



C & O Canal

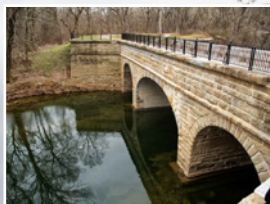
≈ TRAIL *to* HISTORY ≈



POINT OF ROCKS



BRUNSWICK



HARPERS FERRY



www.canaltrust.org



C & O Canal

☞ TRAIL to HISTORY ☞

Take a journey into the rich history of our Canal Towns along the C&O Canal towpath. Explore our region in your car, ride a bike, raft the river or take a leisurely stroll in our historic towns. Visit our historical parks and learn about our region's rich history. Pioneer settlement, transportation innovations, struggles for freedom—it all happened here. Visit, explore and enjoy!



Pivotal to the history of the West Virginia-Maryland border, Harpers Ferry, Brunswick, and Point of Rocks are steeped in Civil War history, C&O Canal and B&O Railroad heritage, and local lore. This charming area encompasses approximately 12 miles on the C&O towpath between Harpers Ferry and Point of Rocks, with Brunswick located about halfway. In addition to the area's memorable historical sites, several outstanding hiking trails and scenic vistas are located in or nearby the towns, and the area is home to three national parks.

POINT OF ROCKS

As its name indicates, Point of Rocks stands out as a natural landmark along the Potomac River and the C&O Canal. Towering above the present railroad tunnel that was constructed after the Civil War, the “Point” featured Union Army artillery and a wartime signal tower that relayed messages between Sugarloaf Mountain and Leesburg, Virginia.

While the town Point of Rocks saw no major Civil War battles, it was the site of several skirmishes and artillery attacks between the Union and Confederates camped on mountains on either side of the river. The



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

June 14, 1861, burning of the Potomac River bridge by the Confederacy resulted in hardships for anyone wanting to maintain contact across the border.

Point of Rocks served before, during and after the Civil War as one of the principal river crossings by bridge, ferry, boat, or fording. The town was a transportation center, and the junction of the B&O Railroad and the C&O Canal was a transfer point for vital military troops and supplies for the Union Army. Colonel John Singleton Mosby and his band of Virginia Cavalry raiders carried out two notable attacks on the well-stocked stores and warehouses near this transportation hub.



Point of Rocks train station

Today's Point of Rocks is a great place to detour off the towpath to find refreshment or to see the distinguished Point of Rocks train station. Designed by E. Francis Baldwin and built in the 1870s, it was meant to highlight the B&O's new line from the west to the nation's capital. The station is believed to be the most photographed train station in America.

Just downstream from Point of Rocks you will pass White's Ford, where Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army crossed the river September 4, 1862, on its first invasion of the North. Lee later ordered General John G. Walker's division to destroy the nearby C&O Canal's Monocacy Aqueduct as it proceeded to Harpers Ferry, but Walker discovered the “extraordinary solidity and massiveness of the masonry” would require more time and tools than he had.



C&O Canal Lockhouse 28

BIKE ACCESS

There is a short, flat road connection between the C&O towpath and the community of Point of Rocks.

POINTS OF INTEREST

For information on camping, food, and other services, visit <http://www.visitmaryland.org/city/point-rocks>

Point of Rocks Railroad Station, Tuscarora Road (MD 28). E.F. Baldwin's 1873 B&O Station. This active station serves MARC Line passengers. Only folding bicycles currently allowed.

Lander C&O Lockkeeper's House at Lock 29, 2 ½ miles west on towpath. Displays focus on life of a lockkeeper. Open Sat. 11am-2pm, Memorial Day through Labor Day.



Lockkeeper's House at Lock 29

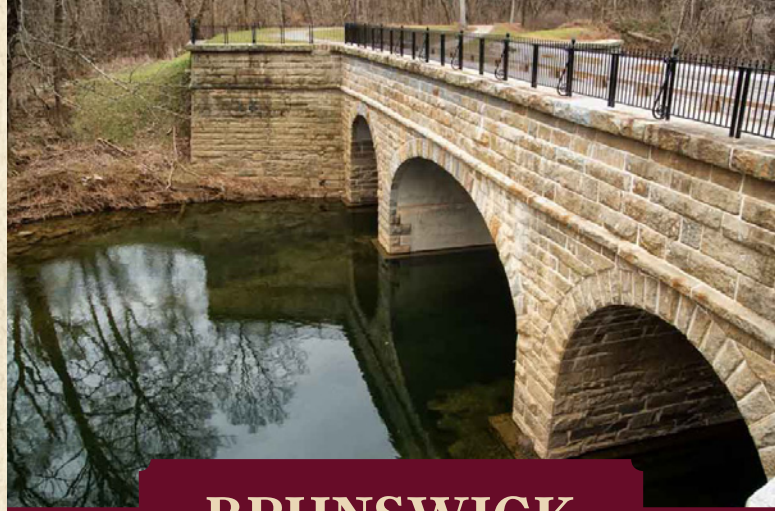
Lockkeeper's House at Lock 28, ½ mile east on towpath. Available for overnight use. Visit www.canaltrust.org/quarters

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1 mile north of town on Ballenger Creek Pike. 1843 church site of Civil War hospital and encampments. Cemetery has graves from Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

Monocacy Aqueduct, 6 miles east on towpath. Largest aqueduct on C&O, built 1833, restored 2005.

Numerous waysides along towpath, at train station, and at boat ramp area.

Popular boat and fishing access near Point of Rocks Potomac River Bridge. Maryland fishing license required.



BRUNSWICK

Brunswick was incorporated in 1787 with the name Berlin because of its many German settlers. Since Maryland already had another Berlin, the name was eventually changed to Brunswick. The C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad were built side-by-side here. Both were operating in the town by 1834, but in the late 1800s the B&O built a six-mile rail yard in Brunswick, transforming it into a railroad company town. Today, the rail yard is virtually gone, but freight and passenger train services thrive.

Early industry in the area was based on waterpower; ironically, the power of floods destroyed much from that time. The ruins of C. F. Wenner's mill lie near the present Potomac River Bridge, as do those of C&O Canal Lock No. 30.

Brunswick suffered raids by Confederates from across the river during the American Civil War. The wooden bridge over the Potomac was burned by Confederate troops in 1861,



Union encampment at Brunswick



Weverton Lockhouse

forcing the Union Army to construct a pontoon bridge to move troops and materials across the river into Virginia. After the Battle of Antietam, the Union Army used Brunswick as a major supply depot due to its central location.

The C&O Canal had strategic importance to both sides in the war. The Union army used it for transporting troops and war supplies while Confederates tried to damage canal aqueducts and impair barge traffic.

The fully restored Catoctin Aqueduct is just downstream from Brunswick along the towpath and was considered the most beautiful along the line by the old canalers.



C&O Canal Lock 30 at Brunswick



Top: Brunswick Train Station

Bottom: Brunswick viewed from the Potomac River bridge

BIKE ACCESS

Brunswick's downtown lies across a commuter parking lot from the C&O towpath. Mind signals and use caution when crossing the busy train tracks.

POINTS OF INTEREST

For information on lodging, camping, food, and other services, visit www.BrunswickMD.gov and www.brunswickmainstreet.org.

Brunswick Heritage Museum/ C&O Canal Visitors Center,

40 W. Potomac Street. Area photos and artifacts, model railway depicting B&O line from Brunswick to Washington, DC. Thur.-Fri. 10am-2pm, Sat.-Sun. 10am-4pm (varies seasonally).



Mosaic River Mural

Towpath and downtown sites include three large mosaic and painted murals, numerous waysides, lockhouse and mill ruins under Potomac River bridge, and E.F. Baldwin's 1891 B&O Railroad station. This active station serves MARC Line passengers. Only folding bicycles currently allowed.

Outdoor recreation includes boat and bicycle rentals and two boat ramps, river trips, 5-mile mountain bike trail, fishing (Maryland license required). For more information, visit www.BrunswickMD.gov and www.brunswickmainstreet.org.

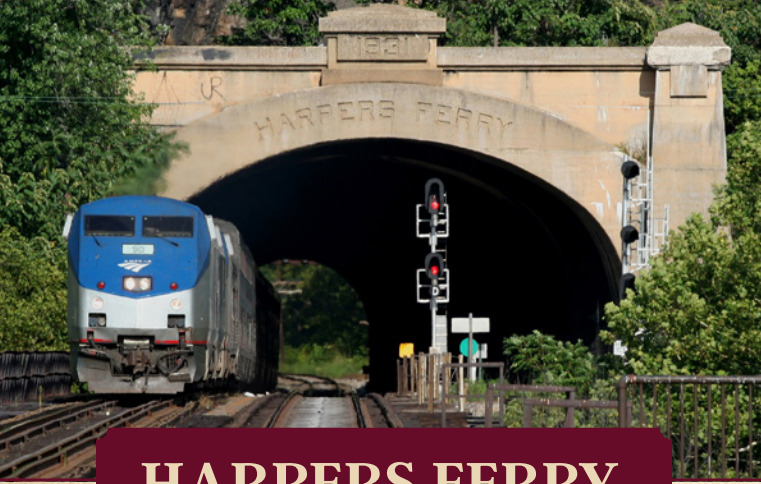
Catoctin Aqueduct, 3½ miles east on towpath. Fully restored in 2011 and long considered the most beautiful aqueduct along the C&O Canal.

Weverton Cliffs, 3 miles west on towpath and 2 mile hike north on Appalachian Trail. Dramatic view of Potomac River valley and nearby towns and mountains.

South Mountain Civil War sites, accessible by mountain roads north of Brunswick. Maryland State Parks and historical markers interpret site of fierce 1862 battle. Visit www.visitfrederick.org/things-to-do/history-and-museums/civil-war.



War Correspondents Memorial, Gathland State Park



HARPERS FERRY

The C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad run alongside each other between Brunswick and Harpers Ferry. During the 1830s they raced to open service to Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia), a bustling factory town that was home to one of two federal armories, and flour, cotton, and lumber mills that took advantage of the ample waterpower along both the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers.

In October 1859 abolitionist John Brown led a party of 21 men across the old railroad bridge from the canal on a raid of the Federal Armory. Brown's goal was to start a slave rebellion that would spread throughout the South. Although his original plans were a bust and he was soon captured by a U.S. marshal named Robert E. Lee, the incident and Brown's later hanging became flashpoints leading to the Civil War just months later.



Then and now: Marines at John Brown Fort and Marines storming the Fort



Harpers Ferry viewed from Maryland Heights

As a border town at the north end of the Shenandoah Valley and as an important transportation hub, Harpers Ferry was coveted by both Northern and Southern forces. It passed from one to the other eight times during the war. The most momentous turnover was in September 1862, when Confederate troops under General "Stonewall" Jackson surrounded the town from four directions (including Maryland Heights, the large hill above the canal and the railroad bridge), forcing over 12,000 Federal troops to surrender. By autumn 1864, however, Harpers Ferry was firmly in Union hands, and it served as the supply and staging center for Union General Phil Sheridan's successful



Harpers Ferry, c. 1855



campaign to conquer the Shenandoah Valley. The bustling pre-war town of 3,000 was largely destroyed, with a remnant population of just 300. Today's Harpers Ferry remains at that post-war size, but some of the liveliness has returned—now



fuelled in part by tourists intrigued by history and seeking the adventures that area trails, rivers and hills provide. As you cross the bridge from the C&O towpath into Harpers Ferry and its uphill neighbor Bolivar, you'll be on part of the Appalachian Trail, a 2,100-mile American scenic hiking trail that runs from Georgia to Maine. Once you've entered the town and West Virginia, you'll be in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, where you can visit John Brown's



Cannons at Bolivar Heights

“Fort” (where the raiders were captured), archaeological and historical sites of the Federal Armory, and museum displays on topics from Stonewall Jackson's 1862 invasion to the town's waterpower industry. Ranger-led tours and living history activities are available. Up the hill you will find the campus where the post-war Freedman's Bureau and New England church leaders educated newly freed slaves, later becoming Storer College, one of the first African American school of higher education in the U.S. The entire town of Harpers Ferry is a registered historic district, with many homes and other buildings that date from the late 18th through the early 20th centuries.



Storer College Students at John Brown Fort, c. 1915



John Brown's Fort prior to 1881

BIKE ACCESS

To enter Harpers Ferry from the C&O towpath with bicycle, you must carry the bike up a circular iron staircase and walk the bike across the pedestrian pathway along the railroad bridge. Bike parking is available on both ends of the river, so locking your bike by the towpath is an option for a short visit.

POINTS OF INTEREST

For information on lodging, camping, food, and other services, visit www.historicharpersferry.com.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Historical sites and museums, hiking trails, and interpretive tours focus on Civil War, 1859 John Brown Raid, the Harpers Ferry Federal Armory, and African American education. Visitor centers on US 340 and on Shenandoah Street. Visit www.nps.gov/hafe.

Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Bureau. 1½ miles west at 37 Washington Court. Visitor center for Harpers Ferry and historic Jefferson County. Daily 9am-5pm.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail. 2,100-mile hiking trail from Georgia to Maine. Visitor Center, 799 Washington Street. Visit www.appalachiantrail.org.

Harpers Ferry Railroad Station, Potomac Street. E.F. Baldwin's 1889 B&O Railroad station. This active train station serves both Amtrak and MARC Line passengers. Roll-on bicycle service allowed on Amtrak with prior reservations.

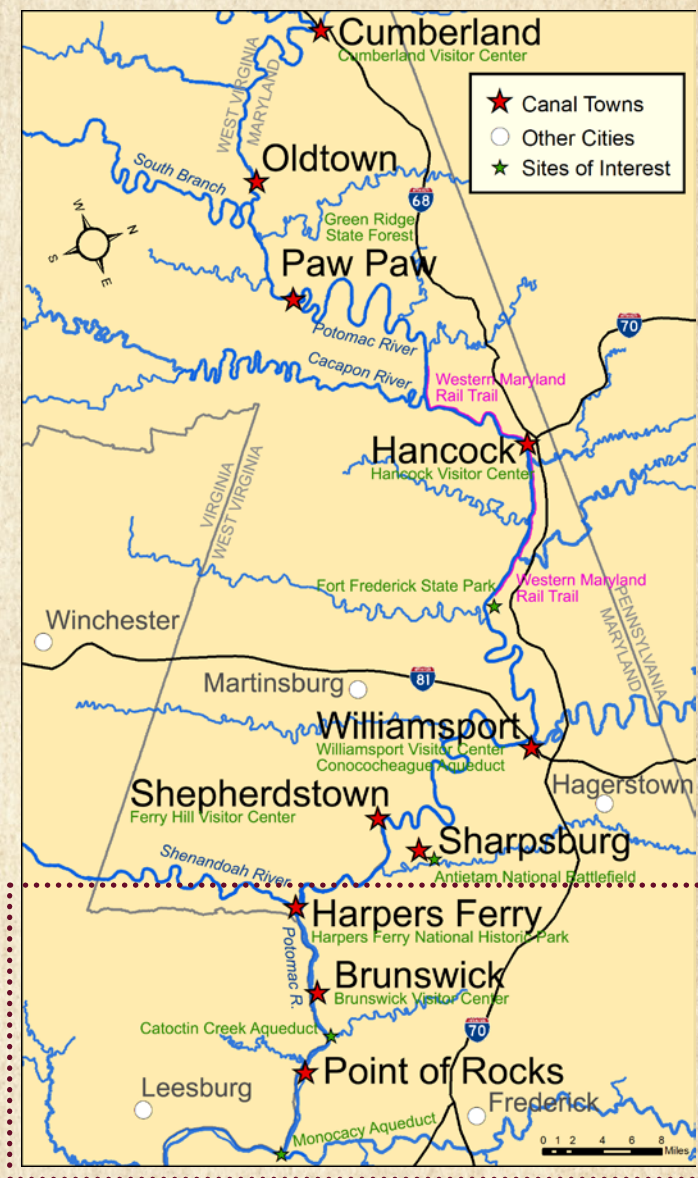
River trips and boat rentals, zipline and canopy tours, bicycle and Segway tours and rentals, guided horseback riding tours, ghost tours. Visit www.historicharpersferry.org.

John Brown Wax Museum. 168 High Street. Wax figures tell the story of John Brown. Daily 10am-4:30pm, mid-March through mid-December.

Harpers Ferry Toy Train Museum and Joy Line Railroad, 937 Bakerton Road. Take a ride on this miniature railroad. Open Saturdays.



MAP





The C&O Canal Explorer app has over 600 points of interest mapped for you in a searchable format, allowing you to find hiking trails, campgrounds, history, trailheads, parking, and more at a glance.

The app also calculates the distance from your location to nearby amenities, and points of interest. The C&O Canal Explorer app will encourage you to tread new paths and journey to new parts of the Park!



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