

...Start at CVB

Welcome to Barboursville, a bustling city rich in history. The Cabell County seat for nearly 80 years in the 1800s, Barboursville was also a popular steamboat destination before the Civil War when a skirmish tore open the heart of the city. In the 20th Century it was one of the region's first college towns and now a regional retail hub. Let's go back to when it all began.

In 1772, John Savage and other pioneers received a 28,000-acre land grant in the Ohio Valley (Wayne, Cabell and Mason counties) for serving in the French and Indian War. After the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, many pioneers began moving in for this fertile land near the Guyandotte and Mud Rivers. In 1802, William C. Merritt, and Jeremiah Ward bought land on either side of the Guyandotte, at \$1.60 for 100 acres.

By 1813, an act of the General Assembly of Virginia established their lands, known as Merritt's Mill, and Farmdale, as Barboursville, a village of 339 people named after Governor James Barbour. The first Cabell County Court House was established in 1809. The county seat moved to Guyandotte in 1810, but was moved back in 1813 to Barboursville where it remained until 1887.

Prior to the Civil War and before trains, Barboursville, which sits on the Guyandotte River and near the Mud River, was a popular steamboat town and popular stop on the state road, the James River and Kanawha Turnpike (that connected the James River to the Ohio River).

After the War, it was a popular railroad town after the Guyandotte Valley Railroad was completed in 1873. When the county seat moved to Huntington, Barboursville became a college town with the 1890s founding of Barboursville Seminary which became Barboursville College and then Morris Harvey College. It moved to Charleston in the 1930s and became the University of Charleston. The college grounds are now the West Virginia Veterans Home.

In the 20th century, water mains were laid in 1913, and street paving began in 1916. In 1930, U.S. 60 (the James River/Kanawha Turnpike or Midland Trail) bypassed the village and Barboursville became a quiet, residential setting of historic homes. The population has steadily grown and doubled in recent decades from 2,285 in 1970, and 3,964 in 2010 to 4,186 in 2017.

Home since 1981 to the nearby 150-store Huntington Mall, and many new U.S. 60 developments, Barboursville has the best of both worlds - one of the region's largest retail areas, while also maintaining a quaint downtown historic district (placed on the National Register in 2008) and a crown jewel park - the 750-acre Barboursville Park, one of the largest city parks in West Virginia. Let's go explore this beautiful downtown historic district that is home to several pre-Civil War structures and learn more about this former college town, steamboat destination, and city rich in pioneering regional history and business.

Walking Tour

1. The George Thornburg Home - Built in 1901, this Queen Anne style home is located at the intersection of Main Street and Central Avenue. It is one of the most outstanding homes in Barboursville with an elaborate veranda with 12 tapered wooden columns supporting a slanted metal roof. Home to the Barboursville Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Thornburg home's distinct features are its corner turret, topped by a rounded dome with a spire. Prior to the home being built, it was the former site of the Civil War era Baumgardner Frame Hotel. Thornburg was the founder of the old Barboursville Clay Manufacturing Company on the south side of town in 1904. It supplied tile for the remodeling of the White House in 1921. Closed in 1979, it was demolished in 2007. The Thornburg home was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

Cross Central Avenue heading northwest into the Nancy Cartmill Gardens. Now home to a gazebo, public art projects and a water fountain, the Gardens were established in 1999 and named for Nancy Cartmill, the first woman mayor of Barboursville from 1993 to 2001.

2. Fortification Hill - Part of the Civil War Trail. Stop at the Civil War marker describing the Barboursville Engagement of July 14, 1861 when 600 Confederate troops used "Fortification Hill" during a battle with the Union Army's 2nd Kentucky which had crossed the Mud River covered bridge attacking the Confederates with a bayonet charge that beat them into a retreat. The Union used the courthouse on the hill as a hospital. A year later, on Sept. 8, 1862, Gen. Albert Gallatin Jenkins and the Eighth Virginia Cavalry retook the village surprising an Ohio regiment of Union cavalry on a Sunday morning on Main Street. Barboursville would remain under Confederate control until the people of West Virginia voted on a Constitution on March 26, 1863. West Virginia became the 35th Union State on June 20, 1863 and was the only state born out of the Civil War.

From this same high vantage point, overlooking the town, take a look at the row of historic buildings that line the 600 block of Main Street (The old James River Turnpike).

3. Historic Main Street (First State Bank and First National Bank) - In the 600 block of Main Street is a line of historic buildings. At 664 Main Street, the First State Bank, was founded in 1905 in a building that was built in 1870. That building was also home to the I.O.O.F. Lodge Hall. It is now home to Horace Mann Insurance, and the Village House Salon. Next door, The First National Bank Building at 650 Main Street opened in 1870. It is home to Walker & Stevens attorneys, Village Caregiving, and W.V. Quilt. The next two brick blocks of



buildings were built in 1909 and 1926, replacing frame buildings. The 1909 building was originally the Edgar Hotel. Those buildings have long been the backbone of downtown Barboursville businesses and have included: Wyson Drugstore, Earl Spencer Grocery, Brady Hardware, Mrs. Ball's Restaurant, Steel Florist, Chevy Garage and Repair Shop, and Burton Plumbing and Electric. Today, attorneys Bailey and Howard, and David Hill Limited Stamps and Coins occupy some of that space.

Walk above the gazebo and toward the river, below the entrance of the West Virginia Veterans Home.

4. The West Virginia Veterans Home (formerly Morris Harvey College) - The Barboursville Seminary was founded in the 1890s. It became Barboursville College and then Morris Harvey College until moved to Charleston in 1935. It became the University of Charleston. Of historical sports interest is that Morris Harvey College played Notre Dame in football in 1912 losing 39-0. After the college left, the Middle School moved into the buildings on the lower level of the hill, while the state took upper dorms for a mental health facility. In 1981, Gov. Rockefeller turned the upper buildings into the first and only West Virginia State Veterans Home.

5. McDonald Hall and Rosa Harvey Hall - The West Virginia Veterans Home (former Morris Harvey College) is home to a couple historic buildings. McDonald Hall was built in 1929 for \$100,000 as a men's dormitory. This three level building exemplifies the Colonial Revival style and contains excellent features such as a two elaborate central pilasters projecting from the front and the side with double doors. Both entrances have rounded arched portals. Rosa Harvey Hall, a girl's dorm was completed in 1928 for \$125,000. Also built in the popular Colonial Revival of the time, it is similar to its sister building, McDonald Hall. The Rosa Harvey Hall was named after the wife of the college founder, Morris Harvey. In 1942, the former college became the Barboursville Unit of the Weston State Hospital, and then Barboursville State Hospital in 1949. During a 1962 Thanksgiving weekend roof fire, all 187 patients (30 bedridden)

were safely evacuated from the Hall thanks to quick action by staff and the Barboursville Volunteer Fire Department.

Walking back down the hill toward Main Street, be sure and read the Barboursville Historic Commission's plaque that honors the founding of the village in 1813.

Cross Main Street and stroll along south Water Street. Although the building is 20th Century, the First United Methodist congregation dates back to 1803. By 1823, Marie Therese Gardener was holding church in her home. As you walk along Water Street, notice the home at 615 Water St., which has a nationally certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat.

6. Water Street - Glance to your right past Water Street to the Guyandotte River to conjure up the wild history of this navigable river. Barboursville was a popular steamboat town prior to the Civil War when the New York Navigation Company constructed seven locks and dams along the 35 miles of the Lower Guyandotte River to haul coal and timber up from the upper Guyandotte Valley. Three packets, The J.T. Hustler, R.H. Lindsey and Major Adrian maintained a regular schedule carrying freight and passengers. Four other steamboats also plied the waters. The locks and dams were destroyed and/or fell into disrepair during the Civil War. The Miller and Moore sawmill (located from Main Street to the Mud River) provided lumber used to construct the steamboats. Though no longer used by steamboats, the Guyandotte is used for recreational kayaking and canoeing. Go online at <https://guyandottewatertrail.com> for more info about paddling the Guayndotte.

Walk two blocks to Slaughter Street and take a left on Slaughter Street and walk one block over to Central Avenue. Take another left and walk the two blocks back to toward Main Street and between the new post office on our right and the new First State Bank building on your left at 660 Central Avenue.

7. Harvest Club - Located at 652 Central Ave., The white building is now home to the First State Bank Harvest Club, a social and travel club for bank members ages 50 and older. Take a peek down the narrow Brady Street as you can see evidence to the fact that the building was once the Cackley Livery Stable, the forerunner to the modern-day bus terminal some 150 year ago. The stable ran horse and buggy service to Huntington and points in between. Find out more about the Harvest Club at <https://www.fsb-wv.com/about/harvest-club/>

8. Central Avenue Shops - The block between Brady Street and Main is lined with historic shops some still in use. Ossie Mills General Store has been a series of restaurants including C.R. Thomas, Blackhawk Grille and currently, Central on Main that opened in 2018. It is located at 646 Central Avenue.

Next to Central on Main at 604 Central Avenue was the old M.C. Johnson Drugstore that was well known for its large keg of root beer that sat on the end of the fountain counter. It is home to Make: Art Gallery and Community Studio. That studio is run by Barboursville native Sassa Wilkes, who has helped organize the monthly Barboursville Art Walk as well as the Village Art Market at the Barboursville Farmers Market, located at 6501 Farmdale Road or Sadler Field (site of the Barboursville Fall Fest carnival). That field was home in the 1920s to a mile-long horse racing track.

At the corner of Central Avenue and Main Street is one of the oldest buildings on the block. The Miller Thornburg Store was built in 1854. William C. Miller, who also built the courthouse, supervised the construction. This building later housed the Kroger grocery store in the 1930s. Kroger is still located in the community along U.S. 60.

Cross Central Avenue and begin strolling east down the sloping hill on Main Street where a bounty of historic homes await. On your right will be the blue brick Barboursville Public Library, at 728 Main St. A Cabell County Public Library branch, the Barboursville Public Library will soon be upgraded with a new 14,000 square foot building. Continue walking east on Main Street. Across the street is the Old Toll House, a log cabin that dates back to 1837. We will get a closer look at it in a minute. For now be on the lookout for a two story White House with four impressive columns.

9. The Dirton House - Built in 1870, The Dirton House is at 848 Main Street, tucked between 20th century houses (a Dutch Colonial and a Bungalow), this was the home of Elizabeth Merritt Dirton, daughter of William Merritt, the village founder who built a mill at the mouth of the Mud River. Elizabeth's husband was a toll gatherer on the James River Turnpike in the 1830s. As with many other older homes in the village, the Dirton House, which has four two story white columns out front, was used as a boarding house during Morris Harvey College's

37 years in Barboursville. Pre-Civil War the site was home to a hat factory.

10. The William Clendenin Miller Home - Located at 1112 Main Street, this is the oldest existing dwelling in Barboursville. The W.C. Miller home that was built around 1835 and is now home to the Sweet and Sassy Bakery (<https://www.facebook.com/sassycustomsweets/>). The Federal designed house is made of Barboursville plain brick. The simple porch is supported by six decorative columns, and a distinct iron fence sets off the front of the home. Mr. Miller was postmaster from 1840-1860 and stagecoaches would stop here to deliver mail. Miller also oversaw the building of the Courthouse, the Miller/Thornburg store and two of the six locks on the Guyandotte River. During the Civil War, a wounded Union soldier was carried to the Miller's porch. The Millers, Confederate sympathizers, wrapped the body in a sheet and laid it on the porch until members of the company returned for it. After the Civil War, Miller sold the home. It returned to the family in 1914 when his son John W. Miller bought it. Like many large historic homes was also used as a boarding house during the Morris Harvey College days.

In modern times, people told The Herald Dispatch they saw a soldier's face in the second window from the right on the second floor. They speculate it could be the wounded Union soldier or James Reynolds, who stopped at the Miller home for breakfast on July 11, 1861, three days before the Battle of Barboursville. He was the only Confederate soldier killed in that battle. After he was wounded he was taken to the courthouse where he died from his injuries.

11. The George McComas Home - Located next door to the W.C. Miller Home, and with a connecting wrought iron fence at the sidewalk, is the George McComas home at 1118 Main Street. This white painted Queen Anne style home was built by P.A. Vallandingham. The asymmetrical designed home is distinguishable by its large tent-shaped turret with an octagon base on the left side of the home. George McComas was the grandson of Brigadier General Elisha McComas, who oversaw the Cabell County Militia during the War of 1812. The general's name is on the Farmdale Road bridge coming into the village from the west.

Just past the house and when you see a pair of Lions guarding at home at the corner of Main Street and McConkey Avenue, go ahead and cross the street and turn left, and begin walking back toward town to get an up-close look at one of the oldest churches in the village.

12. Kuhn Memorial Presbyterian Church - Located at 955 Main St., and dating to 1925, this chapel was built on Main Street on land given to the church by Mrs. Amanda Kuhn, wife of James I. Kuhn, Clerk of Session of the original Barboursville Presbyterian Church. A Sunday



school room expansion was completed in 1955 and a new sanctuary was dedicated in 1970.

13. The Old Kuhn Kitchen - Located at the rear of 953 Main Street. When you see the KMPC parking sign walk on that blacktop driveway back into the parking lot where the Kuhn Homestead Kitchen sits. This simple 18-foot-by-24-foot structure was built in the early 1860s to accompany the Kuhn home. The original "big house" was moved about three blocks away to Lewis Avenue but the kitchen remains. The most unique feature is an elaborate fireplace and exterior stepped chimney. The building was used for laundry and to cook for residents in the Kuhn House. Such kitchens were popular in the 1800s to keep heat and odors away from the main dwelling.

14. The Miller/Stowasser Home - Located at 849 Main Street, this home was built in 1865 by George Frederick Miller on 12-foot-by-12-foot hand-hewn oak beams. It is distinguishable by the stone wall out by the sidewalk. His son, George Miller, Jr., would go into business with George Thornburg on the corner of Central and Main Streets. He also helped organize the First Huntington Bank, at 650 Main Street in 1905. This home was purchased in 1890 by Mr. Stowasser who was one of the founders of the Barboursville Seminary, which became Morris Harvey College.

Keep walking past the 2017-built, blue Barboursville Police Station, until you see a log cabin. You can't miss it.

15. The Old Toll House - Located at 811 Main St., the Old Toll House was built in 1837 at its original location at the junction of the James River and Kanawha Turnpike (U.S. 60) and the Guyandotte River. The toll house served as a collection point where the ferry crossed the river. In 1950, the Daughters of the American Revolution purchased the home and moved it to its present site where it was

refurbished. One of the few log buildings left that date back to the early to mid 1800s, the Toll House museum is operated by the DAR. Note the Toll price sign on the porch. If you've got four cows it's going to cost you a penny to pass.

Keep Walking back up Main Street until you return to the Barboursville Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Enjoy a nice rest in one of the rocking chairs on the large porch. Or if you are up for more history, cross the street to the Library to check out local historian and seventh generation Barboursville resident Jeanette M. Rowsey's more than 500-page history book, "The Lost Village of Barboursville: Unsung and Vanishing History of "The Best Little Village in West Virginia" (1813-2013) and many other history-filled books.

Also, from the CVB you can walk/or drive down Central Avenue (away from downtown) where it connects with Kuhn Street and Cemetery Street home to the historic Barboursville Cemetery, which dates back about 175 years. That cemetery is the final resting place for many of the founding families of Barboursville, including the Merritts, Thornburgs, McComases, Millers, Mosses, Baumgardners, Dirtons and Gardners. Soldiers are also buried there from the Civil War, Spanish-American War and both world wars.

The oldest grave on record is of Marie T. C. Gardner from 1854. Joseph Gardner, who was 81 years old, was buried there in 1855.

The Gardners, from Boston, had an inn at the corner of Main and Center Streets and organized a church society that became the First Methodist Church.



Index of Tour

1. The George Thornburg Home
2. Fortification Hill
3. Historic Main Street
4. The West Virginia Veterans Home
5. McDonald Hall and Rosa Harvey Hall
6. Water Street
7. Harvest Club
8. Central Avenue Shops
9. The Dirton House
10. The William Clendenin Miller Home
11. The George McComas Home
12. Kuhn Memorial Presbyterian Church
13. The Old Slave Kitchen
14. The Miller/Stowasser Home
15. The Old Toll House



2 Nancy Cartmill Gardens Gazebo



7 The Harvest Club



12 Kuhn Memorial Presbyterian Church



15 The Old Toll House