

DISCOVER ATSION

Welcome to Atsion, a once thriving industrial center on the edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The bog iron industry began in the NJ Pine Barrens when Charles Read, a local businessman and farmer, and a gentleman involved in all aspects of Colonial New Jersey government, established a forge at Atsion. That same year, 1766, he established a furnace at Batsto, and ironworks at Aetna (*now Medford Lakes*) and Taunton (*now Medford*).

These locations were chosen because of three natural resources critical to the iron works process — bog iron which could be found on the bottoms and banks of the streams and rivers; plentiful water that could be dammed to operate the bellows; and vast stands of pinewood which could be turned into charcoal to fuel the furnace. During the Revolutionary War the Atsion Forge made products for the Pennsylvania Navy and the Continental Army.



Samuel Richards

The Atsion Ironworks had many successful years, however its greatest prosperity came when Samuel Richards, the son of William Richards, the ironmaster at Batsto, purchased the Ironworks in 1819. He saw to the delivery of cast iron water pipes for the city of Philadelphia then put the property up for sale. With no takers, Richards restored and reopened the Ironworks in 1824. The furnace made pig iron and cast iron products like firebacks and stoves. The original stoves used to heat Congress Hall in Philadelphia were cast at Atsion. In 1826, Richards built a summer home at Atsion for himself and his family.

ATSION AFTER THE RICHARDS ERA

Samuel Richards died in 1842 and the property was divided between his two children, Maria and William. Maria, who inherited the village and mansion, married in 1849. Maria's husband, William Walton Fleming took over management of the ironworks and village. When the iron industry began to fail Fleming built a paper mill that historians believe never operated. By 1862 the property had passed into the hands of William Paterson who attempted to establish a planned farming community. By 1871, with few plots sold, he declared bankruptcy. Atsion was then sold to Maurice Raleigh who established a cotton mill on the site. The mill operated until Raleigh's death in 1882. In 1892, Joseph Wharton bought the property as part of a plan to pump water out of the Pine Barrens to the city of Philadelphia. When this plan was foiled by the NJ Legislature he turned to farming. In 1955 the state bought the Atsion property as part of the Wharton tract purchase.

*Join us in sharing
and preserving
Atsion Mansion & Village*

**For more information about mansion tours
and volunteer opportunities, contact:**

Wharton State Forest

609-561-0024

OR

Atsion Forest Office

609-268-0444

BatstoVillage.org



**Batsto Citizen Committee/
Historic Batsto Village**

Wharton State Forest

ATSION MANSION & VILLAGE



*Take a trip back in time
and learn about the
Pines of the past*



**NJ State Park Service
Division of Parks and Forestry**

ATSION MANSION



Photo by Albert D. Horner

The mansion, built in 1826, is an example of rural Greek Revival architecture. It had no central heating and was only used by the Richards family during the spring and summer. When the weather grew cold the family returned to their Philadelphia residence. During the Richards era the family entertained quite lavishly and the home was built with this in mind. The mansion has 14 rooms on three floors plus a cellar where the main kitchen is located. Atsion Mansion was first restored in the early 1960's and then a second restoration, which included the interior, occurred in 2008. To learn more about the mansion join us for a tour.

WALKING TOUR OF ATSION VILLAGE

1 The best place to start your walking tour is the Company Store. The store was built by Richards in 1827 and now serves as the Atsion Forest Office. During the Richards era the town operated much like a feudal village and workers were generally not paid in cash but in scrip that could only be used at the Company Store.

2 After visiting the store follow the map to the nearby Mansion. See above.

3 After touring/viewing the mansion walk to Quaker Bridge Road. Quaker Bridge Road was once the stage road to Tuckerton, the third largest port of entry into New Jersey in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Tuckerton Stage Road ran from Coopers Landing Ferry (now Camden) straight across the state to the coast.

4 Now walk down Quaker Bridge Road in an easterly direction toward the large concrete barn on your left. The barn was built in the Wharton years during the early 1900's and housed horses, cows and the grain to feed them.

Return to Quaker Bridge Road and walk a short distance. You will notice a hunt club on your right, which is privately owned. During the iron era many of the workers' homes were located in this area.

5 Across from the hunt club and on your left you will see a white clapboard church and cemetery. The church was built in 1828



Photo by Albert D. Horner

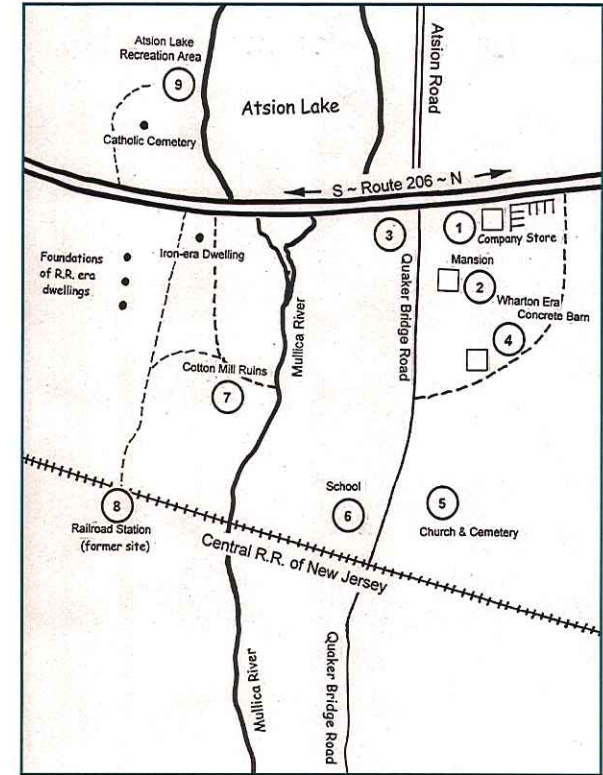
by Samuel Richards to be used by all denominations. During the years it has been used by Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians. Today it is a Baptist church. Next to the church is a cemetery where many 19th and 20th century villagers are buried.

6 Leave the church and continue east on Quaker Bridge Road until you see a building on your right. This is the site of a school built by Maurice Raleigh in 1872. The current structure was built in 1916 and used as a school until 1922 when it became a private residence.



Photo by Albert D. Horner

Walk back down Quaker Bridge to Route 206 to continue the walking tour. At the highway turn left, go across the dam and turn left into the first dirt road. Following the road straight back you will pass a bungalow on your right.



7 This cottage is believed to be the oldest building in Atsion Village, probably dating back to the early iron days. In a short distance you will come to the ruins of the cotton mill (1871-1882). Originally this structure was built (1852) as a paper mill that historians believe never operated. Later, during the Wharton years the building was used as a cranberry sorting and packing house.

8 To visit the site of the Railroad look for a dirt road just west of the cotton mill. Follow the road as it bends to the east. After walking for about five minutes in an easterly direction you will cross railroad tracks. In the clearing on the northeast side of the track is where the Atsion Railroad Depot (1861-1949) once stood.

Enjoy a piece of NJ Pinelands history — at your own pace.