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Chapter 6: The Regions of West Virginia

Quick Notes

Chapter 6

The Regions of West Virginia

Section 1 [Geographic Regions of West Virginia](#)

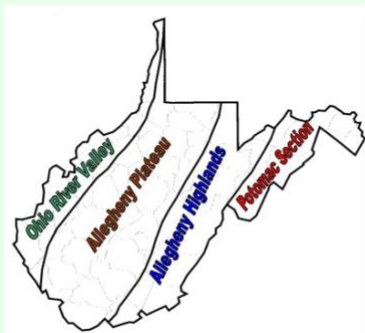
Section 2 [Tourist Regions of West Virginia](#)

Section 1

Geographic Regions of West Virginia

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From east to west, the four geographic regions of West Virginia include the



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Potomac Section



The Potomac Section was the first region settled by Europeans in western Virginia.

The Potomac River forms the northern border of the Potomac Section.



The Fairfax Stone, located at the headwaters of the North Branch of the Potomac River, originally marked the state's border with Maryland.



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The Potomac Section is characterized by a rich, limestone-based soil that produces abundant fruit trees.

The soil also produces excellent grass for livestock.



A unique feature of the Potomac Section is its warm springs, which maintain a constant temperature of 74° F.



Allegheny Highlands



The Allegheny Highlands gave West Virginia its nickname “the Mountain State.” The region forms the dividing line between eastern and western Virginia.

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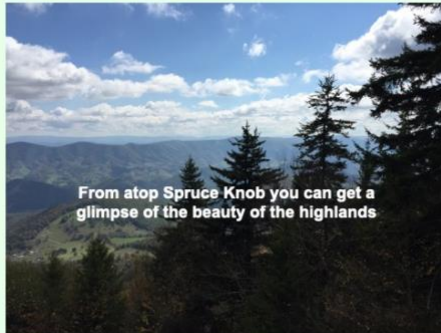
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The Allegheny Highlands has some of the highest mountains found in the state.



The highest point in the state—**Spruce Knob**— is located in the Allegheny Highlands.



Many of the natural wonders of West Virginia are located in the Allegheny Highlands.

- Peter's Mountain**
- Pinnacle Rock**
- Smoke Hole Caverns**
- Seneca Caverns**
- Lost World Caverns**

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- **Dolly Sods**, a unique area with one-sided spruce trees, is also found in this region.



Helvetia, an immigrant community located in the region, is the Latin name for Switzerland. Helvetia maintains a number of old world traditions.



Allegheny Plateau



West of the high mountains lies a region of more or less level land.

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Gorges and canyons, formed from fast-flowing rivers, are found in this region. The New River Gorge is found here.



The New River Gorge Bridge allows people to cross the gorge on a modern highway.

The Bridge also offers a number of recreational activities.



The prehistoric New River, which formed the gorge, is a haven for whitewater rafting.

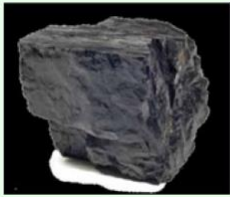


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The Allegheny Plateau contains a variety of natural resources, including limestone, sandstone, shale, coal, oil, natural gas, and salt.



The two largest cities in West Virginia are located in this region.



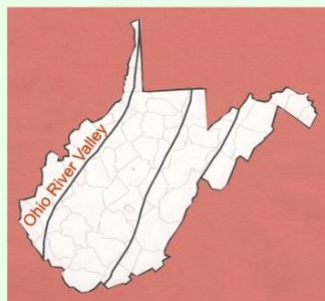
Charleston

Huntington



The Ohio River Valley

The Ohio River Valley lies along the Ohio River.



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The **Ohio River** helped the region to become a major manufacturing area. Glass, steel, and electric power are three of the industries found here.



Although the first iron furnace west of the Alleghenies was located in Hancock County, it was not until improvements in transportation made it possible to import iron ore from Minnesota that the manufacture of steel became profitable.



Section 2

Tourist Regions of West Virginia

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Some tourists enjoy traveling the backroads of West Virginia to enjoy scenes of its natural beauty.



Outdoor adventurers can also enjoy



Some tourists enjoy attending fairs and festivals that celebrate the state's culture, history, and economic development..

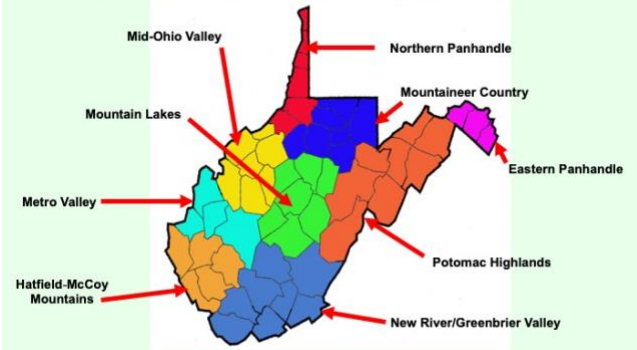


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West Virginia is divided into nine tourist regions. They include




The Eastern Panhandle includes three counties.



West Virginia's history began in the Eastern Panhandle.

There are interesting historic sites throughout the region, including Berkeley Springs, Martinsburg, Harpers Ferry, and Charles Town.

Berkeley Springs, in Morgan County, was originally called Bath in reference to the healing mineral waters that are found there. People first began traveling there over 200 years ago to lie in the warm waters. These warm waters still attract tourists today.



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Other Morgan County tourist attractions include

[The Berkeley Castle](#)

Cacapon and [Berkeley Springs](#) state parks



Visitors to **Martinsburg** may visit historic houses from the Revolutionary War period

Or, from the Civil War period

[Adam Stephen House](#)

[Belle Boyd House](#)



They may also visit the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad roundhouse which was important during the Civil War



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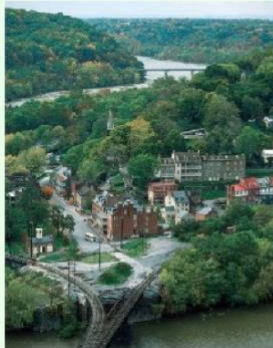
Visitors to Charles Town

may visit the site of John Brown's trial and hanging.



Visitors to Harpers Ferry

may visit the site of John Brown's raid in 1859.



POTOMAC HIGHLANDS

Southwest of the Eastern Panhandle lies the Potomac Highlands. The eight counties that are included in this region are



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The Potomac Highlands is especially attractive to outdoor adventurers.

This region contains some of the finest ski slopes in the eastern United States



The region's rock formations, including Seneca Rocks and Spruce Knob, provide challenges and excitement for serious climbers.



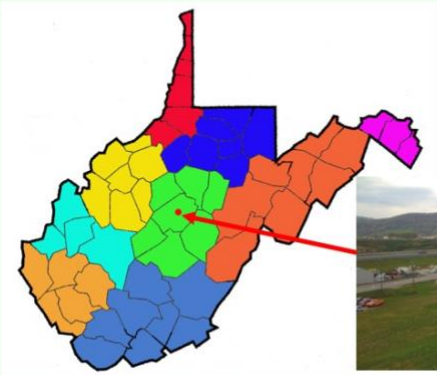


Tourists who are interested in history may visit

the restored town of **Cass** where they may ride a train powered by an antique, coal-burning engine.

Tourists interested in trains may also travel to **Romney** where they can ride the *Potomac Eagle* through the scenic Trough.

An area near Sutton, in Braxton County, is the geographical center of West Virginia.

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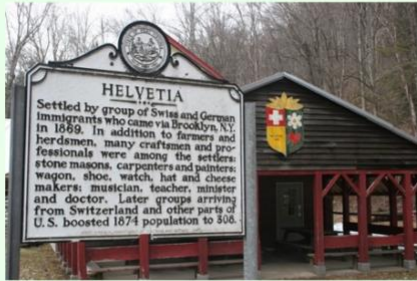
Quick Notes

The Potomac Highlands also features a number of opportunities to learn more about the culture of West Virginia. These include

The Augusta Heritage Festival

The Mountain State Forest Festival

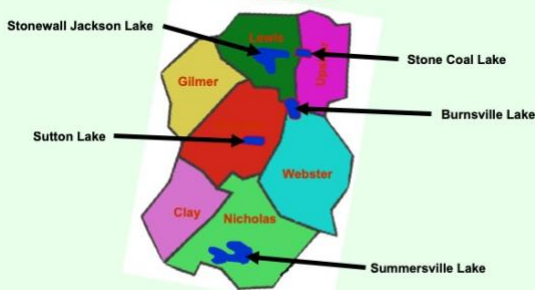
A visit to Helvetia



MOUNTAIN LAKES

Mountain Lakes, located in the center of West Virginia, contains seven counties, including

The lakes that are located there give the region its name.



The economy of the Mountain Lakes region has helped create a number of tourist attractions, including

Visits to local glass factories



Appalachian Glass

Woodchopping Festival





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Stonewall Jackson, a famous Civil War general who was born in Harrison County, grew up in Lewis County. The presence of Stonewall Jackson in the area is well documented and visitors may travel to see


His boyhood home at Jackson's Mill **A state park which bears his name.**

There are eight wildlife management areas in the region, including the West Virginia Wildlife Center in Upshur County. This center is home to French Creek Freddie, the groundhog who predicts the end of winter each year on February 2.

MOUNTAINEER COUNTRY




Mountaineer Country contains seven counties, including



Tourists interested in history can find a number of places to visit, including

The International Mother's Day Shrine in Taylor County
The Phillippi Bridge in Barbour County

Fort New Salem, in Harrison County, and Prickett's Fort in Marion County

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Tourists interested in the West Virginia statehood movement will find Ohio County a place to visit.

Wheeling was the location of the Restored Government of the State of Virginia which played an important role in the statehood movement. Wheeling is the location of the West Virginia's first capital.

Independence Hall, the state's first capitol building, is a National Historic Landmark.



For those who want to know more about the early settlers of western Virginia, the Grave Creek Mound, located in Marshall County, will provide much information on the early Woodland people.

A new state-of-the-art **Archaeology Center**, which opened in 2008, provides for the storage and examination of artifacts.



A number of fairs and festivals attract visitors to the Northern Panhandle.

Wheeling hosts the annual Festival of Lights which provides lighted Christmas displays over the 300-acre Oglebay Park.



Sistersville, in Tyler County, hosts the West Virginia Oil and Gas Festival to commemorate the importance of oil and natural gas in the region.

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MID-OHIO VALLEY

The Mid-Ohio Valley contains seven counties. These counties include



There are a number of tourist attractions which focus on the economic development of the Mid-Ohio Valley region.

Visitors can visit such places as



The Oil and Gas Museum in Parkersburg



Berdine's Five and Dime in Harrisville



Holl's Chocolates in Vienna



Those who are interested in history can take a ferry to Blennerhassett Island State Park, located in the Ohio River.

On the island they can visit the Blennerhassett Mansion, built by Harman Blennerhassett in 1800. The original mansion was destroyed by a fire in 1811 and was rebuilt by the state of West Virginia. The restoration was completed in 1991



Take a virtual tour

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METRO VALLEY

The Metro Valley, the most populated region in the state, contains four counties. These include



West Virginia's state capitol is located in Charleston.

The Capitol Complex includes the offices of divisions of the state government.



Huntington, the second largest city in West Virginia, is home to the second largest university in the state. Marshall University was the subject of a major motion picture about the plane crash which killed members of the 1970 football team along with a number of the team's supporters. The movie generated interest in the city and university. This interest resulted in an increase of visitors to the city.



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Mason County has developed a number of attractions to appeal to tourists.

Those who are interested in history can visit

Tu Endie Wei State Park to find out more about the Battle of Point Pleasant, which some call the first battle of the American Revolution.



The home of **John McCausland**, a Civil War general

Riverfront murals which depict the early life of the Native Americans who lived in the area



One of the biggest tourist attractions in Point Pleasant is **Mothman**.

A twelve-foot statue, made of stainless steel, has red eyes made by Blenko Glass.



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Putnam County also has a number of historical attractions. The Buffalo Academy, which was established in 1849, was once attended by General John McCausland.



HATFIELD AND MCCOY MOUNTAINS

The Hatfield and McCoy Mountains is the newest designated tourist region in West Virginia. The region, which at one time was included as part of the Metro Valley, contains five counties.



Coal is king in the Hatfield and McCoy Mountains. The focus on coal is seen in many communities, including

Williamson, in Mingo County



Madison, in Boone County

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Perhaps the most popular tourist attraction in the Hatfield and McCoy Mountains is the **Hatfield and McCoy Trails**, an off-highway vehicle trail system used by dirt and mountain bikers, hikers, horseback riders, and ATV enthusiasts.



Video

NEW RIVER/GREENBRIER VALLEY

The New River/Greenbrier Valley region contains eight counties. These counties include



The New River/Greenbrier region also has a long history with coal. Reminders of the importance of coal in the region can be found in

Bramwell, a small town which was once home to a number of millionaire coal owners.



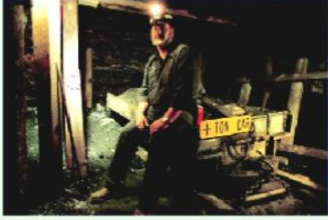
Bluefield is the location of the **Eastern Regional Coal Archives**. This archives houses an extensive collection of records from the West Virginia mining industry.

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Beckley is the location of an **Exhibition Coal Mine**. This facility gives tourists a look at the early days of mining as well as an opportunity to go into a mine.





Coalwood, a coal camp, has been memorialized by Homer Hickam in three books about his hometown. The October Sky Festival, originally held in Coalwood, has been held in Beckley since 2012.

One of the features that most defines the New River/Greenbrier region is the New River Gorge. The area attracts visitors to

the River. Whitewater rafting is a popular outdoor adventure on this second-oldest river in the world.

the Gorge. The unique geographical features of the gorge provide popular photo opportunities as well as rock climbing.

The Bridge

Bridge Day attracts adventurous visitors who jump and parachute from the New River Gorge Bridge.




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Those with an interest in history may visit **Lewisburg**, in Greenbrier County. Visitors may take a walking tour which takes them past old homes, slave quarters, the **Old Stone Church**, and a Confederate cemetery.



West Virginia's best-known resort, the **Greenbrier**, is also found in this tourist area. "Tourists" began visiting the Greenbrier as early as 1774; however, a hotel was not built on the property until 1858.



Bunker
