

About the Trail

The Chimney and Witness Tree trail of the Siegen Forest provides a unique opportunity to walk in the footsteps of history. The path begins just behind, and to the right of the Cloister at the Germanna Foundation Visitors Center.

The Chimney and Witness tree trail is a short (0.5 mile) one-way trail. You will walk to the top of the bluff and then retrace your footsteps to the Cloister. It is relatively flat except for a small hill to get down to the chimneys.

The Chimney and Witness tree trail takes you to the beginning of the Germanna Foundation development of this property, to a magnificent Tulip Poplar tree that probably was here during the Civil War, and all the way back in time to the first and second settlers in the 1700s.

The first landmark you will visit is a 10' x 10' concrete "Speakers' Platform". This is the concrete pad where speakers addressed the gathered members of the Germanna Foundation on their annual meeting/picnics before the property was developed.

Just down the hill from the Speaker's Platform are two stone chimneys. This area is on a bluff about 80 feet above the river and the millrace used by the original settlers. These chimneys are from the Urquhart family houses, ca. 1760.

Thank you for visiting the Germanna Foundation's Siegen Forest. Conservation of this beautiful area and maintenance of our property and trails depends on generous donations from visitors like you. If you enjoy your visit, please consider making a tax deductible donation to the Germanna Foundation today.

Trail Rules and Safety Guidelines

Vehicles may park in marked parking spaces only. There is no general public boat access to the river, and there are no restroom facilities along the trails. All visitors must adhere to "pack it in, pack it out" practices.

- Use of metal detectors, digging, or removal or collection of artifacts, materials, plants, or relics is strictly prohibited.
- Help protect our historical resources by staying on the trails. Do not walk on the Civil War earthworks or walk on or move rocks at any historical building or cemetery sites.
- Do not drink water from streams or the river.
- Wear insect repellent and appropriate clothing and shoes. Beware of poison ivy, chiggers, ticks, and snakes. Foxes, bears and even a coyote have been reported in the Forest.
- Picnicking is allowed at the established area(s). No overnight camping and no fires are allowed, except for Scouts and other organized and supervised groups, and only with advance written permission from the Foundation.
- Bicycles, motorized vehicles, and horses are not permitted on the trails. Dogs are allowed if leashed and all solid waste must be picked up and packed out.
- Although hunting in Siegen Forest is illegal, exercise caution and wear bright colors during hunting season.
- Beware of trail hazards and uneven surfaces. Wear sturdy shoes or boots.
- Road traces and animal trails crisscross the area. To stay on the trail, follow the map carefully and look for the 2" x 6" colored blazes (trail markings) on the trees.
- A single blaze indicates you are on the path. A double blaze indicates the trail changes direction. The blazes are spaced so you should see the next one as you pass a blaze.
- Trails are open during daylight hours, year-round. To help protect our trails and property, please remove/replace the yellow chain across our access road as you come and go.

CHIMNEY AND WITNESS TREE TRAIL

GERMANNA FOUNDATION

SIEGEN FOREST



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As you walk from the Cloister, you will visit the Speaker's Platform (bottom left). Note the large Tulip Poplar tree that is growing at the front of the concrete pad. It was probably just a twig at the first meetings.

Just past the Speaker's platform are the twin chimneys from the two Urquhart houses. One of them is pictured below (center).

A side trail takes you to one of the largest trees on the property—a Tulip Poplar. It is called a “witness” tree because it probably was here during the fighting of the Civil War in the 1860's. If trees could talk what things would it describe of that time.

The tree is held up by Edward Furlow, Virginia Forester who surveyed the property for the foundation in April 2012. Yes, that is a vine he is holding!



Figure 1. Speakers Platform.

