



'The Fries Rebellion' film

"The U.S. Constitution was barely 10 years old when the government and Federalist President John Adams established the first Direct Tax Act on American citizens. Needing funds to create a standing army during an undeclared trade war with France and amid concerns about Napoleon's intentions for world domination, the U.S Government placed a levy on land, houses, and slaves. Little did the President know that this first-ever tax of its kind would incite armed rebellion from patriots who fought for freedom from tyranny abroad and at home during the Revolutionary War. Named after its leader, John Fries (pronounced "freeze"), the Fries Rebellion made waves at the highest levels of the new government."

In anticipation of *America250* celebrations to be held nationwide in 2026, the Lower Macungie Township Historical Society (LMTHS) invites you to be part of a special film project and gala that will celebrate one of the region's defining periods. LMTHS is partnering with award-winning production companies, In the Wee hours and ubiFire Video Productions, to produce a 30-minute film delving into 'The Fries Rebellion.' A professionally produced and edited educational tool for K-12 teachers in Eastern Pennsylvania and distributed nationwide via streaming services, film festivals, museums, and historical societies, and for tourism groups from around the world, the film will provide insights into the ongoing, unfolding American experiment, highlight aspects of local heritage, and be a legacy for generations to come.

LMTHS was formed in 1989 to save a log house in Wescosville from demolition. Since that time, this very active, all-volunteer society has expanded its mission to include educational outreach, programs, videos, and social media; seasonal events at the log house; publication of newsletters, research articles, and books; archives of veterans' biographies; documentation of historic structures; operation of the Bartholomew Center for the Preservation of Lower Macungie Township History museum at Camp Olympic; and collaboration with schools, other local historical societies, and related groups.

Audience

Bringing historical figures and future-defining events to life through the art of film recreates the past in ways that bring audiences and students closer to the truth. Film as a medium is easy to relate to, encourages depth of understanding, inspires new perspectives, encourages discussion, and allows viewers to dynamically explore values. This film will be relatable to a wide demographic. All generations will be able to understand, interpret, and emotionally respond to the meaning of the story. Viewers will reflect on our region's unique heritage and significant role in the early foundation of the country along with the sensibilities of its late 18th-century residents.

Students in grades 3-12 and audiences of all ages will be informed and entertained about this The Fries Rebellion insurrection that occurred in 1798-1799 and was primarily based in the German-speaking populations in and surrounding the "Lehigh Hills" region of then Northampton, eastern Berks, upper Bucks, and upper Montgomery counties of Pennsylvania.

Each year, the video will be shown free of charge to thousands of school-aged students in the 88 school districts in Lehigh, Berks, Northampton, Bucks, and Montgomery Counties to supplement and enrich their history curricula. The days of standing in front of a class and lecturing are long gone! So are the days of history buffs and residents feeling tied to physical locations to explore their interests. Moving into the film medium is a much more productive and accessible way for students, virtual visitors to eastern PA, and history buffs to explore the rich history of the region. By offering '*The Fries Rebellion*' on web platforms, people from all over the world will engage in this fascinating period in our history.

The film will also be a valuable resource for museums and historical sites and an attraction for the more than 16 million tourists who visit the Lehigh Valley and eastern Pennsylvania each year. This number will only increase, especially international visitors, as Historic Moravian Bethlehem grows closer to being named a World Heritage Site.

Others who will view this video include school districts throughout Pennsylvania, The National Constitution Center, the Museum of the American Revolution, The State Museum of Pennsylvania, the Sigal Museum, the Mercer Museum, the Congress Hall, and more. Media outlets that will be offered the film include PBS affiliates, The History Channel, Military History, National Geographic, Discovery+, Hulu, Netflix, Amazon, and more.

We are excited that regional historic sites have agreed to be part of the film, each representing an important setting for the Rebellion. The Red Lion Inn (formerly Enoch Robert's Tavern – Quakertown), Jamison Publick House (formerly Conrad Marks's Tavern – Geryville), Hendrixson's furniture store (formerly John Shymer's Tavern – Shimersville), Buckeye Tavern (formerly Henry Shankweiler's Tavern – Macungie), 1760 House (formerly Peter Trexler's Tavern – Trexlertown), Commix Hotel (formerly Martin Ritter's Tavern – Allentown), and the 1758 Sun Inn (Bethlehem) will appear in the film.

Film Description

'*The Fries Rebellion*' film is a story about how a sensitive young girl's simple search for information transforms her understanding of her past and present through profound experiences. Through narrative storytelling, imagery, and dramatic reenactments of an earlier time, viewers are taken on her journey as she learns about the culture of the Germans who settled in the "Lehigh Hills" region in the early 18th century, and how that ethnic group felt marginalized under English rule and distrustful of a strong centralized U.S. government.

The self-sufficient Pennsylvania Germans established crossroad villages, churches, businesses, and prosperous farmsteads. German men of the Lutheran and Reformed faiths (the "Kirchenleute") served in the military

alongside French soldiers during the Revolutionary War, in contrast to pacifist German sects like the Moravians, Mennonites, Anabaptists, and Schwenkfelder who did not bear arms. Still infused with the spirit of the Revolution, including that of the recent French Revolution, the Kirchenleute tried to define what “freedom” and “liberty” within the Constitution meant to them.

Kayla, a teenager who recently moved with her parents to the Macungie area, has a history report due for a school project. Her mother, who grew up in Macungie, suggests the Fries Rebellion as a topic, even though she knows little about it. Kayla finds reading books challenging and instead relies on other ways to access information. At the Lower Macungie Township Historical Society’s Museum, Kayla meets with her uncle Steve, a history professor at a local college. After he realizes that a literature search will not work for her, he takes her on a driving tour so she can see and experience some of the places where the Rebellion took place.

Kayla not only learns about local history and the ideological and political underpinnings of the Fries Rebellion, but also delves into other late 18th-century cultural issues including slavery, disease, and transportation. She experiences and sees that misguided charismatic leadership, fueled by anger, misinformation, fearmongering, bravado, and inflamed rhetoric can quickly turn a well-established, tight-knit community of peaceful neighbors into violent foes whose disagreement causes innocent victims to be manipulated and to suffer.

Through the juxtaposition of past and present and personal versus national interests, the film subtly addresses the ongoing search for what liberty, freedom, patriotism, loyalty, and duty mean in the United States of America.

Sponsorship

Sponsors who would like to be part of this celebration of history have several levels through which to contribute and be recognized. The audience and reach of the film described above will be refreshed yearly (as new classes and visitors to the region and on the web are introduced). Each new viewing audience will benefit from your support while learning about your organization. We are also holding an Opening Night Gala / Film Screening in the Lehigh Valley that is expected to host 400 attendees. The proposed sponsorship levels below describe the benefits you will receive at each level of giving. Please contact us if the levels described below do not meet your needs. We would love to collaborate with you further to help engage your organization with our viewing audience.

Film Name Sponsor (1 Available)- \$125,000 – as the film naming sponsor, your organization will be recognized as the official sponsor of the film, for example, “Organization Name” proudly presents ‘*The Fries Rebellion*’ film. This headline will be included in all materials promoting the film and the Official name on the cover /opening screen of the film. Additional benefits include a 45-second spot/commercial at the beginning of the film to highlight your organization; a Chance to speak and deluxe signage at the Opening Night Gala / Film Screening; 12 VIP tickets to The Opening Night Gala; and an Advance film download.

Gen. McPherson’s Patron (2 Available)- \$ 80,000 includes A 15-second spot/commercial at the beginning of the film; Recognition in all materials promoting the film; Executive Producer screen credit; A chance to speak and deluxe signage at the Opening Night Gala and Film Screening; 12 VIP tickets to the Opening Night Gala; and Advance film download.

Col. Nichol’s Endowment (4 Available) - \$40,000 includes Recognition in all materials promoting the film, Co-Executive Producer screen credit; Deluxe signage and prominent placement in the program for the Opening Night Gala / Film Screening; 8 VIP tickets to the Opening Night Gala; and Advance film download.

Judge Henry’s Hedge (4 Available) - \$15,000 includes Producer screen credit; Appearance in the film; a Website ad; Opening Night Gala program ad, 8 Tickets to the Opening Night Gala; and Advance film download

Henry Jarrett's Trustee (6 Available) \$10,000 includes Associate Producer screen credit; an LMTHS Website ad; Opening Night Gala program ad, 8 Tickets to the Opening Night Gala; and Advance film download.

John Fries's Fund (10 Available) - \$5,000 includes Sponsor screen credit; Opening Night Gala program ad; 4 tickets to the Opening Night Gala; and Advance film download.

Grandy Miller's Pot (20 Available) - \$2,500 includes Special Thanks screen credit; 2 tickets to the Opening Night Gala; an Ad in the Opening Night Gala program; and an Advance film download.

Thank you for your consideration in supporting our film! If you would like any additional information, please contact Sarajane Williams, President, Lower Macungie Township Historical Society P.O. Box 3722 Wescosville, PA 18106: Phone at (610) 965-9509: Email at president@lmthistory.org or info@LMThistory.org

Visit us on the Web: www.LMTHistory.org

The Lower Macungie Township Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization - contributions are tax deductible. Direct donations can be made via:

Check: *LMTHS Fries Movie*, P.O. Box 3722, Wescosville, PA 18106

PayPal (via our website): <https://www.lmthistory.org/fries-rebellion.html>

Production Timeline and Budget

LMTHS is raising \$300,000 to produce this film, and its supporting materials, and hold an Opening Night Gala / Film Screening. Film production is expected to begin in early 2024. With this timing, the film's premiere and initial film festival run would commence by fall of 2024 to commemorate the 225th anniversary of the Fries Rebellion. The film is expected to become widely available in 2025 to participate in *America250* celebrations.

The film will be promoted through social media sites, newspaper articles, regional historical society newsletters, membership lists, direct mailings, outreach to community organizations and school districts, and other media outlets that might show the film.

Invested Partners

- Lower Macungie Township Historical Society
- In the Wee hours Production (Philadelphia)
- ubiFire Video Productions (Allentown)
- Quakertown Historical Society
- Sun Inn Preservation Association (Bethlehem)
- Upper Milford Historical Society
- Alburdis-Lockridge Historical Society
- Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center (Kutztown)
- Mercer Museum (Doylestown)
- Lehigh University's Professor Scott Paul Gordon, Ph.D.
- Red Lion Inn (formerly Enoch Robert's Tavern – Quakertown)
- Longswamp Township Historical Society
- Hendrixson's furniture store (formerly John Shymer's Tavern – Shimersville)
- Lehigh Valley Passport to History

- Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society
- Rising River Brewing (Macungie)
- Two Rivers Brewing Company (Easton)
- Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center
- Embassy Bank
- Mr. Bill's Poultry (Allentown)
- Jason Searock
- Historic Rescue Photography
- Attorney Michael S. Horvath
- Blake and Marilyn Marles
- Discover Lehigh Valley
- Jamison Publick House



Director Dan Hertzog and crew

photo by Gary Heller