

Washington Heritage Trail

The Washington Heritage Trail in West Virginia

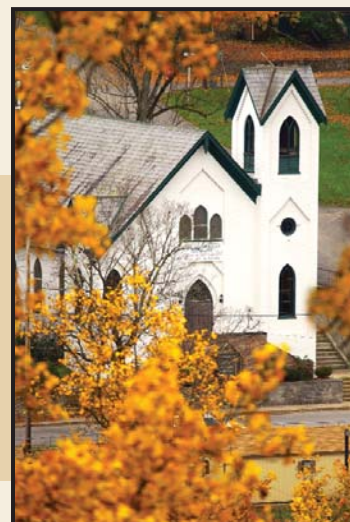


The Washington Heritage Trail is a 136-mile national scenic byway inspired by the prominent footsteps of George Washington through the three historic counties of West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. Compelling history, spectacular scenery, geologic wonders, recreation and year 'round activities and festivals are highlighted by 45 historical sites. The trail meanders across mountains and rivers, through forests, farms and orchards as it connects five 18th century towns that remain the center of life today and offer comfortable lodging, unique shopping and fine dining. More information on attractions and services throughout the area is available at each town's Visitor Center.

www.washingtonheritagetrail.com



Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association



"I am very glad Colo Lewis purchased a lott or two for me at Warm Springd, as it was always my intention to become a proprietor there if a town should be laid off at that place."

George Washington to Samuel Washington - October 27, 1777

Berkeley Springs

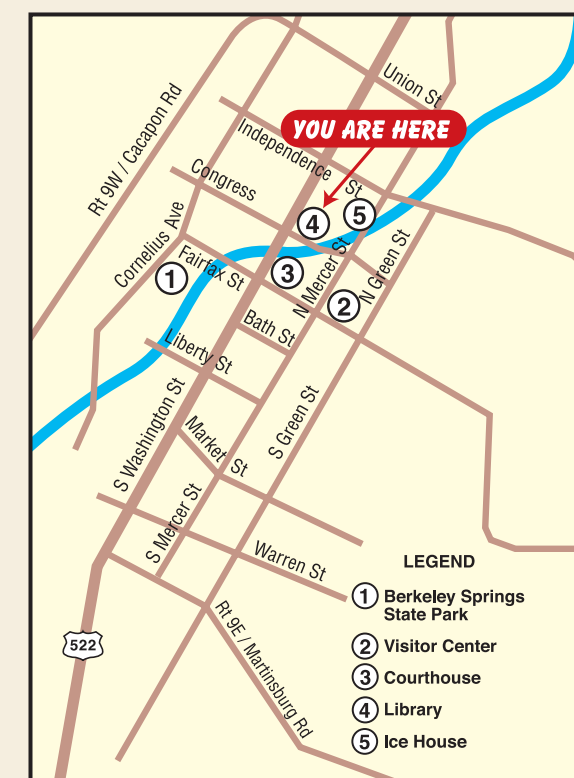
From the time he was 16 through the reading of his will in 1799, George Washington ate, slept, owned land and bathed in and around Berkeley Springs.

The historic spa town of Bath is known to the world by its post office name of Berkeley Springs.

Described as a "little bush village" where hundreds of visitors came for the healing waters, stayed in rough cabins and lived off the land as early as 1750, the area around the springs was known at various times as Medicinal Springs, Healing Springs, Warm Springs and Frederick Springs.

The Virginia legislature established the town of Bath at the springs in 1776. Building plaques note the founders and buyers of the first lots sold in 1777, including George and Samuel Washington as well as others of the colonial elite who selected Bath as the country's first spa. Washington visited nearly a dozen times with various members of his family, often staying for several weeks. He came for the waters as well as to socialize. Historic reports included racetracks, gambling and houses of ill repute.

Hospitality and health have always been the central purpose of Berkeley Springs, spa town, surviving threats from war, downtown fires and incompatible industries. The famous and the obscure have been welcomed for more than two centuries at summer cottages, huge hotels and covered bathhouses. 21st century Berkeley Springs is a nationally recognized art town filled with spas, shops, restaurants, galleries and inns.



"to build convenient houses for accommodating numbers of infirm person, who frequent those springs yearly, for the recovery of their health.....fifty acres of land adjoining the said springs is hereby established a town, by the name of Bath."

An Act Establishing a Town at Warm Springs—
December 6, 1776