HARPERS FERRY

Few places played such an important role in the Civil War as Harpers Ferry. This was where some of the first shots of the conflict were fired, when abolitionist John Brown led his "army" of would-be slave liberators there on October 16, 1859. After shedding the first blood and seizing the U.S. Armory, Brown and his followers were overwhelmed two days later, when a detachment of marines stormed the engine house. Col. Robert E. Lee with his aide Lt. J.E.B. Stuart commanded the force. Brown was captured, tried, convicted of treason against Virginia, and hanged at nearby Charles Town on December 2, 1859.

When the war came, both Union and Confederate forces coveted this strategic location at the gateway to the Shenandoah Valley. The Federals used the town and its connection to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a supply base, launching repeated incursions from here into the heart of Virginia. The Confederates marched through the area when they invaded the North and occupied Harpers Ferry during the 1862 Maryland (Antietam) Campaign, the 1863 Gettysburg Campaign, and Gen. Jubal A. Early's 1864 raid on Washington. Nearby Shepherdstown and Martinsburg also played key roles in the conflict, as hospital and transportation centers respectively.

Gen. William E. Jones
Courtesy West Virginia State Archives

Gen. John Imboden
Courtesy Library of Congress

JONES-IMBODEN RAID

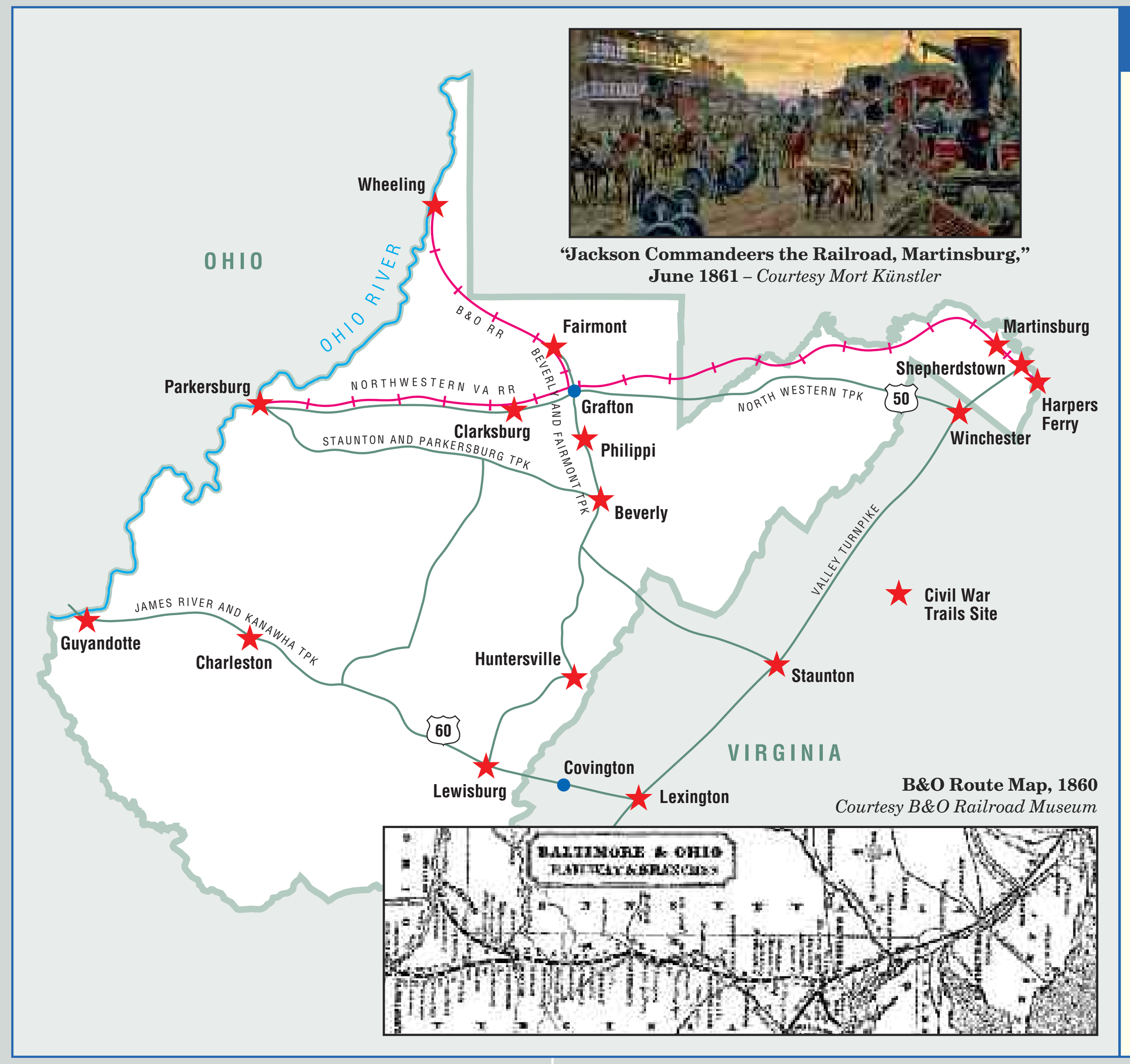
On April 20, 1863, Confederate Gens. William E. "Grumble" Jones and John D. Imboden began a cavalry raid on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Virginia through present-day north-central West Virginia. They planned to disrupt rail transportation, cut telegraph lines, weaken Federal control, and seize provisions and supplies. The generals took separate routes. Imboden led 3,365 men from Staunton through Beverly and Buckhannon. Jones rode with 2,100 men through Petersburg and Moorefield, fought an engagement at Greenland Gap in Hardy County, and was repulsed at the Rowlesburg rail viaduct. He occupied Morgantown and seized Federal supplies and horses on April 28. The next day, Jones fought his largest engagement at Fairmont. Despite the efforts of 500 Union regulars and home guards defending the town, he destroyed a railroad bridge and burned the library of Francis H. Pierpont, governor of the Restored Government of Virginia. Jones reunited temporarily with Imboden at Buckhannon and skirmished to Weston. Jones destroyed the oil wells and equipment at Burning Springs, and both forces maneuvered southeast, returning to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley by May 26. The generals claimed that they marched 1,100 miles, fought numerous engagements, captured 700 Federals, seized about 1,200 horses and 4,000 cattle, and burned 4 turnpike bridges, more than 20 railroad bridges, 2 trains, and 150,000 barrels of oil. Most bridges were soon repaired, but the raid prolonged the struggle in the new state.

Confederate raiders, *Century Magazine*, ca. 1880.
Courtesy West Virginia State Archives

Gen. Albert G. Jenkins
Courtesy Library of Congress

JENKINS'S RAID

Confederate Gen. Albert G. Jenkins led 550 cavalrymen on a 500-mile raid through central West Virginia between August 22 and September 12, 1862, attacking Federal forces, capturing prisoners, and destroying military stores. From Salt Sulphur Springs in Monroe County, he rode along the Tygart and Buckhannon Rivers, capturing Union scouts in Huttonsville and taking 5,000 weapons in Buckhannon on August 30. As Jenkins and his men rode west on the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike, he occupied Weston and destroyed the telegraph line there. He drove off two companies of Federals at Glenville and then captured the Union garrison (5 companies of the 11th West Virginia Infantry) under Col. John C. Rathbone at Spencer on September 2. Next, he took Ripley in Jackson County and seized $5,550 from the U.S. paymaster. At Ravenswood on September 4, the Federals retreated across the Ohio River. That evening, Jenkins forded the river and raised the Confederate flag in Ohio. He captured Racine, recrossed the river, and passed through Point Pleasant. Jenkins then continued through Barboursville, Logan Court House, Pineville in Wyoming County, and Beckley in Raleigh County. On September 12, Jenkins ended the raid at Red House on the Kanawha River. Jenkins's Raid, like most cavalry expeditions, temporarily disrupted the Union communication and supply system but had no long-term consequences, although planting the Confederate flag in Ohio provided a brief lift to Confederate morale.



"Jackson Commandeers the Railroad, Martinsburg," June 1861 – *Courtesy Mort Künstler*

B&O Route Map, 1860
Courtesy B&O Railroad Museum

MOUNTAIN MANEUVERING

West Virginia's rugged terrain made campaigning extremely difficult despite numerous gravel turnpikes. Major western turnpikes included the Staunton and Parkersburg, Beverly and Fairmont, James River and Kanawha, Valley, and North Western. In northern West Virginia, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Northwestern Virginia Railroad linked Wheeling and Parkersburg on the Ohio River with Grafton, Martinsburg, Baltimore, and the Chesapeake Bay. These railroads were the most strategically important lines of communication and transportation in the state.

The turnpikes were serviceable in dry weather, but heavy rain and snow often rendered them impassible. Gen. John D. Imboden reported that two weeks' hard rain had made the roads "horribly bad": to lighten his artillery enough to get it through the mud, he "had to destroy the spare wheels ... and throw away fifty solid shot from each caisson." Road maintenance, infrequent in peacetime, was minimal during the war. Most large-scale military campaigns, therefore, took place farther east in Virginia.

Both sides sought to control or disrupt the railroads. Besides Confederate cavalry raids, there were numerous Federal raids, including the one that Gens. William W. Averell and Alfred N.A. Duffié led in November 1863. Most of the raids succeeded only briefly, as the lines were quickly repaired or rebuilt.

1861

- April 12 Shots fired at Fort Sumter, Charleston, S.C.
- April 15 President Abraham Lincoln calls for volunteers to suppress "insurrection"
- April 17 Virginia secedes
- April 18 US Forces burn the Armory at Harpers Ferry
- May 13–15 First Wheeling Convention
- May 22 First US soldier T. Bailey Brown killed
- May 23 Virginia voters approve Ordinance Secession
- June 3 Battle of Philippi, first land battle of the Civil War
- June 11 Convention begins at Wheeling
- July 8–10 Battle of Laurel Hill
- July 11 Battle of Rich Mountain
- July 13 Robert S. Garnett first general killed
- July 13 Engagement at Corricks Ford
- July 21 First Battle of Manassas, Va.
- July 25 Union forces occupy Charleston
- September 3 Federals repulse Confederates at Gauley Bridge
- September 10 Battle of Carnifex Ferry
- September 10–15 Battle of Cheat Mountain
- December 13 Federal attack on Camp Allegheny fails

1862

- April 3 Restored Government of Virginia constitution ratified
- May 8–June 9 Stonewall Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign
- May 13 Restored Government of Virginia legislature requests state's admission to Union
- August 22–September 12 Jenkins's Raid
- August 28–30 Second Battle of Manassas, Va.
- September 4–19 Antietam Campaign, Va., Md., W.Va.
- September 15 Stonewall Jackson occupies Harpers Ferry
- December 10 Congress passes West Virginia statehood bill
- December 31 Lincoln signs West Virginia statehood bill

1863

- March 26 Voters approve West Virginia constitution with antislavery provision
- April 20 Lincoln proclaims conditions met for West Virginia statehood
- April 20–May 26 Jones-Imboden Raid
- April 29 Battle of Fairmont
- June 10–July 14 Gettysburg Campaign, Va., Md., Pa.
- June 20 West Virginia becomes 35th state
- July 1–3 Battle of Gettysburg, Pa.
- July 4 Grant captures Vicksburg, Miss.
- August 26 Restored Government of Virginia relocates in Alexandria
- November 6 Battle of Droop Mountain
- December 7 First W.Va. senators and congressmen seated in Congress

1864

- January 30 W.Va. accepts provisions of Morrill Land Grant Act (1862) to establish agricultural college
- February 3 W.Va. legislature abolishes slavery in state and ratifies 13th Amendment (2nd state to do so)
- March 1 W.Va. legislature proposes constitutional amendment to disfranchise men who voluntarily aided rebellion against the U.S. after June 1, 1861
- May 4–June 20 Overland Campaign, Va.
- June 15 Siege of Petersburg begins, Va.
- August 7 Battle of Moorefield
- August – November Sheridan's 1864 Valley Campaign
- September 2 Gen. William T. Sherman captures Atlanta
- September 19 3rd Winchester
- September 22 Fishers Hill
- October 13 Col. John S. Mosby's Greenback Raid, Jefferson County
- October 19 Cedar Creek
- November 15–December 10 Sherman's March to the Sea, Ga.

1865

- February 1–April 26 Sherman's Carolinas Campaign, S.C. and N.C.
- February 25 W.Va. legislature enacts "voters' test oath" to disfranchise men who had borne arms against the U.S., Reorganized Government of Va., and state of W.Va.
- April 2–3 Fall of Petersburg and Richmond, Va.
- April 9 Gen. Robert E. Lee surrenders Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Va.
- April 14 John Wilkes Booth assassinates President Abraham Lincoln
- April 26 Gen. Joseph E. Johnston surrenders Army of Tennessee near Durham, N.C.

WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR TRAILS

Mathias Homestead, Courtesy Hardy County CVB and Albert Mach

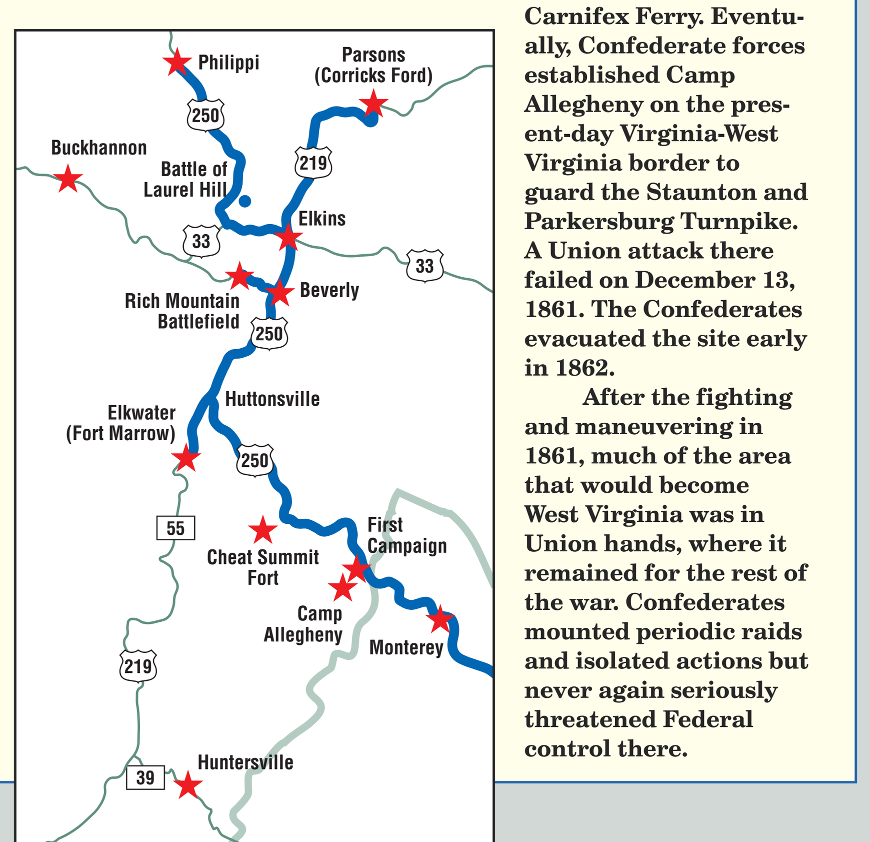
★ ★ THE FIRST CAMPAIGN ★ ★

In the spring of 1861, after the secession of Virginia from the Union, Federal forces rushed to secure the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which passed through northwestern Virginia and linked the Chesapeake Bay with the Ohio River and the West. Gen. George B. McClellan led the Union effort to hold the railroad and to protect the largely Unionist part of Virginia that soon became West Virginia. The first land battle of the Civil War occurred on June 3, 1861, when McClellan's forces brushed aside Confederate resistance at Philippi. The next month, on July 11, Union troops under Gen. William S. Rosecrans overcame Confederate forces at Rich Mountain commanded by Gen. Robert S. Garnett, who was charged with protecting the turnpike crossroads at Beverly. Trying to retreat, Garnett was killed two days later at Corricks Ford. McClellan became a Union hero, and President Abraham Lincoln soon appointed him commander of the Federal army in the eastern theater.

In August, Confederate president Jefferson Davis sent his senior military advisor, Gen. Robert E. Lee, to western Virginia to salvage the situation. In contrast with his future adversary McClellan, Lee failed. Many factors conspired against Lee: friction between subordinate Confederate commanders, poor weather, disease among the troops, and rugged terrain. Lee attempted to drive the Federals from their bastion at Cheat Summit Fort on September 11–13, taking personal command in his first battle of the war. Plagued by rain and ineffective underlings, Lee was forced to withdraw, and the Federals retained control of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike. Davis soon transferred Lee to South Carolina to supervise the construction of fortifications. While in western Virginia, however, Lee acquired a horse that he would treasure the rest of his days. Lee named him Traveller.

At about the same time as the Cheat Mountain debacle, Union forces under Rosecrans drove Confederate Gen. John B. Floyd's command from its fortifications at Carnifex Ferry. Eventually, Confederate forces established Camp Allegheny on the present-day Virginia-West Virginia border to guard the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike. A Union attack there failed on December 13, 1861. The Confederates evacuated the site early in 1862.

After the fighting and maneuvering in 1861, much of the area that would become West Virginia was in Union hands, where it remained for the rest of the war. Confederates mounted periodic raids and isolated actions but never again seriously threatened Federal control there.



ROAD TO STATEHOOD

Independence Hall, Wheeling
Courtesy West Virginia State Archives

The longstanding political, social, and economic differences between western and eastern Virginia reached a crisis in April 1861, when Virginia seceded and created a pro-Confederate state government in Richmond. Union supporters generally dominated western Virginia, where there were fewer slaves, especially in the northwestern counties. On June 11, delegates from 26 western counties convened in Wheeling, reorganized, and restored the loyal government of Virginia under Gov. Francis H. Pierpont. A later session authorized a referendum to dismember Virginia and create a new state, Kanawha (later named West Virginia). However, not all of the residents within the new state's boundaries concurred; secessionists dominated the eastern and southern portions. In the months after November 1861, a convention drafted a state constitution. Voters in the western counties ratified it on April 3, 1862. The new legislature, which convened on May 13, requested the state's admission to the Union. The U.S. Congress passed a bill—soon amended to address the slavery issue—that President Abraham Lincoln signed on December 31, 1862, and on March 26, 1863, the voters approved a state constitutional provision to deal with slavery. West Virginia became the 35th state on June 20 under Gov. Arthur I. Boreman. Two 45th U.S. Colored Troops companies were credited to the new state.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

Northwestern Virginia (including present-day West Virginia) was the first part of the state to experience guerrilla conflict. There, John H. McNeill was the precursor of John S. Mosby in northern Virginia. Guerrillas resisted "invading" forces from the opposite side and carried out often-personal vendettas against civilians who supported the other side. In the spring of 1861, the Unionists, who generally dominated the area, formed guerrilla bands to intimidate their pro-Confederate neighbors, who formed their own bands to retaliate. Such rival groups included the Confederate Moccasin Rangers and the Unionist Snake Hunters.

Confederate guerrillas also attacked the occupying regular Union troops who sought to protect Unionist civilians and control the strategically important turnpikes and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The Federals frequently resorted to extreme measures to subdue the Confederate guerrillas, whom they considered little more than outlaws. Unionist volunteers acting under official orders targeted Confederate guerrillas, capturing or killing them wherever they found them. The Confederate guerrillas, likewise, struck any target of opportunity from Unionist civilians to local government officials.

Officially, both the United States and the Confederate States denounced such "irregular" warfare, but each side supported its own guerrillas while condemning those of the other side. The "war within the war" was so vicious and uncontrollable, despite attempts to regulate it with "partisan ranger" legislation, that hatreds and low-level violence continued in some areas for decades after the war ended.

★ ★ ★ ★ THE CIVIL WAR REVISITED ★ ★ ★ ★

The following further explore and expand upon the story of the Civil War:

West Virginia Division of Tourism
90 MacCorkle Ave. SW
South Charleston, WV 25303
www.wvtourism.com

West Virginia Division of Culture and History
304-558-4839
www.wvculture.org

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia
304-345-6005
www.pawv.org

Civil War Trust
202-367-1861
www.civilwar.org

MOUNTAINER COUNTRY

Greater Bridgeport CVB
800-368-4324
www.greater-bridgeport.com

Greater Clarksburg CVB
304-622-2157
www.cityofclarksburgwv.com

CVB of Marion County
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www.marioncvb.com

Greater Morgantown CVB
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www.tourmorgantown.com

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www.philippi.org

Preston Co. Visitor Center
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www.tourpreston.com

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www.greenbrierwv.com

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Monroe County Tourism
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www.travelmonroe.com

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Princeton-Mercer Co. C of C.
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www.pmccc.com

METRO VALLEY

Cabell-Huntington CVB
800-635-6329
www.wvvisit.org

Charleston CVB
800-733-5469
www.charlestonwv.com

EASTERN PANHANDLE

Bath-Romney Campaign Historical and Preservation Association
www.bathromneycampaign.webs.com

Falling Waters Battlefield Association
www.battleoffallingwaters.com

John Brown's Fort
Courtesy West Virginia Dept. of Commerce

Jefferson County CVB
866-HELLO-WV
www.hello-wv.com

Martinsburg-Berkeley Co. CVB
800-498-2386
www.travelwv.com

MID-OHIO VALLEY

City of Spencer
304-927-1640
www.cityofspencer.com

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800-752-4982
www.greaterparkersburg.com

Jackson County Tourism
304-372-1152
www.jacksoncountywvevents.com

Ritchie Co. Tourism & Visitors Bureau
304-869-4070
www.visitritchiecounty.com

POTOMAC HIGHLANDS

Droop Mountain Battlefield SP
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www.droopmountainbattlefield.com

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www.visithardy.com

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www.pocahontascountywv.com

Randolph County CVB
800-422-3304
www.randolphcountywv.com

Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation
304-637-7424
www.richmountain.org

Tucker County Visitor Information
800-782-2775
www.canaanvalley.org

MOUNTAIN LAKES

Buckhannon-Upshur Co. CVB
304-472-4100 ext.37
www.buckhannoncvb.org

Braxton County CVB
304-765-6533
www.braxtonwv.org

Carnifex Ferry Battlefield SP
304-872-0825
www.carnifexferrybattlefield-statepark.com

Gilmer Co. Tourism
304-462-8098
www.gceda.org

Lewis County CVB
800-296-7329
www.stonewallcountry.com

Summersville CVB
304-872-3722
www.summersvillecvb.com

WVU Jackson's Mill
800-287-8206
www.jacksonsmill.ext.wvu.edu

NORTHERN PANHANDLE

West Virginia Independence Hall
304-238-1300
www.wvculture.org

Wheeling National Heritage Area
304-232-3087
www.wheelingheritage.org

Wheeling/Ohio Co. CVB
800-828-3097
www.wheelingcvb.com

Hampshire County gunsmith Jacob Sheetz converted flintlock rifles to percussion for military use during the Civil War.
Courtesy Royce Saville and the Hampshire County Historic Landmarks Commission

How to Use this Map-Guide

WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR TRAILS

This map-guide identifies more than 150 Civil War sites throughout West Virginia. Each site is interpreted and accessible and encourages you to explore diverse settings where America's destiny was forged. West Virginia Civil War Trails sites can be explored at your own pace, and many offer other historical and recreational opportunities. Enjoy one of the numerous walking tours available in many communities. Shop at one of hundreds of antique and specialty shops, dine at a historically-themed tavern, or simply walk amid the serenity of a preserved battlefield. Near every West Virginia Civil War Trails site, you'll find other activities that make visiting West Virginia so popular: whitewater rafting, mountain biking, and curvy, country roads where the stories you've discovered will ignite your imagination.

The West Virginia Civil War Trails program is part of a five-state trails network that invites you to explore both well-known and less-familiar sites associated with America's greatest drama. Together, more than 1,000 places tell the epic and heartfelt stories of civilians and soldiers who experienced triumph and tragedy during the war.

For more detailed travel information, contact any of the organizations listed in this guide or visit any West Virginia Welcome Center or local Visitor Center. For additional Civil War Trails information, visit **www.civilwartrails.org**.

View of Parkersburg from Fort Boreman
Courtesy Marty Seufer, Greater Parkersburg CVB

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