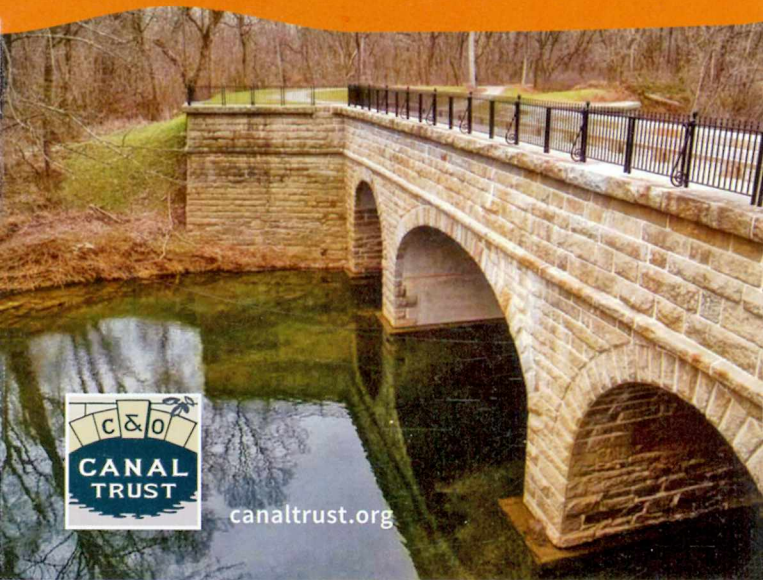


C&O CANAL

TRAIL TO HISTORY

POOLESVILLE • POINT OF ROCKS

BRUNSWICK • HARPERS FERRY/BOLIVAR



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 varied history. Pioneer settlement, transportation innovations, struggles for freedom—it all happened here. Visit, explore, and enjoy!



Harpers Ferry, **Bolivar**, **Brunswick**, **Point of Rocks**, and **Poolesville** are steeped in Civil War history, C&O Canal and B&O Railroad heritage, and local lore. This charming area encompasses approximately 26 miles on the C&O Canal towpath between Harpers Ferry and White's Ferry and boasts some of the most memorable sites of Civil War, industrial, and railroad history. Several outstanding hiking trails and scenic vistas are located in or nearby the towns, and the area is home to three national parks.





POOLESVILLE

Poolesville's story begins in 1760, when brothers John and Joseph Poole purchased 160 acres where the town now stands. John Poole, Jr. later built a log store and sold land to several other merchants. The growing town finally incorporated in 1867.

Poolesville served as an important crossroads during the Civil War. Large numbers of soldiers passed through and camped in the area. An estimated 20,000 Union troops were stationed in or near Poolesville during the winter of 1861-1862, monitoring the nearby Potomac waters for crossing attempts by Confederates.



Lockhouse 25

While no Civil War battles were fought in Poolesville, the October 1861 Battle of Ball's Bluff took place just across the river in Virginia. During this engagement, a small reconnaissance mission by the Union army resulted in an unexpected clash with Confederates and a significant loss of Union troops, including hundreds stationed in Poolesville. About 20 soldiers who were either killed at Ball's Bluff or died of illness while stationed in Poolesville are buried in the historic cemetery at Poolesville Methodist Church.

Near Poolesville is White's Ferry, the last operating ferry on the Potomac River. It connected the Poolesville area and the C&O Canal towpath with Loudoun County, Virginia, from 1786 into the 21st century. The chain ferry was a popular crossing point for troops during the Civil War. Later, it carried commuters and visitors, along with their cars and bicycles, across the river.



John Poole House

Just upstream from the ferry is White's Ford, where Confederate troops waded across the Potomac several times during the war, often raiding Poolesville after crossing into Maryland. Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry made the trip in 1862 on its way to Antietam, and Jubal Early's troops retreated into Virginia via White's Ford after attacking Washington, D.C. in 1864. Just upstream at milepost 38, see the remains of a quarry where Benjamin Latrobe mined marble for the U.S. Capitol after the War of 1812.

Towpath travelers today can ride lovely rural roads into Poolesville, where they will discover a busy commercial and residential center. History is preserved amidst the bustle, however, and visitors can explore the 1793 John Poole House and the one-room Seneca Schoolhouse Museum during their trip.

BIKE ACCESS

Take Edwards Ferry Road, turn right on Westerly Road, and turn left on W. Willard Road for a five-mile trip to downtown Poolesville. Take White's Ferry Road for a six-and-a-half-mile trip to downtown Poolesville.

POINTS OF INTEREST



For information on lodging, camping, food, and other services, visit www.poolesvillemd.gov/

Edwards Ferry and Lockhouse 25, C&O Canal mile marker 30.9. Rustic lockhouse available for overnight stays. Furnished to depict the 1860s Civil War era in the canal town of Edwards Ferry. www.canalquarters.org

John Poole House, 19923 Fisher Avenue. Built by John Poole, Jr. in 1793, it is the oldest building in Poolesville. Former trading post and post office. Open to visitors by appointment. www.historicmedley.org/visit/john-poole-house

Monocacy Aqueduct, mile marker 42.2. The longest aqueduct in the Park, it was the subject of many attacks by Confederate troops in an attempt to sabotage canal operations. Built in 1833, restored in 2005.

Poolesville Old Town Bank Museum, 19933 Fisher Avenue. Housed in the former Town Hall and restored in 2006. Civil War exhibits. www.historicmedley.org/visit/town-hall

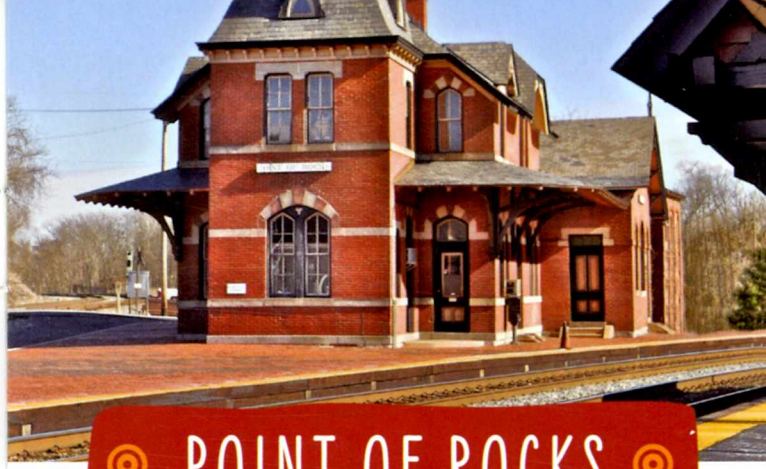
Rileys Lock/Lock 24, C&O Canal mile marker 22.7. Named after the family that operated it, Rileys Lock is both a lift lock and an aqueduct. Seneca sandstone quarried nearby used in numerous canal locks and notable buildings, including the Smithsonian Castle in Washington, D.C.

Seneca Creek, C&O Canal mile marker 22.7. Nearby boat ramp and access to more than 12 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails on the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail.

Seneca Schoolhouse, 16800 River Road. Nineteenth century schoolhouse offers day program to 4th graders. www.historicmedley.org/visit/seneca-schoolhouse

Sugarloaf Mountain, 7901 Comus Road, Dickerson, MD. During the Civil War, Union troops occupied the summit, which served as an observation and signal station. 16 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding.

White's Ferry, C&O Canal mile marker 35.5. Last operating ferry on the Potomac River. It began operations in 1786. After the Civil War, it was purchased by Elijah White, a Confederate Lieutenant Colonel. Service is currently suspended.



POINT OF ROCKS

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" was home to Union Army artillery and a wartime signal tower that relayed messages between Sugarloaf Mountain and Leesburg, Virginia.

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

Point of Rocks was a transportation center – the junction of the B&O Railroad and the C&O Canal – and therefore was a transfer point for vital military troops and supplies for the Union Army. The town served as a principal river crossing by bridge, ferry, boat, or fording.

Today, 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, the station is believed to be the most photographed train station in America.



Lockkeeper's House at Lock 29



Point of Rocks tunnel

POINTS OF INTEREST

For information on camping, food, and other services, visit www.visitfrederick.org

Lockhouse 28, C&O Canal mile marker 49. A rustic lockhouse available for overnight stays. Furnished to depict the era of the race between the B&O Railroad and the C&O Canal Company in the 1830s. www.canalquarters.org

Point of Rocks Boat Ramp, C&O Canal mile marker 48.4. Popular boat and fishing access. MD fishing license required.

Point of Rocks Railroad Station, 4000 Clay Street. This active station serves MARC Line passengers and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Point of Rocks Tunnel, C&O Canal mile marker 48.5. Constructed by the B&O Railroad after the Civil War to help the railroad pass next to the canal.

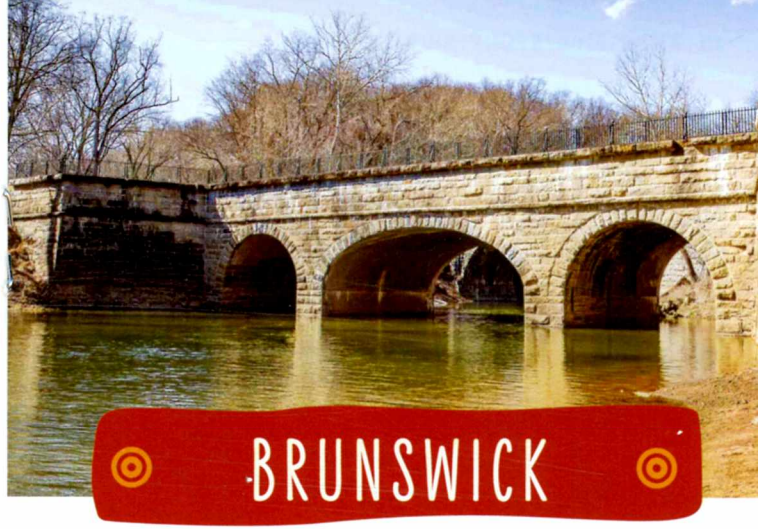
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1914 Ballenger Creek Pike. An 1843 site of a Civil War hospital and encampments. The cemetery has graves from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

BIKE ACCESS

A short flat road connects the C&O Canal towpath and the community of Point of Rocks.



BRUNSWICK



Archway to downtown 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 and operated 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-day Potomac River Bridge, as do those of C&O Canal Lock No. 30.

The C&O Canal had strategic importance to both sides during the Civil War. The Union army used it for transporting troops and war supplies while Confederates tried to damage canal aqueducts and impair barge traffic. Brunswick suffered from raids by Confederates from across the river



Berlin, MD 1862 Scouts and guides of the Army of the Potomac



Weverton Lockhouse

during the war. A wooden bridge over the Potomac was burned by Confederate troops in 1861, 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 Berlin, as it was then known, as a major supply depot due to its central location.

Modern Brunswick is a growing town with new homes and businesses connected by trails with the historic center. Outdoor-oriented visitors can find mountain bike trails, boat rentals, and camping here, and the model railway at the visitor center delights both children and adults. 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 Canawlers.



Brunswick Heritage Museum

BIKE ACCESS

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

POINTS OF INTEREST



Mosaic River Mural

For information on lodging, camping, food, and other services, visit https://brunswickmainstreet.org/plan-your-visit/

Appalachian National Scenic Trail. 2,100-mile hiking trail from Georgia to Maine, from which Brunswick is nearby. www.appalachiantrail.org

Brunswick Heritage Museum, 40 W Potomac Street. Three stories of Brunswick history, including a 1,700-square-foot model railroad depicting the B&O line from Brunswick to Washington, D.C. www.brunswickmuseum.org



War Correspondents Memorial, Gathland State Park

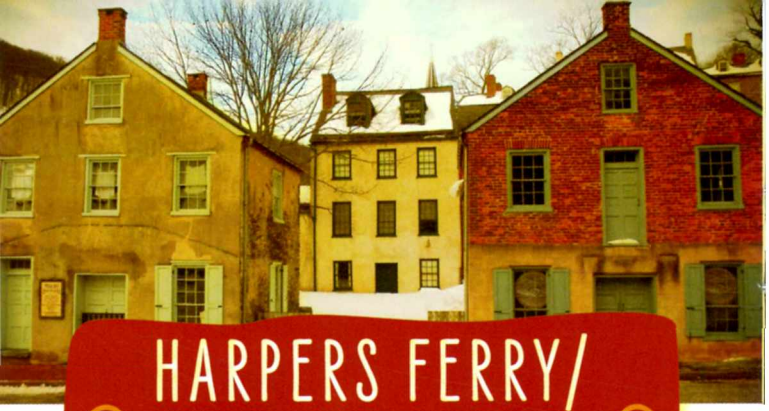
Catoctin Aqueduct, C&O Canal mile marker 51.5. Fully restored in 2011 and considered the most beautiful aqueduct along the C&O Canal.

Downtown Sites. Three large mosaic and painted murals, a restored caboose, and 1891 B&O Railroad station. This active station serves MARC Line passengers.

Outdoor recreation. Boat and bicycle rentals, a five-mile mountain bike trail, two boat ramps, river trips, and fishing (Maryland license required). Visit brunswickmainstreet.org/outdoor-recreation/

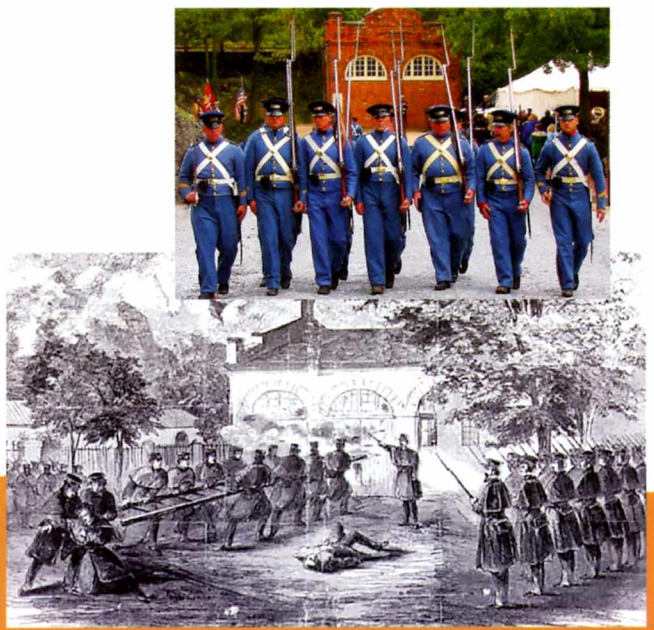
South Mountain, west of Brunswick. Includes 15 miles of the Appalachian Trail, four state parks, and Civil War sites. www.visitfrederick.org/things-to-do/history-and-museums/civil-war

Weverton Cliffs, C&O Canal mile marker 58. A two-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail leads to dramatic views of the Potomac River valley and nearby mountains.



HARPERS FERRY/ BOLIVAR

The C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad ran alongside each other between Brunswick and Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia). During the 1830s, they raced to open service to the latter, where the U.S. Armory and bustling factories ran on the waterpower of 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 Armory. His goal was to start a slave rebellion that would spread throughout the South. Although those plans were a bust and he was soon captured and jailed, 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

BIKE ACCESS

To enter Harpers Ferry from the C&O canal towpath with a bicycle, roll your bike up the ramp/stairs and walk the bike across the pedestrian path on the old railroad bridge. Bike parking is available on both sides of the bridge.

In April 1861, that war broke out, and Virginia joined its neighbors to the south in seceding from the United States. U.S. troops destroyed the federal arsenal as rebels stormed Harpers Ferry, the first of eight wartime turnovers in this border town and important transportation hub. The most momentous turnover was in September 1862, when General "Stonewall" Jackson's Confederate troops surrounded the town from four directions (including Maryland Heights, the large hill above the canal and railroad bridge), forcing over 12,000 federal troops to surrender. By autumn 1864, however, Harpers Ferry and Bolivar were firmly in Union hands, and Union General Phil Sheridan made the towns the center for his successful Shenandoah Valley campaign.

Today, factories and war have given way to tourism centered on history and outdoor adventure. As you cross the bridge from the C&O Canal towpath into Harpers Ferry and its uphill neighbor Bolivar, you'll tread on the Appalachian Trail, a 2,200-mile American scenic hiking trail that runs from Georgia to Maine. In Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, you'll see John Brown's "Fort" (where the raiders were captured), remains of the federal armory, and museums covering the area's distinctive history. Take in a ranger-led tour or living history exhibits. Up the hill, you will find the campus of the former Storer College, a pioneer institution in African American education.



Harpers Ferry viewed from Maryland Heights

POINTS OF INTEREST

For information on lodging, camping, food, and other services visit https://experienceharpersferry.com/

Appalachian National Scenic Trail. 2,100-mile hiking trail from Georgia to Maine, of which Harpers Ferry is the midpoint. www.appalachiantrail.org

Appalachian Trail Conservancy and Visitor Center, 799 Washington Street. Exhibits, kids' activities, a hiker lounge, and photos of AT hikers since 1979. www.appalachiantrail.org

Bolivar Heights Battlefield, Whitman Avenue. Civil War campground and battlefield and site of the largest surrender of U.S. troops prior to World War II.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Visitor center off U.S. Route 340. Historical sites and museums, hiking trails, and interpretive tours focused on the Civil War, John Brown's Raid in 1859, the Harpers Ferry Armory, and African American education. www.nps.gov/hafe

Harpers Ferry Railroad Station, Potomac Street. 1889 B&O Railroad station that serves both Amtrak and MARC Line passengers. Bicycles are allowed on Amtrak with prior reservations.

Harpers Ferry Toy Train Museum & Joy Line Railroad, 937 Bakerton Road. Take a ride on this miniature railroad. (304) 535-2521.

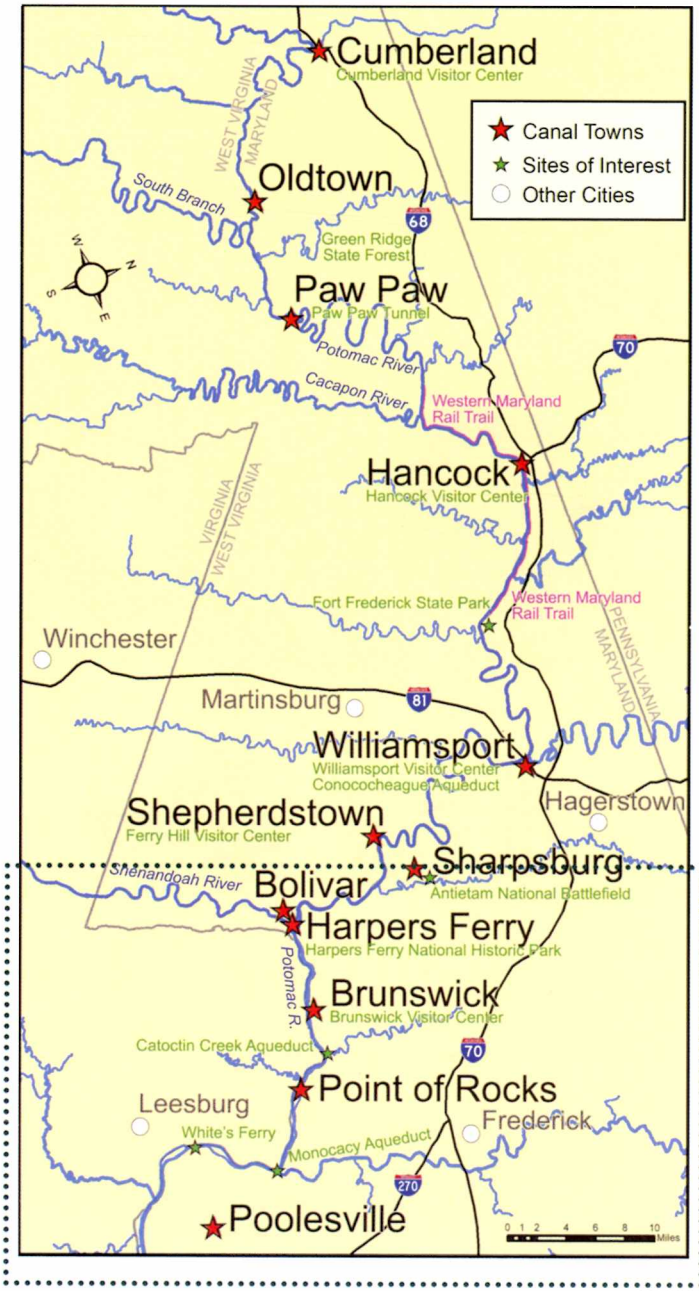
Jefferson Rock, off the Appalachian Trail. The site where Thomas Jefferson admired the views of Harpers Ferry.

Outdoor Recreation. Hiking trails, river trips, and boat rentals, zipline and canopy tours, bicycle and Segway tours and rentals. www.experienceharpersferry.com



Bolivar Heights

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!
www.canaltrust.org/app

www.canaltowns.org

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