

Washington Heritage Trail

The Washington Heritage Trail in West Virginia

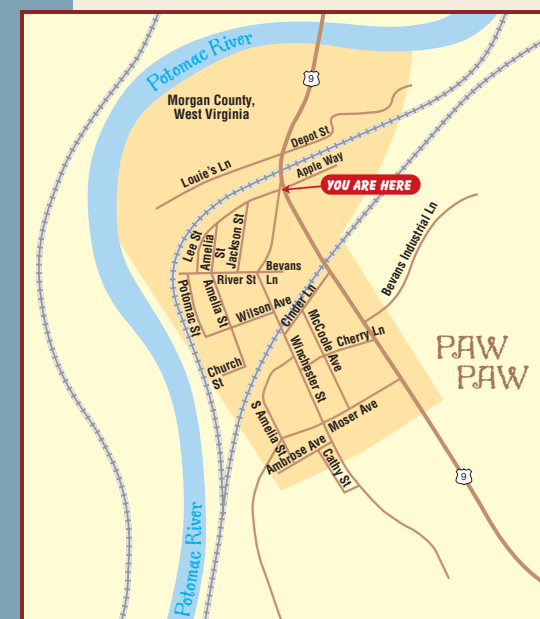


The Washington Heritage Trail is a 136-mile national scenic byway inspired by the prominent footsteps of George Washington through the three historic counties of West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. Compelling history, spectacular scenery, geologic wonders, recreation and year 'round activities and festivals 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



Paw Paw

Paw Paw is the westernmost settlement in Morgan County, incorporated as a town on April 8, 1891. A former canal, railroad, orchard and tannery boomtown, Paw Paw is embraced by one of the bends of the Potomac River. Colonial travelers heading west, including George Washington, often forded the river or crossed the gap in the mountain here. In 1928 a bridge replaced the pre-Civil War ferry. Braddock's French and Indian War army camped south of town, a site used in the Civil War as the federal Camp Chase.

The B&O Railroad arrived in 1838; by the 1930s, six trains per day stopped at the depot. Passenger service ceased in 1961. The Paw Paw Pullman car was dedicated on April 16, 1948 and assigned to the Capitol Limited route from Washington, DC to Chicago.

Paw Paw Tunnel

Beginning in 1836, the C&O Canal Company took 14 years to carve a 3118-foot tunnel through Sorrell Ridge, eliminating 6 miles of river bends. The Paw Paw Tunnel was dubbed by American promoters as a wonder of the world. At 24 feet high, it is the largest manmade structure on the C&O Canal and is lined with more than 6 million bricks. A mile north of town, the restored towpath is part of the C&O Canal National Park and welcomes cyclists and hikers year 'round.



"...our party entirely out of provisions...perfectly contented and tell us they can live very well on the pappaws..."



The Fruit

The town is named for the fruit that grows along the river and ridge. Found throughout the United States, the paw paw is North America's largest native edible fruit with purplish-brown flowers in April and ripe fruit in September. A natural custard, it was a favorite dessert of George Washington.



Sep. 18, 1806 William Clark; Lewis & Clark expedition.