacob's Well and Jacob's Spring: as the cars of the early 20th century often become overheated climbing the hills of Jacob's Ladder Trail, this was an important stop for water.

**Becket Arts Center of the Hilltowns.** The Becket Arts Center is housed in a fine example of an 1855 Greek Revival schoolhouse, located at the intersection of Route 8

and Brooker Hill Road in Becket Village (several miles north of the Jacob's Ladder Trail). It houses two galleries presenting exhibits and workshops from June to Labor Day. For information: 413-623-6635.

**Miniature Theatre of Chester.** Founded in 1990, this Theatre presents plays featuring renowned stage actors, from the first week of July through Columbus Day weekend. The Theatre uses the auditorium of the Chester Town Hall for its productions. For information: 413-354-7771 or [www.miniaturetheatre.org](http://www.miniaturetheatre.org).

**Chester Railroad Depot and Museum.** This museum, located in the restored depot at the end of Main Street, houses trains, railroad memorabilia, and artifacts from Chester's railroading days. Built around 1841, it was operated for many years along the line from Springfield to Albany, New York. Exhibits include the Children's Heritage Boxcar Museum, and the depot is surrounded by a variety of historic railroad cars, including a 1923 tank car, a 1919 wooden caboose, and a 1929 restored wooden boxcar. The museum is open June - October on weekends from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For information: The Chester Foundation at 413-354-7752.

**The Old Chester Jail.** This tiny 19<sup>th</sup> century jailhouse is used as an historical museum, including a display of an enormous carborundum grinding wheel, formerly manufactured by local factories. Open the first Wednesday of the month, 9-11 a.m. or by appointment. For information: 413-354-7820.

**Keystone Arch Bridges and Trail.** The Keystone Arch Bridges, located in Chester, Becket and Middlefield, Massachusetts, are the oldest bridges of their kind built for railroad use in the United States. These 70-foot high stone bridges, built without mortar or steel reinforcements, were built between 1833 and 1841, extending the Western Railroad across the deep gorges of the Westfield River on its route to New York. Major George Washington Whistler, father of the artist James Whistler, and William Gibbs McNeill were the chief engineers responsible for designing the bridges. The five remaining Keystone Arch Bridges are in the Middlefield-Becket Stone Arch Railroad Bridge District on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Keystone Arch Bridges Trail extends for 2.5 miles and provides the only public access to two of the bridges. The trail also provides beautiful views of the West Branch Gorge of the Westfield River, the first National Wild and Scenic River designated in Massachusetts. The hiking trail to the Arches originates off of Middlefield Road in Chester. A self-guided tour map is available at the Chester Railroad Museum, or call 413-354-7752 to arrange a guided tour.

**Tekoa Mountain Wildlife Management Area and Rattlesnake Sanctuary.** This rugged, steep-sided mountain marks both the mouth of the Westfield River canyon and the eastern end of the Jacob's Ladder Trail. The canyon was formed by the erosion of the highlands by the river over the millenia following the last Ice Age. Purchased in 2000 by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Mt. Tekoa has been designated as a rattlesnake preserve.

**Boston and Albany Railroad.** In 1841 the opening of the Western Railroad forever changed the towns along Jacob's Ladder Trail. The rail line, which is still in use today, later became the Boston and Albany Line. It was designed by George Washington Whistler and remains one of the steepest rail grades in the United States. Among the engineering feats accomplished by Whistler and Scottish mason Alexander Birney are the colossal keystone arch bridges in Chester and Middlefield. The only remaining Western Railroad depot, ca. 1840, is located in Chester Factory Village and serves as a railroad era museum.

**Westfield River.** The Westfield River, a nationally designated Wild and Scenic River, flows through much of the Jacob's Ladder Trail region. With headwaters in the Berkshire Hills, the Westfield River traverses some of the wildest areas in Massachusetts, as well as cultivated landscapes of maple-shaded farms and historic villages. In the spring, the river attracts hundreds of paddlers from the eastern United States for the excellent whitewater canoeing and kayaking at the annual river races.

**Pine Hill Cemetery.** Established in 1834, this Victorian-era cemetery, located atop of Pine Hill in Chester, offers scenic views of the Westfield River Valley. Many of the headstones were cut from Chester granite and slate by local stone cutters. This cemetery is still used by Chester residents.

**Chester-Blandford State Forest.** Created by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression, this forest contains Sanderson Brook Falls and Goldmine Brook Falls, a semi-primitive campground and numerous hiking trails, including the Newman Marsh Trail which offers spectacular views of the Westfield River Valley. It also includes the Boulder Park Accessible Trail, described below.

**Boulder Park Accessible Trail.** Boulder Park was constructed between 1934 and 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to offer swimming, picnicking, hiking and skiing. The park, part of the Chester-Blandford State Forest, is named for its high concentration of huge boulders, called "erratics," dropped by glaciers 15-18,000 years ago. An accessible trail winds through the park, providing access to several sitting areas, views, a pavilion, and several interpretive signs describing the history and geology of the park.

**Littleville Dam & Lake.** The Littleville flood control dam and recreational facility was built in 1963 in response to the devastating 1955 Westfield River flood. The two-and-a-half mile long impoundment created by the dam is popular for fishing and canoeing.

**Gardner State Park.** Named for the former national president of the Grange Association, Charles M. Gardner, this park is popular for picnicking, and for swimming and fishing in the nationally designated Wild and Scenic Westfield River.

**Chester Center on Skyline Trail.** This intact 18th and 19th century village that includes an old burial ground is surrounded by blueberry fields, open pastures, and sheep and

cattle farms. The crest of Skyline Trail offers splendid views across the valley formed by the Westfield River. In early spring, the Chester Hill Association holds the Maple Festival, during which farmers along Skyline Trail open their doors to the public, serving up pancake breakfasts, demonstrating the making of maple syrup products and offering horse-pulled hay rides.

**Chester Hill Winery.** This winery, tucked away in the foothills of the Berkshires in blueberry country, specializes in delectable blueberry wines to complement dinner as well as dessert. Delicious white wines include a Seyval/Vidal Blanc blend and Riesling. The Chester Hill Winery offers a unique tasting and educational experience. The gift shop has wine-related items. The winery is open June through December, Saturdays and Sundays 1-5 p.m. or by appointment. For more information, call 413-354-2340 or visit [www.blueberrywine.com](http://www.blueberrywine.com).

**H. Newman Marsh Memorial Trail on Observation Hill.** Located in the Chester-Blandford State Forest, this marked trail of 1½ miles leads to Observation Hill, a 1,200-foot summit with spectacular views of the Berkshires and the Wild and Scenic Westfield River Valley. Access and parking are available on Sanderson Brook Road in Chester, across from the Bannish Lumber Company.

**Knightville Dam & Wildlife Management Area.** This flood control dam, built in 1941, has a 1,200 foot long earthen embankment which stores water during flood conditions in a six-mile long reservoir. The basin contains second growth forest that is habitat to native New England fish and wildlife. Among the many recreational opportunities are catch-and-release trout fishing and hiking trails. Located at the northern end of the basin is Chesterfield Gorge, a Trustees of Reservations property that is open to the public.

**Hill & Dale Rapids.** This is a popular viewing spot for the annual Westfield River Wildwater Race, the longest continuously held whitewater race in the country. During spring flood, when the river is at race level, this section of the Westfield River is a class 3 rapids.

**General Knox Marker.** A 1927 marker memorializes General Knox's crossing of the ridge of Glasgow Mountain during the Revolutionary War. Knox and his troops were marching with the cannons from Fort Ticonderoga, New York to Dorchester Heights in Boston. The arrival of the cannon forced the evacuation of the British. General Knox wrote in his diaries that this section of the trail was the most difficult portion of the entire trip.

**Cobble Mountain Reservoir.** The largest of three reservoirs built between 1910 and 1930 to provide water to the city of Springfield, Massachusetts. This inland lake was created by an earth-filled dam that was the world's highest at the time of its construction.

**Canterbury Farms Cross-Country Skiing.** Canterbury Farms' trail system was specifically designed for cross country skiing, and it has recently been adapted for ski skating as well. Twelve miles of trails are groomed and tracked daily. With a northern

exposure, nestled high in the Berkshire Foothills, the facility gets the best snow in the area. Surrounding the Farm are 2,000 acres of state and private forestlands, allowing for wilderness skiing as well. The Farm's staff is available to fit guests with the proper ski equipment or provide lessons if needed. The Berkshire Room of the farmhouse has a cozy fireplace and hot food and drinks. For ski rates, lessons, and packages call (413) 623-0100 or log onto [www.canterbury-farms.com](http://www.canterbury-farms.com).

**First Congregational Church in Lee.** This beautiful Romanesque church, built in 1858, has the tallest wooden steeple in the country. The interior contains "trompe l'oeil" (fool the eye) stenciling, an excellent example of an almost-forgotten craft, and regarded as one of the finest examples of this work in the U.S. The choir loft and the 1927 organ are also noteworthy. Sunday worship is at 10:30 a.m., and community suppers are served Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. For more information: 413-243-1033 or [www.ucclee.org](http://www.ucclee.org).

**Prime Outlets at Lee.** Sixty-five manufacturer direct outlet stores, arranged in a New England village style setting, offer everyday savings of 25-65%. Located on the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway (Route 20), just off of Exit 2 of the Mass Pike. For dining and overnight accommodations, visit historic downtown Lee, less than a mile away. For more information: 1-877-GO-OUTLETS or [www.primeoutlets.com](http://www.primeoutlets.com).

**Blandford Ski Area.** This ski area has been owned and operated by the Springfield Ski Club since 1936 and is the oldest continuously operating club-owned ski area in North America. Located just ½ hour from Springfield, the ski area offers exciting downhill skiing, ski sales, and ski instruction. The Blandford Ski Area is located on 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Road in Blandford, just three miles off of the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway. For ski conditions, call 413-568-4341, and for more information, visit [www.skiblandford.org](http://www.skiblandford.org).

# Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway

## *Four Seasons of Fun*

The Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway offers adventures in any season. The Berkshire hills are magnificent under a freshly fallen mantle of snow or ablaze with the colors of autumn. The hills and valleys are colored by spring blossoms and cooled by summer breezes. Explore glacial potholes in Woronoco, paddle wildwater on the Westfield River in the spring, or enjoy the thrills of our annual canoe races. Fish our many lakes for trout, bass and other game fish.

Discover treasures at our numerous antique shops and artist's studios. Enjoy world class performances at The Miniature Theatre of Chester and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket. Experience a real country fair. Try some locally made maple syrup. Find miles of state forest with their diverse array of recreation. Hike the Appalachian Trail from its crossing near Greenwater Pond.

### **SPRING**

**Chester Hill Maple Festival.** In early spring, the Chester Hill Association holds the Maple Festival, during which farmers along Skyline Trail open their doors to the public, serving up pancake breakfasts, demonstrating the making of maple syrup products, and offering horse-pulled hay rides. The crest of Skyline Trail offers splendid views across the valley formed by the Westfield River. For information: 413-354-9696.

**Westfield River Wildwater Races.** The Westfield River Canoe Club has sponsored this event, held in mid-April, for over 50 years. The race draws more than 200 novice and more than 100 experts annually for an event that originally started as a bar-room bet among eight friends. It is now considered the longest running whitewater race in the country. The races include an eight-mile course for novices and a 12-mile one for experts. It has increased in popularity because of the ability of the Army Corps of Engineers to regulate the flow of the Westfield River through the flood control dams at Littleville and Knightville. Clinics offered by the Westfield Canoe Club are offered the three Sundays preceding race weekend. The Westfield River has been designated a National Wild and Scenic River, and its watershed has been selected by The Nature Conservancy for nomination as a National Forest Legacy Area. For information: 413-354-6570.

**Chester on Track Festival.** This historic railroad town holds an annual celebration of its heritage, with a parade, live music, educational demonstrations and exhibits, antique car show, and more. The Chester Railroad Depot and Museum is open for viewing rare artifacts, and railroad cars are prominently displayed in and around the depot. Held annually in May, the festival has become one of the largest in the area. For more information: 413-354-6570.

## **SUMMER**

**Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival.** America's premiere international dance festival is located on the site of Becket's historic Carter Farm, which dates from 1790. The "Pillow" is an international venue for dance performance and education, founded in the early 1940s by modern dance pioneer Ted Shawn. Today this 150-acre facility is open to the public from June through August. In the course of the ten-week festival, 150 performances are presented on three stages by companies from around the world representing contemporary, modern, ballet, dance-theatre, jazz, tap, hip-hop, and culturally-specific dance. More than 200 free events – open rehearsals, outdoor performances, open studios, daily talks by Scholars-in-Residence, exhibits, film and video showings, and panel discussions – are available to the public. For information on current programs and events, call 413-243-9919 or visit [www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org).

**Berkshire Scenic Railway and Museum.** On summer weekends and holidays, the museum offers narrated train trips through the Housatonic River Valley towns of Lenox, Lee and Stockbridge. You will ride back in history in 1920s era passenger coaches, on a 20 mile, 1 ¾ hour round trip connecting Lenox, Lee and Stockbridge. For information: 413-637-2210 or [www.berkshirescenicrailroad.com](http://www.berkshirescenicrailroad.com).

**State Parks and Lakes.** The 2,308-acre Chester-Blandford State Forest was created by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Depression. It contains Sanderson Brook Falls, Goldmine Brook Falls, a campground, and numerous hiking trails, including the H. Newman Marsh Trail and Boulder Park Accessible Trail.

October Mountain State Forest, the largest state forest in Massachusetts at 16,127 acres, offers 46 campsites, of which several are wheelchair accessible. Trails are available for every level of experience and include the famous Appalachian Trail, accessible from within the state forest or from a parking area on the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway at the Lee/Becket border.

Gardner State Park, named for the former national president of the Grange Association, Charles M. Gardner, is popular for picnicking and for swimming and fishing in the nationally designated Wild and Scenic Westfield River. It is located on Route 112 in Huntington.

The Littleville flood control dam and recreational facility was built in 1963 in response to the devastating 1955 Westfield River flood. The two-and-a-half mile long impoundment

created by the dam is trout-stocked and is popular for fishing and canoeing. It is located off of Route 112 in Huntington, several miles past Gardner State Park.

**Summer Camps and Campgrounds.** In addition to the campgrounds mentioned above, the town of Becket is home to six resident summer camps and one private RV campground.

**Historic Lee - the Gateway to the Berkshires.** Historic downtown Lee is a wonderful place to stay while you visit summer events at Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and the many other attractions of the Berkshires. Downtown Lee is right off of Exit 2 on the Mass Pike.

**Local Country Fairs.** Local fairs held during the summer months include the Becket Village Country Fair, the Littleville Fair in Huntington, and the Middlefield Fair. These old-fashioned country fairs have arts and crafts, livestock shows, contests, food and activities for children.

## **FALL**

**Prime Outlets at Lee - Columbus Day Sidewalk Sale.** Sixty-five manufacturer direct outlet stores, arranged in a New England village style setting, offer everyday savings of 25-65% and additional bargains and savings on this scenic fall weekend. Located on the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway (Route 20), just off Exit 2 of the Mass Pike. For dining and overnight accommodations, visit historic downtown Lee, less than a mile away.

**Lee Founder's Day Weekend.** Each fall, in late September/early October, Lee holds its own birthday celebration, known as Founder's Weekend, with three days of events such as the "Taste of Lee," Hometown Parade, Festival Latino and the popular Classic Car Show. For more information, call the Lee Chamber of Commerce at 413-243-0852 or visit [www.leechamber.org](http://www.leechamber.org).

**Great River Ride Bicycle Tour.** This annual 100-mile tour through the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway area is held on the Sunday of Columbus Day weekend. For information: 413-562-5237.

**Appalachian Trail.** Known as the "A.T." to hikers, the Appalachian Trail is America's longest walking trail - approximately 2,175 miles from Maine to Georgia. Ninety miles of the AT pass through western Massachusetts, along the ridges and valleys of the Berkshire Mountains. Backcountry campsites and shelters are available for hikers. Parking for the Appalachian Trail is located at the Lee/Becket Border. There you will also find an interpretive panel with a map of the area and tips on nearby trail conditions and highlights.

**Local Country Fairs.** In the fall, you can attend the Blandford Fair and the Chester Hill Harvest Festival, old-fashioned country fairs with livestock, contests, and activities for children.

## WINTER

**Blandford Ski Area.** This ski area has been owned and operated by the Springfield Ski Club since 1936 and is the oldest continuously operating club-owned ski area in North America. Located just ½ hour from Springfield, the ski area offers exciting downhill skiing, ski sales, and ski instruction. The Blandford Ski Area is located on 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Road in Blandford, just three miles off of the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway. For ski conditions, call 413-568-4341, and for more information, visit [www.skiblandford.org](http://www.skiblandford.org).

**Canterbury Farms Cross-Country Skiing.** Canterbury Farms' trail system was specifically designed for cross country skiing, and it has recently been adapted for ski skating as well. Twelve miles of trails are groomed and tracked daily. With a northern exposure, nestled high in the Berkshire Foothills, the facility gets the best snow in the area. Surrounding the Farm are 2,000 acres of state and private forestlands, allowing for wilderness skiing as well. The Farm's staff is available to fit guests with the proper ski equipment or provide lessons if needed. The Berkshire Room of the farmhouse has a cozy fireplace and hot food and drinks. For ski rates, lessons, and packages call (413) 623-0100 or log onto [www.canterbury-farms.com](http://www.canterbury-farms.com).

## **Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway**

### ***The Seven Hidden Gems of the Berkshire Foothills along Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway***

#### **1) Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival**

America's premiere international dance festival is located on the site of Becket's historic Carter Farm, which dates from 1790. The "Pillow" is an international venue for dance performance and education, founded in the early 1940s by modern dance pioneer Ted Shawn. The Carter family farm was near the main stagecoach route, the Jacob's Ladder Trail, said to be named after the biblical story of Jacob, who slept on a stone pillow and dreamt of a ladder to heaven. When the Carters found a large pillow-shaped rock on their property, they named their farm "Jacob's Pillow," a name that stuck with the property and is now beloved by dance artists around the world.

Today this 150-acre facility is open to the public from June through August. Each year the Festival celebrates many dance traditions, from ballet to hip-hop, in the Pillow tradition of introducing new artists, presenting programs that happen nowhere else, and encouraging unexpected discoveries. Many free events are also offered, including tours of the site, talks, performances, films, exhibits, professional class observations and an annual Community Day. Everyone is invited to meet dancers, choreographers, designers, writers, musicians, and filmmakers to enjoy and learn about dance.

The Festival site also offers a variety of dining opportunities, including The Pillow Café, The Pillow Pub, the Tea Garden, a Coffee Bar, and an Ice Cream Bar. Souvenirs and gifts are available at The Pillow Store. For information on current programs and events, call 413-243-9919 or visit [www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org)

#### **2) Keystone Arch Bridges**

Magnificent, secluded stone bridges of exceptional craftsmanship, the Keystone Arch Bridges are the oldest of their kind built for railroad use in the United States. These 70-foot high bridges, located in Middlefield, Becket and Chester, Massachusetts, were built between 1833 and 1841 without mortar or steel reinforcements and stand as impressive testimony to the engineering feats of the period. Major George Washington Whistler (father of the artist James Whistler) and William Gibbs McNeill were the chief engineers responsible for designing the bridges, referred to by some as "American cathedrals." The bridges stand as a physical reminder of the evolution of the region and the extension of transportation routes westward.

The railroad itself was a marvel, the highest and longest in the world at the time, beginning as the Western Railroad and later becoming the Boston and Albany Railroad. The Keystone Arch Bridges allowed the railroad to extend from Worcester across the Connecticut River and through the Berkshires, over the deep gorges which border the Westfield River, to East Greenbush, New York on the Hudson River, where a ferry linked to Albany. There were originally ten Keystone Arch Bridges spanning the section of river known as the West Branch Gorge; only five remain. Three of the original bridges were washed away in floods during 1927, and two were removed by the railroad during a 1912 re-alignment. The five remaining Keystone Arch Bridges comprise the Middlefield-Becket Stone Arch Railroad Bridge District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Keystone Arch Bridges Trail, beginning at a marked location on Middlefield Road in Chester, extends for 2.5 miles and provides the only public access to two of the bridges. The trail also provides beautiful views of the West Branch Gorge of the Westfield River, the first National Wild and Scenic River designated in Massachusetts. A self-guided tour map is available at the Chester Railroad Museum, or call 413-354-7752 to arrange a guided tour.

### **3) The Miniature Theatre of Chester**

Founded in 1990, the Miniature Theatre of Chester (MTC) produces the highest quality professional theater in an intimate setting. Productions originating at the MTC have played Off Broadway and have toured regionally, nationally and internationally. The Theatre provides an appealing setting in which audiences enjoy language-rich, thought-provoking and entertaining theater performed by the finest professional actors in regional theater today.

MTC was founded in 1990 by Vincent Dowling, who established a commitment to new works. In the past 14 seasons, MTC has presented 17 world premieres, as well as many proven classics. In a region noted for its nationally acclaimed theater companies, MTC productions have won top honors among the very best of the Berkshires. The Theatre uses the auditorium of the Chester Town Hall, on Middlefield Road in Chester Village, for its productions. Plays are performed from the first week of July through Columbus Day weekend. For more information, call 413-354-7770 or visit [www.miniaturetheatre.org](http://www.miniaturetheatre.org).

### **4) The Huntington Country Store**

This classic country store is one of New England's foremost, welcoming visitors from around the world. Open seven days a week, all year long, the store is located on Route 112, just north of historic Huntington Village. The Huntington Country Store is filled to the ceilings with country goods in each of its cozy rooms, including a Holiday Room, spice room, porch, and ice cream parlor. The store is located on the first floor of an historic house, formerly a restaurant known as the Colonial Inn, which has been beautifully maintained. Its owners have operated three country stores in their long career; a second one still exists in the town of Worthington, just north of Huntington.

The store is perfect for gift shopping, holiday decorations, specialty items and unique taste treats. Everything from gourmet chocolates and candy, jewelry, windchimes, baskets, Christmas ornaments and stocking stuffers, kitchen gadgets and pottery can be found. Shoppers can smell the wonderful aromas of candles, spices, baked goods, fancy soaps, incense, potpourris and gourmet coffees as they browse.

The Holiday Room changes with the seasons, but always includes Christmas items, including a wide variety of angels, Santas, and ornaments. The spice room attracts folks from far and wide for its collection of 75 different herbs and spices, including vanilla beans and real saffron. The room also contains an array of kitchen gadgets. Visit the porch for wind chimes, glass bottles, mugs, baskets, wrought-iron “tavern” puzzles, magnets, calendars, Coca Cola collectibles, and pewter figurines, just to name some of the many items. Visitors can also indulge in a treat from the ice cream parlor, which rotates among 80 delicious flavors and also serves hot gourmet coffee in a comfortable café setting. Add to this the old-fashioned toys, penny candy, and books, and the whole family can be entertained at the Huntington Country Store. For more information and directions, call 413-667-3232 or visit [www.hcstore.com](http://www.hcstore.com).

#### **5) Historic Main Street in Downtown Lee**

Situated on the Housatonic River, Lee was settled in 1760 and built around its marble quarry and paper mills. Lee’s Main Street, carefully refurbished during the 1990s, is notable for its historic architecture and friendly hometown atmosphere. The remarkably beautiful First Congregational Church is located at one end of the street, next to the town park and visitor’s center. The street contains many other buildings of historic and architectural interest, including the Lee Town Hall, which was the former Berkshire County Courthouse. Lee is also the home of Joe’s Diner, the setting for the 1958 Norman Rockwell painting “The Runaway.” Joe’s Diner is at the northern end of Main Street (and the Norman Rockwell Museum is only a few miles away in Stockbridge). Several inns and Bed & Breakfasts are available right on Main Street, including the Chambery Inn, a renovated 1885 schoolhouse; the Morgan House, a former stagecoach inn built in 1817, with colonial-style guest rooms and its own restaurant and tavern; and From Ketchup To Caviar, an 1841 building with two guest suites and a restaurant.

A number of other cafés and restaurants are located on Main Street, including the Cakewalk Bakery, Cactus Café, and Salmon Run Fish House. Nearby, on Railroad Street, is the Sullivan Station Restaurant, serving American cuisine in a fully restored railroad station. Shops include antique stores, gift shops, and an organic health food store, and Main Street is still home to a supermarket and two hardware stores, rare in small town centers these days. Each fall, Lee hosts a Founder’s Weekend Celebration, with three days of events such as the “Taste of Lee,” Hometown Parade, Festival Latino and the popular Classic Car Show. For more information, call the Lee Chamber of Commerce at 413-243-0852 or visit [www.leechamber.org](http://www.leechamber.org).

#### **6) Countryside Woodcraft Furniture**

This store in Russell is the production site and showroom for custom-made, heirloom quality furniture and kitchens. A family-owned and operated business, Countryside Woodcraft craftsmen bring more than 100 years of collective woodworking experience to the manufacturing procedure. Their disciplined Mennonite heritage gives them the dedication and skills to build woodcrafts that exhibit traditional New England simplicity and functionality. The showroom in Russell is relaxed, with staff available to assist you to consider the full range of options as well as offer free kitchen design consultations. Workshop activity is also visible through large windows at the back of the store.

Furniture is offered in a variety of styles (including Shaker, Mission and Nantucket) and wood species, which can be custom finished with stains, paints, distressing, or glazes. Raw lumber is harvested from native northeastern forests, and purchased from environmentally responsible lumber companies. Each piece of furniture is bench-built by an individual craftsman, who hand assembles all of the components. Skilled finishers spray on the color stains, paints and glazes to provide a consistent color tone, and they will do custom detailing if desired. Hand-rubbed stain brings out the distinctive grain of the wood, enhancing its details and natural beauty. The Countryside Woodcraft showroom is a perfect place to visit just to enjoy these fine handcrafted items, and you can even watch craftsmen at their tasks in the workshop. Showroom hours are Monday-Friday 8-5 and Saturday 10-4, with some evenings available by appointment. Discounted items are also available, in the store's basement. For information, call 413-862-3276.

#### **7) First Congregational Church in Lee**

This classic New England church has the tallest timber-framed steeple in the nation, at 171 feet. The present church was built in 1857 and has a 141-year-old clock system built by Turret and Marine Clock Company of Boston, with a Seth Thomas Clock movement to drive the four dials that strike the bell. The clock is hand wound and is designed to run for seven days at a time. The church is a fine example of the Romanesque style of architecture and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The interior was decorated by two German artists using a technique called "trompe l'oeil" (fool the eye) stenciling, an almost-forgotten craft, and regarded as one of the finest examples of this work in the United States. The choir loft and the 1927 organ are also noteworthy. Sunday worship is at 10:30 a.m., and community suppers are served Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 413-243-1033 or visit [www.ucclee.org](http://www.ucclee.org).

## **Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway**

### ***Historic Towns of the Berkshire Foothills***

#### **Lee**

Incorporated in 1777, Lee was built around its marble quarry and paper mills. Its center is notable for its historic architecture and traditional New England main street. The towering steeple of Lee's Congregational Church, reputed to be the tallest in the United States built of wood, marks the western end of the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway at the town park. On Founders Day, held in October, Lee celebrates its colonial heritage with a hometown parade. Known as "The Gateway to the Berkshires," Lee offers attractions of its own as well as an enjoyable place to stay while visiting other Berkshire and Jacob's Ladder sites.

#### **Becket**

Becket, site of the legends that the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway was named for, has two historic villages. In Becket Center, which began with a sawmill in 1740, the first Congregational Church has a bell cast by Paul Revere that is still in use today. In front of the church is "The Parade" where Becket Minutemen drilled before marching to Boston in 1775. In 1840 Becket Village developed around the Western Railroad, which became the Boston-Albany Railroad. The Village is noted for its Greek Revival architecture, examples of which include the Becket Arts Center, offering exhibitions and classes during the summer months, and the Becket Athenaeum, a former church, housing the town's library and museum.

#### **Chester**

Chester Factory Village developed in the mid-19th century with the arrival of the railroad. It has excellent examples of the Italianate and Colonial Revival styles of architecture in its railroad depot, inn and general store. The village is home to the Miniature Theater, which uses the auditorium of the Chester Town Hall for its productions. The Chester Railroad Depot Museum and the Chester Jail historic site offer many artifacts and photographs of 19<sup>th</sup> century life in this former industrial village. The annual Chester on Track railroad festival is held in May. Chester Center, on Skyline Trail in northern Chester, is an intact 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century village, with an old burial ground and agricultural surroundings.

**Huntington**

Known as Falley's Crossroads in the early days of settlement, Huntington Village has numerous historic structures including picturesque Stanton Hall, a former church located on the town common. During the summer months, the common hosts the Hilltown farmer's market offering local produce and baked goods. The Norwich Bridge school, a former one-room school house and home to the town's museum, is located on the northern edge of the village. Two branches of the Westfield River flow through Huntington Village, offering scenic views year round.

**Russell**

Comprised of three historic villages, Russell blossomed during the industrial revolution along the banks of the Westfield River. The former Strathmore Mills complex dominates Woronoco Village located on Salmon Falls. Horace Moses, who operated these mills from 1905 to 1947, created a company town with worker housing, a community center and a park. Russell Village, a mid-19th century railroad village, hosts several notable historic buildings in a typical New England setting. The town celebrates Memorial Day with a parade down Main Street. Today the only active paper mill is located in the hamlet of Crescent Mills.



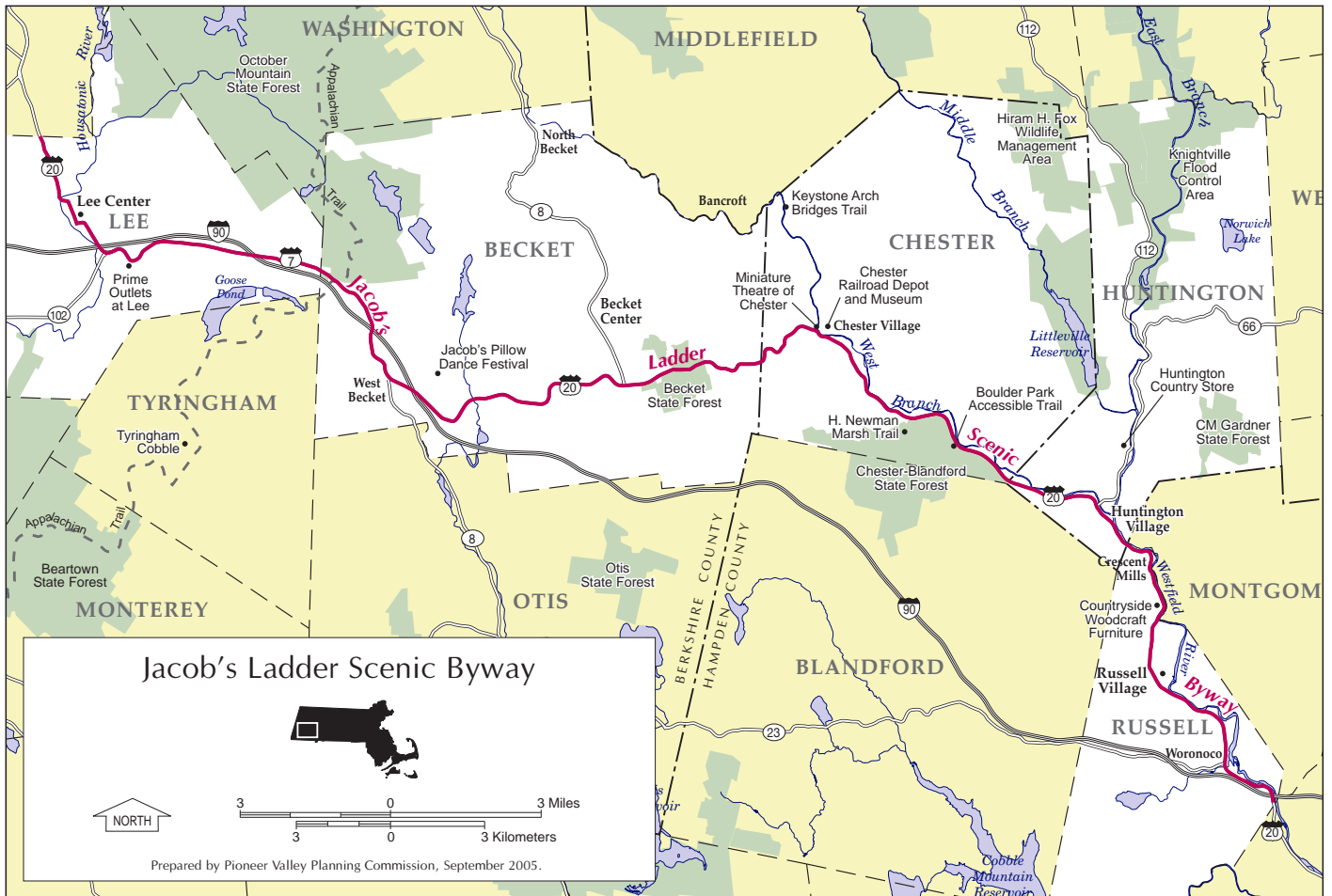
## JACOB'S LADDER SCENIC BYWAY

The Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway is a 33-mile stretch of U.S. Route 20, known for many years as "Jacob's Ladder Trail," and was designated as a scenic byway by the state of Massachusetts in 1992. The route passes through five towns in the Berkshire Foothills, beginning in downtown Lee and continuing along Route 20 through Becket, Chester, Huntington and Russell.



For more information, contact Steve or Linda Hamlin  
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 phone: (413) 667-3346 or write to them at:

Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway  
 P.O. Box 508  
 Huntington, MA 01050





## PHOTOGRAPHY LIBRARY

A photo library has been assembled featuring many of the major attractions, activities, and scenic vistas on Jacob's Ladder Trail. These photographs are available for reproduction, pending agreement with individual photographers. The following are just a sampling from the library. Contact information regarding licensing is noted below.



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Courtesy of JLTSB, Inc.



Parade in Lee  
Courtesy of Lee Chamber of Commerce



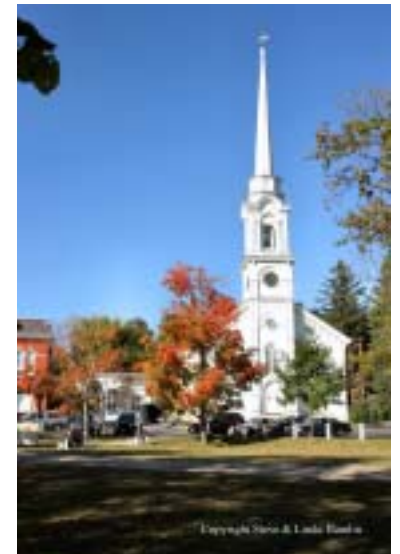
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