

MARYLAND
BYWAYS

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal

3



Workers who toiled on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal between 1828 and 1850 could not have imagined that their engineering feat – designed for the sole purpose of speeding up commercial trade – would one day become a hub of outdoor recreational activity. Hiking, biking, bird watching and mule-drawn barge rides are among the many popular pursuits now enjoyed beside this peaceful passage.

During its century of service, the canal worked with a system of 74 lift locks that regulated water levels, allowing boats laden with coal, flour, lumber, grain and produce to be pulled by mule teams walking on an adjacent towpath. Their 184.5-mile journey stretched from the mountains

of Western Maryland, through farmland and forest, to the tidewater outskirts of our nation's capital. Your journey follows this same course, allowing you to make heritage discoveries along each new mile.

Cumberland to Hancock – MD 51 – WV 9 & U.S. 522

Though plans called for the C&O Canal to extend from the Chesapeake Bay all the way into the Ohio Valley, railroading won the race to the west, and work on the canal stalled in Cumberland. This beautiful town – a transportation crossroads tucked amid the Allegheny Mountains – is home to the Cumberland C&O Canal National Historical Park Visitor Center at Canal Place and the Canal Place Heritage Area. The visitor center is



236 miles from Cumberland to Washington, D.C.



housed within the Western Maryland Railway Station, which dates back to 1916. The national park itself includes the C&O Canal Towpath Trail along nearly 20,000 acres paralleling the Potomac River, which is recognized as an American Heritage River for the

number of historic sites found along its shores. From the Spring Gap Recreation Area off MD 51, a one-mile hike along the canal towpath leads to Lock 72, which stands beside a restored, two-

story lock tender's house. Approaching West Virginia, you skirt Green Ridge State Forest, famous among wildlife watchers and off-road bikers alike. In the distance is the most impressive engineering achievement found along the canal – the





Paw Paw Tunnel, which, over the course of 14 years, was cut through more than 3,000 feet of rock so that vessels would not have to navigate a tricky double bend in the river. Both the tunnel and a West Virginia town just across the border are named for small, fruit-bearing trees found nearby.

Hancock to Sharpsburg - MD 144 - I-70 - MD 56, 68, 63 & 65
Emerging from West Virginia, you cross the

border back into Maryland and arrive at the Hancock-based C&O Canal Museum and Visitors Center. Exhibits and a short film bring canal history to life, and the center's staff can point you toward local country roads that feature wayside markers, views of locks and other canal sites. This area is also famous for its fishing and many fine restaurants.

For several miles from Hancock east toward Big Pool, the C&O Canal byway runs side by side with the Historic National Road byway (see pages 7-18). You're also near the beginning of the 21-mile-long Western Maryland Rail Trail, a paved path that traverses Fort Frederick State Park, site of an important defensive position occupied in the mid-18th century during the French & Indian War. The fort later saw action



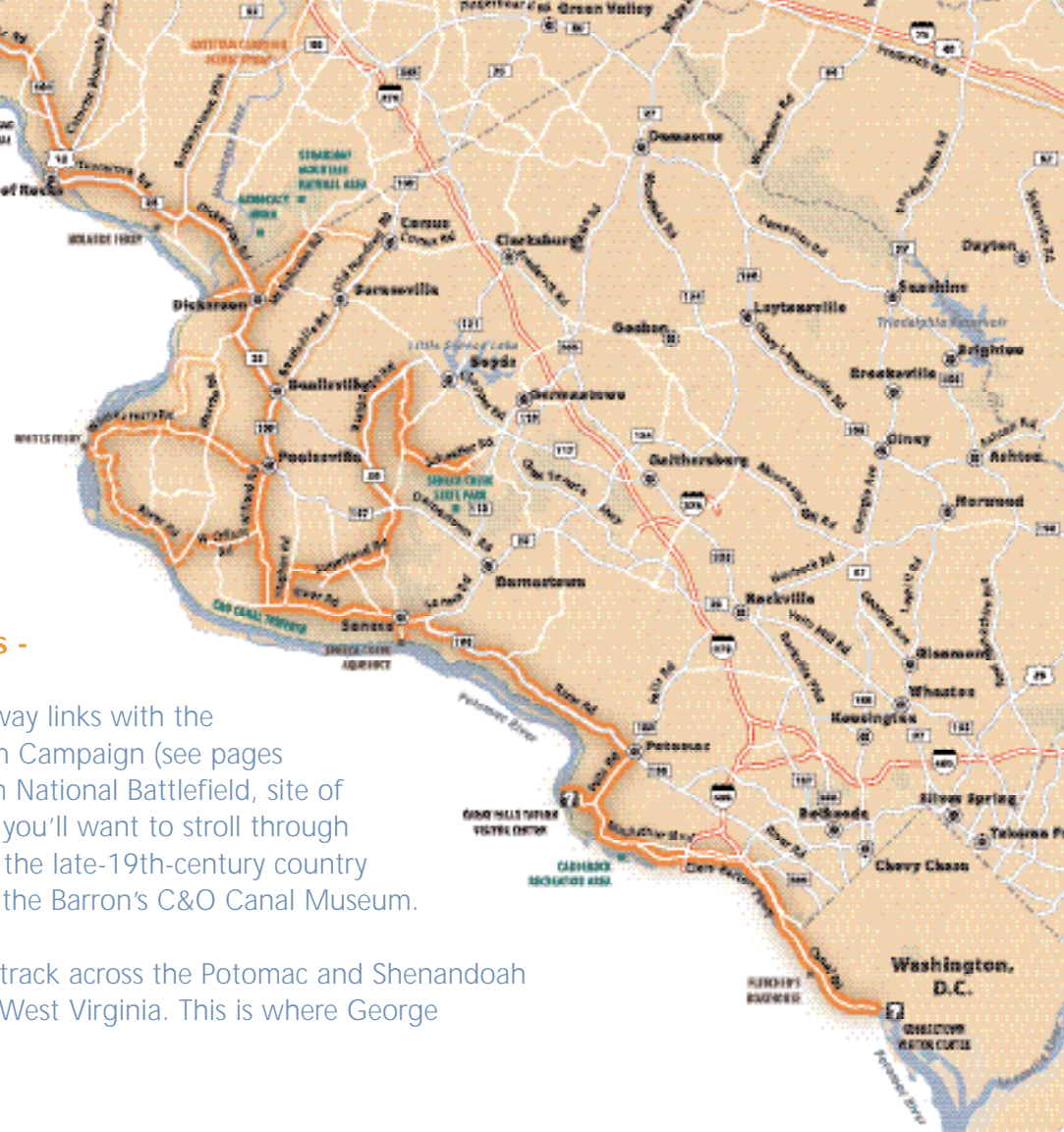
during the American Revolution and Civil War.

Returning to the canal, the brick Lockhouse 49 takes you back to the 19th century when workers lived here. And soon you'll be entering the town of Sharpsburg, where Civil War stories mingle with transportation tales.

Sharpsburg to Point of Rocks - MD Rts. 65, 34, 478 & 464

In Sharpsburg, the C&O Canal byway links with the Maryland Civil War Trails: Antietam Campaign (see pages 39-46). After touring the Antietam National Battlefield, site of the bloodiest day in the Civil War, you'll want to stroll through the surrounding town and admire the late-19th-century country store and canal-related exhibits at the Barron's C&O Canal Museum.

Following U.S. 340 for a brief sidetrack across the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers brings you to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. This is where George



Washington arranged for the construction of an arsenal which, many years later, became a key Confederate target prior to the Civil War Battle of Antietam.

In Brunswick, railroad yards parallel the canal and river. Visit the Brunswick Railroad Museum/C&O Canal Visitors Center, where exhibits not only tell about the life of railroad workers but also local baseball and the canal. If you're a hiker or biker, get information from the visitors center about 31 hiker-biker campsites (for single-night tent camping) spaced every few miles along the canal's towpath trail from Swain's Lock (Mile 16.6) to Evitts Creek (Mile 180.1).

Point of Rocks to Gaithersburg - US 15 - MD Rts. 28, 109 & 117

You've entered a stretch of the canal

byway that is a land of nationally recognized landmarks. Point of Rocks achieved national recognition in 1830 when the B&O Railroad and C&O Canal companies fought over the right of way on land between Catoctin Mountain and the Potomac, crucial to their race westward. Then travel through the Monocacy Natural Resource Management Area to admire the Monocacy Aqueduct, that is the largest of the canal's 11 aqueducts. A sidetrack on MD 95 leads to Sugarloaf Mountain Natural Area, which is a National Natural Landmark. Heavily wooded and covered with brown sandstone, this isolated mountain hosted many lookouts during the Civil War. Now it's open for hiking, horseback riding and picnicking.

In Poolesville, the John Poole House is an 18th-century log store built by the



town's founder and is a National Historic Landmark. Another museum is located in the restored, one-room Seneca Schoolhouse, built in 1866 from sandstone quarried nearby. The school closed in 1910, but whispers remain of the farmers' children who performed their recitations here every Friday.

From Poolesville, a sidetrack on 107 West brings you to White's Ferry where cars today cross the river on the ferry that was used during the Civil War by the Confederate armies entering Maryland. Stop for a picnic along the canal and river.

Consider exploring a branch off of the byway through the Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve, part of Heritage Montgomery. Considered the country's most successful farm-

land preservation program, the agricultural reserve features rolling countryside steeped in history. Drive down rustic, rural roads to see landscapes that have changed little since colonial times, including 18th-century plantation homes, horse farms and weathered barns. Following MD 118 also takes you to Germantown, known for its small-town charm and prime antiques opportunities.

Head back toward the Potomac River and visit Seneca Creek State Park to see a mill and 19th-century cabin.

Seneca to Washington, D.C. - MD Rts. 190 & 189, MacArthur Blvd. Clara Barton Parkway & Canal Road

From several "lock" roads that link to MD 190, you can admire canal struc-



tures while also taking advantage of canoe and bike rentals. And just above the canal's 10-mile mark, the Carderock Recreation Area has riverfront picnic facilities while also providing bikers with convenient access to the unpaved C&O Canal Towpath. Ample rock-climbing experiences are also available, with ascents up to 80 feet.

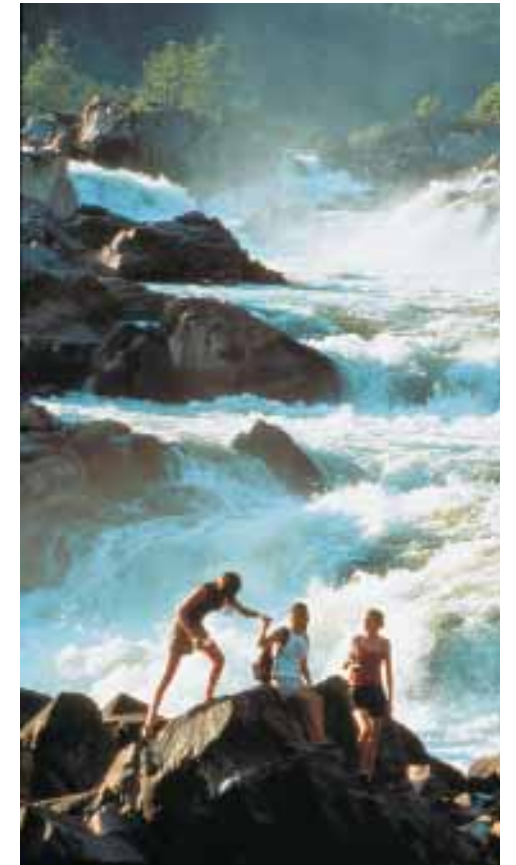
Another stop on both the C&O Canal byway and Maryland Civil War Trails system is the Clara Barton National Historic Site. Known as the "Angel of the Battlefield" for her efforts to comfort sick and injured soldiers, Barton later founded the American Red Cross.

Located three miles west of Carderock, the Great Falls is a spectacular series of waterfalls and rapids

that drop 76 feet in two-thirds of a mile, from the Piedmont Plateau to the tidewater part of the Potomac River. Rough patches like this made the Potomac unnavigable by ships, prompting the need for a canal.

Stop in at the Great Falls Tavern, now the visitor center for the C&O Canal National Historical Park-Potomac. Originally a lockhouse, the tavern is home to a museum of canal history and lore, and features a restored canal boat. You can also arrange for a guided, one-hour, mule-drawn barge ride through one of the historic lift locks.

Before entering Washington, D.C., veer east into Bethesda. Officially recognized by the State of Maryland as one of several Arts & Entertainment Districts in this region, Bethesda is a



hub of cultural activity featuring museums, gardens, galleries, performing arts, and upscale shopping.

Another canal visitors center lies within Georgetown, which was once a busy Maryland tobacco port and now has been incorporated into Washington, D.C. This stylish, urban community's 18th- and 19th-century homes and commercial buildings now house shops and restaurants. The C&O Canal's first lock lies at the mouth of Rock Creek, near the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Now you're ready to be released into our nation's capital city.

OLD LINE LORE: *Both the C&O Canal's famous Paw Paw Tunnel and a West Virginia town just across the border are named for small, fruit-bearing trees found nearby. The pawpaw is said to be*

the largest, edible fruit native to America, and the tree's leaves and twigs contain cancer-fighting properties.

Antietam National Battlefield
Rt 65, Sharpsburg Pk, Sharpsburg 21782
301-432-5124
Daily, 8:30am-5pm.
www.nps.gov/anti

Barron's C&O Canal Museum
5632 Mose Cir, Sharpsburg 21782
301-432-8726
Sat-Sun, 9am-5pm.

Brunswick Railroad Museum/C&O Canal Visitors Center
40 W Potomac St, Brunswick 21716
301-834-7100
Jan-Apr: Fri, 10am-2pm; Sat, 10am-4pm; Sun, 1-4pm. Rest of year: Thur, 10am-2pm.
www.brrm.org



C&O Canal Museum & Visitors Center
326 E Main St, Hancock 21750
301-678-5463
Fri-Tues, 9am-4:30pm.
www.nps.gov/choh

C&O Canal National Historical Park-Georgetown
1057 Thomas Jefferson St NW, Georgetown, Washington, D.C., 20007
202-653-5190
www.nps.gov/choh

C&O Canal National Historical Park-Potomac
11710 MacArthur Blvd, Potomac 20854
301-299-3613, 301-767-3714
Barge rides: Apr-Oct.
www.nps.gov/choh

C&O Canal Paw Paw Tunnel
MD Rt 51, near Paw Paw, WV, Cumberland 21502
301-722-8226
Sunrise-sunset.

C&O Canal Museum & Visitors Center
326 E Main St, Hancock 21750
301-678-5463
Fri-Tues, 9am-4:30pm.
www.nps.gov/choh

Clara Barton National Historic Site
5801 Oxford Rd, Glen Echo 20812
301-492-6282
Call for schedule.
www.nps.gov/clba
<http://www.nps.gov/clba>



Cumberland C&O Canal National Historical Park Visitor Center

Western Maryland Railway Station,
13 Canal St, Cumberland 21502

301-722-8226

9am-5pm. Closed Mon, Tue during winter months.

www.nps.gov/choh

Fort Frederick State Park

11100 Fort Frederick Rd
Big Pool, 21711

301-842-2155, (TDD) 301-974-3683

Apr-Oct: 8am-sunset; Nov-Mar: Mon-Fri, 8am-sunset; Sat-Sun and holidays, 10am-sunset.

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html

Green Ridge State Forest

28700 Headquarters Dr NE
Flintstone 21530

301-478-3124, (TTY) 410-974-3683

Dawn-dusk

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/greenridge.html

John Poole House

19923 Fisher Ave, Poolesville 20837

301-972-8588

Sun, 12N-5pm.

www.historicmedley.org

Western Maryland Rail Trail

Fort Frederick State Park, 11100 Ft Frederick Rd, Hancock 21711

301-842-2155

Apr 1-Oct 31: 8am-sunset; Nov 1-Mar 31, 10am-sunset.

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/wmrt.html

John Poole House

19923 Fisher Ave, Poolesville 20837

301-972-8588

Sun, 12N-5pm.

www.historicmedley.org

Seneca Creek State Park

11950 Clopper Rd
Gaithersburg 20878

301-924-2127

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/seneca.html

Seneca Schoolhouse Museum

16800 River Rd, Poolesville 20837

301-972-8588, 1-800-925-0880

Mar-Dec: Sun, 1-5pm.

www.historicmedley.org