

## **CHAPTER 13 – HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

### **Introduction**

The State of West Virginia has established the State Historic Preservation Office in the Division of Culture and History. This office administers both the state and federal historic preservation programs. Its programs encourage, inform, support and participate in the efforts of the people of West Virginia to identify, recognize, preserve and protect the state's prehistoric and historic structures, objects and sites. This effort can stabilize neighborhoods, stimulate private investment, provide affordable housing, revitalize downtown activities, attract tourists and enhance community pride in the sense of place that historically significant features create.

Morgan County, settled by the earliest of European colonists, boasts numerous historically significant features particularly in the Bath Historic District, the core of the prominent 18<sup>th</sup> century town known to the world by its postal name of Berkeley Springs. In order to achieve the greatest exposure through this plan to both the potential of available government funds and easy identification to tourist travelers, these features collected in this section are separated into their intrinsic values: scenic, archaeological, architectural and other significant lands or buildings.

### **Scenic Areas and Natural Features**

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources maintains responsibility for the Wildlife Diversity and Natural Heritage Program. This program identifies unique natural areas and serves as a clearinghouse for general information on the state's natural history.  
<http://www.wvdnr.gov/Wildlife/Wildlife.shtm>

Prominent physical features which expose rock structures and provide unique vantage points for scenic views are identified as Special Landforms. The Washington Heritage Trail National Scenic Byway also identifies scenic areas along its 54 miles throughout Morgan County as part of the intrinsic values of the trail.

The most accessible and well-known vista is Panorama Overlook, a scenic view of three states: Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania and two rivers: the Potomac and Cacapon. The view was rated by National Geographic as one of the five best in the east. It is located along WV 9 three miles west of Berkeley Springs at the point where Cacapon Mountain plunges nearly 1000 feet into the Potomac River. Higher on Cacapon Mountain, Prospect Rock (also called Cacapon Rock) offers the same spectacular view to the east. The cluster of unique rock formations that mark this area may be reached by a 12-mile fire road and flat hiking trail across Cacapon Mountain accessed from Cacapon State Park.

Another overlook that provides panoramic views of three states is "Lovers Leap", a high ledge near US 522 north of Berkeley Springs on US Silica property. It has been closed to the public since the mid-1990s. A lesser known, but equally inspiring scenic view is "Fluted Rocks", which

overlooks the Potomac and Cacapon rivers at an elevation of 852 feet. It is not easily accessible to the public.

The topography of Morgan County as part of the Ridge and Valley section of the Appalachians provides a plethora of impressive views along virtually every county road. One of the more significant landforms in Morgan County is “Devil’s Nose”. This feature, which lies on private property, is part of Short Mountain. It is located in the eastern part of the county and projects at nearly and 800 foot elevation into a nose-like structure that overlooks the Meadow Branch.

“Eades Fort” is an historically significant rock formation along the bank of the Cacapon River, named for Thomas Eades, an early settler and farmer who escaped to the rock formation when Indians attacked and burned his barn.

Rock Gap Cave is believed to be the only significant cave in Morgan County. It is located at the north end of a small quarry on the southwest side of Rock Gap. It includes a partially-blocked passage that leads to a thirteen-foot by six-foot crawlway. It is not accessible to the public.

### **Archeological Features**

Archeological studies done in the 1980s and 90s confirm prehistoric settlements in Paw Paw near Brosius (where the Hancock Bridge crosses the Potomac River) and in Great Cacapon. Arrowheads are still found along Sir Johns Run. These were typical year-round settlements based on agriculture supplemented with wild food and hunting.

Local discoveries of different color flint arrowheads suggest nearby native trade routes from Pittsburgh and Ohio to Virginia. A well-documented large village was discovered in Great Cacapon where the Cacapon River empties into the Potomac convenient for river travel both north/south and east/west. Hundreds of artifacts including ceramics date the village to about 1300AD. It is known to be the only site of its type and period in eastern West Virginia and one of only a few in the region.

### **Natural Spring Areas**

Morgan County is most well known in the region for its natural spring areas, the most important of which is the “fam’d warm springs” of Berkeley Springs today part of Berkeley Springs State Park in the center of Bath. Located at about 800 ft. above sea level, the springs emerge at the base of Warm Springs Ridge, which rises nearly 450 ft. above the Warm Springs valley. The springs’ discharge area encompasses five principal sources and numerous smaller ones, all within one hundred yards of one another, producing from 1,000 to 2,000 gallons per minute of clear water at a constant temperature of 74.3 degrees Fahrenheit. The springs have been used since pre-colonial times for health spa activities that continue today.

A second important set of springs is the Breakneck Run Springs located at Ridge in the southern area of the county. The combined flow of these springs measures nearly 1,000 gallons per minute, and supplies water for the Ridge State Fish Hatchery. This is the only fish hatchery in

the state that is a combination warm and cold water hatchery, producing cold water golden, rainbow and brook trout as well as warm water large and small mouth bass and muskies. These free-flowing springs are the only source of high quality, pollution free water in the state conducive to the production of trout.

Additional major flow springs include the following.

Ziler Spring along the western bank of the Cacapon River has a greater flow than Ladies Spring in Berkeley Springs State Park which provides the source water for the town of Bath water system. Ziler Spring is privately owned.

Tonoloway Spring is near the headwaters of Sir Johns Run off of Cold Run Valley Rd. Privately owned, it is also called Suburban Bottling Spring. High Spring and Mountainside Spring are also in the Cold Run Valley area on Coolfont property.

Neely Spring and Webber Spring are limestone springs in Cacapon State Park.

A major water source study was conducted by the county in 2006. The final report can be found at <http://morgancountywv.gov/Planning/Documents/HRC3-MorganCounty-FinalReport2006.pdf>

### **Historic Sites**

The most important federal property in the area is the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park, a part of which parallels the Potomac River across from Morgan County on the Maryland side. Although the National Park Service owns a few acres in Morgan County along the abandoned B & O Railroad right-of-way, the C & O Canal recreational historic attractions are all located in Maryland.

One of the most significant attractions of the C & O Canal is the Paw Paw Tunnel, a 3,118 foot brick-lined excavation located on the Maryland side of the Potomac River, just north of the town of Paw Paw. The tunnel was constructed from 1828 to 1850 to provide passage for the canal through a six-mile set of river bends. The C & O Canal was added the National Register in 1966.

The 34-mile long abandoned Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way from Long Ridge in Washington County, Maryland to Maryland Route 51 was added to the National Register in 1981. Construction of this stretch of the Western Maryland Railroad began in 1903, closely following the C & O Canal and the Potomac River on the northern (Maryland) side. At the Great River Bends between Hancock, Maryland and Paw Paw, West Virginia the railroad cut through the mountains of Maryland and across the river by means of three tunnels and six bridges, transferring seven miles of the right-of-way onto the West Virginia side in Morgan County. Following abandonment of the right-of-way in 1975, it was acquired by the National Park Service in 1980. At the time of purchase, the NPS agreed to relinquish fee title to the right-of-way in Morgan County subject to suitable development controls. Attempts to develop a trail along the right-of-way in Morgan County were blocked by the presence of endangered species of bats in the tunnels.

The most prominent historic site in Morgan County is Berkeley Springs State Park, location of the warm mineral springs, which was added to the National Register in 1976. The park includes a concentration of historic buildings centering on the mineral springs which since the 1780s have formed the core of the spa attracting countless millions of people both famous and obscure over nearly three centuries beginning with some of the highest officials and socialites in early colonial times. The springs drew so many health seekers and other visitors during colonial times that in 1776, the Virginia legislature established the Town of Bath on nearly 50 acres adjoining the springs. Although always public land, the park did not achieve its current 4.5 acres until 1881 when several lodging buildings were razed and the land sold to the Bath Trustees for the park.

In 2009, the core of the Town of Bath within its colonial boundaries was designated a National Historic District with 236 buildings and sites designated contributing structures. This designation makes all contributing structures within the district eligible for various tax credits.

Additional historic sites outside the town limits were identified as designated sites on the Washington Heritage Trail National Scenic Byway including Spruce Pine Hollow Park, Cacapon State Park, Sir Johns Run, Great Cacapon, Camp Hill Cemetery in Paw Paw and the town of Paw Paw.

### **Historic Structures on the National Register**

In addition to the Bath Historic District, there are several individual structures both in and out of town that are individually listed on the National Historic Register. Possibly the most prominent single structure in Morgan County is Berkeley Castle, a two-story stone structure built in the Romantic tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and positioned against the Warm Springs Ridge along WV 9 overlooking the springs and park. Also known as Suit Cottage, it was built as a summer home by Colonel Samuel Taylor Suit, a successful Maryland businessman who earned his fortune in whiskey and railroads. Construction of the castle began in 1885 and was occupied by Suit and his young third wife, Rosa, and their three children in 1887. Suit died in 1888 and Rosa completed work on the structure including the addition of a gatehouse in 1893 that today is separated from the main structure by WV 9. The castle was added to the National Register in 1980. Today it serves as a private residence.

The T.H.B. Dawson House is a large red brick Italianate 19<sup>th</sup> century residence located on a hillside lot at the corner of Green and Market Streets in the Town of Bath. It is a significant and meticulously restored example of a substantial house type once commonly assigned to upper middle class businessmen and professionals of America's Gilded Age. The house was built in 1880 for Mr. Thomas Hart Benton Dawson, a native of the community who served in the Union Army during the Civil War, was elected County Clerk in 1886, and was active in the legal profession and insurance business. The house was placed on the National Register in 1983. It is one of several structures designed by self-taught local architect, Henry Harrison Hunter and constructed by his family business. It is privately owned and occupied as a residence.

The Manor, also known as the Sloat-Horn-Rossell House, is a large two-story Empire style residence located on Fairfax Street in the town of Bath, the only remaining example of this style in the area. Constructed in 1879, it is also a Henry Harrison Hunter structure. Well restored for reuse as a bed and breakfast inn, The Manor was accepted onto the National Register in 1984.

The John Herbert Quick House, popularly known as “Coolfont Manor House”, was also placed on the National Register in 1984. A 2 ½ story mansion of Colonial Revival style that was built in 1913, it is significant for its architecture. More importantly though, it is known as the home of John Herbert Quick, a noted late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century literary figure and social reformer of national renown. The house served as a private residence for the owner of the now defunct Coolfont Resort located in Cold Run Valley between Cacapon Mountain and Warm Springs Ridge, just south of Berkeley Springs. It is currently vacant.

The Berkeley Springs Train Depot, located on North Washington Street at the northern boundary of the town, was constructed in 1914 for use by the B & O Railroad replacing an earlier depot. It is a decorative brick structure that was built in the Spanish Revival style and used by the railroad until 1935. The depot was purchased by the town government and used variously as City Hall and rented for commercial enterprises. The exterior was restored in 2014-15 and is currently vacant awaiting interior renovation.

The Clarence Hovermale House, located on Wilkes Street in the town of Bath, was also built by the Hunter family in 1884 and restored in the 1990s. Also known as the Allen Mendenhall House, it represents the Queen Anne style period. The house currently serves as a private single residence and was added to the National Register in 2003.

Wisteria Cottage, built in 1872, was home to Judge John W. Wright, a Lincoln appointee to the U.S. Court of Appeals. It is a cubical cottage in Tuscan style located on South Green Street in the town of Bath. The cottage was added to the National Register in 1986, and is currently a private residence.

Ambrose Chapel is a single religious structure located on 15 acres along Winchester Grade Road. It was placed on the National Register in 1998.

The Morgan County Courthouse, the third in a series, was added to the register in 2005. It was severely damaged by fire and demolished in 2006.

**Table 13-1 Historic Register Sites and Structures**

<u>Listing</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Year Listed</u>	<u>Owned</u>
C&O National Historic Park	Site	N/A	1966	Public
Berkeley Springs State Park	Site	N/A	1976	Public
Western Maryland Railroad	Site	1903	1981	Public
Berkeley Castle	Structure	1885	1980	Private
T.H.B. Dawson House	Structure	1880	1982	Vacant
Manor (Sloat-Horn-Rossell house)	Structure	1879	1984	Private

John Herbert Quick House	Structure	1913	1984	Private
Berkeley Springs Train Depot	Structure	1914	2001	Public
Clarence Hovermale House	Structure	1884	2003	Private
Wisteria Cottage	Structure	1872	1986	Private
Ambrose Chapel	Structure	1850	1998	Private

Source: National Register of Historic Places

Aside from the sites already on the National Register, there are numerous additional sites that have been identified for eligible inclusion due to their significance as part of the historic architectural and cultural resources within the county. Most of the sites include structures located within the Berkeley Springs area and 236 of those became contributing structures to the Bath Historic District added to the National Register in 2009.

### Historic Sites and Structures Eligible for the National Register

Although there are detailed guidelines for determining properties eligible to be listed on the National Historic Register, the primary ones include being more than 50 years old with limited modifications and possessing historic or architectural significance. An historic survey of the entire county would be a daunting undertaking although there are numerous small historic communities that could yield significant results.

### Historic Preservation Organizations

There are several organizations at various levels of government actively involved in the preservation efforts of Morgan County. The government organizations serve as the procedural mechanism for grassroots groups seeking direction on preservation and restoration of significant community structures and sites and often are sources of financial assistance including grants.

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state or the community;
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects;
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits; and
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, if funds are available.

Like many state and federal preservation programs, the interest in National Register listing originates with the property owner. Once approved by the state, the state historic preservation agencies can nominate the property to the national level. Listing does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage or dispose of the property. However, it often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable aspects of the community.

#### West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

The mission of the Division of Culture and History's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is to encourage, inform, support and participate in the efforts of the people of West Virginia to identify, recognize, preserve and protect West Virginia's prehistoric and historic structures, objects and sites. SHPO administers both the state and federal historic preservation programs and grants including placement of properties on the National Register. It aids federal and state agencies, local governments and the general public in identifying and preserving the physical historic and prehistoric resources of West Virginia.

#### Bath Historic Landmark Commission

In 2006 the Town of Bath established a volunteer Historic Landmark Commission to facilitate formal identification of historically eligible and significant sites in and around Berkeley Springs and to develop and implement strategies to preserve and protect them. After conducting an Historical Survey which identified 236 contributing structures within the town limits of Bath, the Bath Historic District was accepted onto the National Register of Historic Places in 2009. Identifying plaques were placed on more than 50 of the most prominent structures and several workshops have been conducted to educate property owners on historic tax credits available for restoration of properties within the district.

#### Bath-Romney Campaign Historical and Preservation Association

This group is based out of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. The primary purpose of the organization is to continue the research and study of the Civil War campaign; provide a forum that encourages an ongoing exchange of ideas and dialogue; educate the public by organizing and hosting living history events and other educational forums; document associated sites, structures, and artifacts, and to assist in preserving and interpreting those sites, structures and artifacts.

#### Morgan County Historical and Genealogical Society

A volunteer group dedicated to maintaining and developing various records, information and photographs related to the history and families of Morgan County. It has an office in the Morgan County Public Library and has produced several significant compendiums of local information including books on graveyards and schools.

#### Museum of the Berkeley Springs

Established and maintained by volunteers since 1984 and supported by professional staff and docents, the museum showcases the story of the famous warm mineral springs and their continuing impact on the life and people around them through exhibits, publications and activities. Open to the public from March through December, the museum is housed on the second floor of the 1815 Roman Bath House in Berkeley Springs State Park, the oldest public building in the historic town.

## **Goals and Objectives**

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Given the age and rich history of Morgan County, historic preservation is an important and widely supported aspect of the local ethos. The following goals will foster this important trend:

- Promoting the preservation of historic sites and structures that define the unique historical and cultural character of the County;
- Encouraging community development occurring in the vicinity of identified cultural and historic resources to be sensitive to the special nature of the surrounding area; and
- Being sensitive to the contribution viewsheds make to the overall quality of life in the county.

### **Objectives**

These goals are supported by the following objectives:

- Exploring creation of a tax district with strict regulation of historic preservation efforts;
- Promoting the old Paw Paw train depot as a community museum;
- Fostering programs offering “learning vacations” to unique historic areas of the county;
- Supporting development of an inventory of cultural and historic landmarks and resources and identifying sites to be earmarked for National Register status and/or local protective regulations in the county;
- Promoting creation of an Historic Landmarks Commission for the county;
- Evaluating establishment of a dedicated funding stream to purchase and renovate historically significant structures; and
- Supporting efforts of various local historic preservation groups to promote the county’s historic and cultural assets.