

A CELEBRATION
250 YEARS IN THE MAKING.



**July 8 - July 11
Heritage Week**

Commemorate the 250th anniversary of America's founding in historic Easton.

- July 8 Raise a Glass to Freedom: 250 Years Later**
a Declaration of Independence video screening & champagne toast at Sigal Museum.
- July 8 Easton Declaration Dinner**
an anniversary celebration in collaboration with Greater Easton Development Partnership at Thyme Rooftop Grille.
- July 9 Panel Discussion with Jonathan Hill**
staff & artist discussion about the creation of the new NCHGS graphic novel at Sigal Museum.
- July 9 Members' Opening & Book Launch**
exhibition opening and graphic novel launch at the 1753 Bachmann Publick House.
- July 10 Bachmann Block Party**
beer garden-style outdoor celebration with live music on Second & Northampton Streets.
- July 11 Heritage Day**
citywide festival in downtown, historic Easton.
- July 11 Searching for the Declaration Bus Tour**
visit Easton, Trenton, & Philadelphia.

**Northampton County Historical
& Genealogical Society**

Events will fill quickly. Please reserve
your tickets today. www.sigalmuseum.org/events



Events

From July 8–11, 2026, downtown Easton becomes the center of America's 250th anniversary celebration. Join the Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society (NCHGS) for four unforgettable days of programs, performances, exhibitions, dining, and community celebration honoring Easton's extraordinary place in American history. This is more than a series of events—it is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to experience where history happened, in the very places it unfolded. Go to <https://sigalmuseum.org/>.

The Purple Martins are Back at St. Luke's Anderson Campus

By Sam Kennedy

BETHLEHEM - Purple martins have nested at St. Luke's Anderson Campus for the second straight year.

The birds' return heralds the establishment of a new, perennial colony within the expansive greenspace at the Anderson Campus in Bethlehem Township.

Purple Martins, which migrate northward from as far south as the Amazon jungle to spend the spring and summer in the United States, were once commonplace in Lehigh and Northampton counties. They depend on man-made nesting sites, which local farmers used to erect since the birds would eat the bugs that might otherwise destroy their crops.

But as farming in this region declined, so too did the Purple Martin population.

To Tom Fiorini, St. Luke's Director of Landscape Services, this presented an enticing challenge: Could the birds be lured back?

In a grove of young maple trees in an arboretum next to a pond at the Anderson Campus, he mounted a tall pole encircled with racks of gourd-shaped bird houses two winters ago. For months, the bird houses remained vacant – until June 2025. At first, just a few birds moved in. Before long, though, they had some chicks, and then the whole complex was bustling.

To verify the nesting last year, photographs of the birds were sent to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y., which confirmed they were Purple Martins. Peter Saenger of Muhlenberg College's Acopian Center for Ornithology also reviewed the photographs and reached the same conclusion.

"To have first year success, means you have a very good location," Saenger said, who noted that east of the Mississippi River, Purple Martins are 100% dependent on man-made nests. "So, what you have done there is phenomenally important.

"Every colony is important since Purple Martins in the east are 100% dependent upon these man-made nesting sites. Groups in the area, along with those at Anderson, are helping to establish a significant population of these beautiful and utilitarian birds in the Lehigh Valley area."

Purple Martins' symbiotic relationship with humans predates the arrival of Europeans to North America. Indians were the first to recognize their utility for pest control and use gourd nesting sites to attract them.

The largest of the New World swallows, Purple Martins are acrobatic flyers that love nothing more than gorging themselves on flying insects which, of course, are no less of a nuisance for people today than they were for the Indians and farmers of the past. The birds tend to nest near permanent water sources, such as ponds – of which the 500-acre Anderson Campus has several, as well as proximity to the Lehigh River.

The Anderson Campus is also home to an organic farm that grows healthy produce for the hospital and acres upon acres of sunflower fields, so insect life flourishes there, making it ideal habitat for Purple Martins and many other species too.

When Fiorini is working at the Anderson Campus, he checks on his Purple Martins and takes great pleasure in watching them snatch flying insects out of the air to feed their insatiable chicks. "The coolest thing," he said, "is that they are going to know this spot, and they'll keep coming back year after year."

