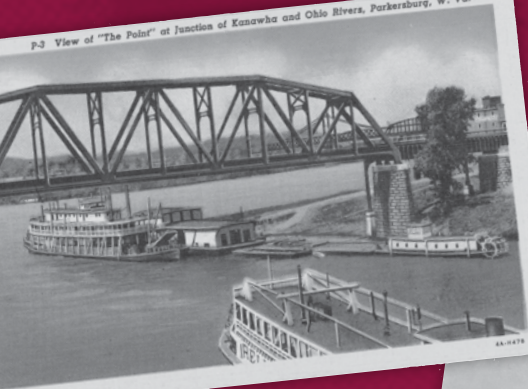


# G R E A T E R PARKERSBURG

P-3 View of "The Point" at Junction of Kanawha and Ohio Rivers, Parkersburg, W. Va.



Wood County Court House,  
Parkersburg, W. Va.



## *Historic Guide* to Wood County, WV

FOUNTAIN AT ENTRANCE, CITY PARK, PARKERSBURG, W. VA.



## Historic Background

The history of Wood County is as rich and varied as that of any part of the United States. It stretches back to almost 9,000 BC when its first human inhabitants, Indians, are known to have lived, worked and played here. By the late 1600s French explorers and traders had penetrated the region soon followed by the English. White settlement did not come until the 1760s when

squatters illegally took possession of the Indians' land. The United States Army drove them out in 1785, the same year permanent settlers arrived.

After surviving a bloody Indian War (1791-1795), the area entered an era of gradual expansion and development.

Population growth was very slow and life very southern in its customs.

Many local settlers, originally from eastern Virginia, owned slaves and used them to carve out plantations.

The emergence of river, road and rail transportation during the 1800s and the discovery of massive oil fields just north and east of Parkersburg would help define a new state and prepare a city for the 20<sup>th</sup> century's industrial age. The area played a key role in the outcome of the Civil War and the county continued to expand both commercially and in population.

By the 21<sup>st</sup> century a highly but industrialized Wood County would support dozens of chemical, plastic and laboratory businesses.

## How Parkersburg came to be called Parkersburg

By Jess Mancini

No one got off a boat at the confluence of the Little Kanawha and Ohio rivers and stepped upon the shore proclaiming the land will be called Parkersburg.

With the stroke of a pen and the perseverance of Alexander Parker's daughter 200 years ago, Newport was no more and Parkersburg was born after years of litigation ended with an out of court settlement and the exchange of money for land.

Parker after he mustered out of the Continental Army in 1783 purchased 1,350 acres of land along the north side of the Little Kanawha River near the confluence of the Ohio for \$50 from Robert Thornton of Pennsylvania. Thornton in 1773 made a tomahawk claim on the land in what was



then Virginia. (A settler made a tomahawk claim by ringing or marking the trees at the corners of the land to mark the claim. The claim would have to go through a legal process before the title would be granted.)

Captain James Neal, another Revolutionary War officer who was a deputy surveyor of Monongalia County, in 1784 surveyed the land sold to Parker. Thornton instructed Neal to survey the property in straight lines, which omitted nooks of land along the riverbank. A year after Parker died, Thornton transferred the nooks, about 69 acres, to John Stokely to quit-claim on April 18, 1792, and Stokely in that same year filed the claim in Harrison County.

In 1796, Stokely surveyed and established the town of Springville, also called Stokelyville, a typically rudimentary frontier settlement of log cabins, inns, a tannery and a forge. The Virginia General Assembly chartered the town as Newport on Jan. 6, 1800, and pronounced it the Wood County seat on November 11, 1800. By this time, Wood County was created from Harrison County in 1789 by the Virginia General Assembly.

Parker, born in 1753, died a young man in 1791 at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Mary Parker, Parker's daughter and heir, sued Stokely in 1802, claiming the land title Stokely received from Thornton that was based on the survey done by Neal was in error and overlapped Parker's land.

The court in Wood County ruled against Stokely, but upon appeal the following year in 1806 a state district court in Morgantown overturned the decision. After the reversal by the state district court, Stokely and Hugh Phelps, Neal's son-in-law, purchased all of Thornton's land interests from Thornton's estate including the land sold to Parker by buying Parker's unredeemed bonds.

Mary, now married to William Robinson, Jr. a prominent citizen from the Pittsburgh area, did not let the case die. The Robinsons met with Stokely and Phelps in September 1810 in Newport and reached an out-of-court settlement whereby Stokely and Phelps sold their land interests to the Robinsons for \$1,696.16.

This agreement was a turning point for the frontier town. The Virginia General Assembly established the town of Parkersburg on January 11, 1811,

The Robinsons on May 1, 1811, donated about two acres of land in the center of town for public buildings and another lot for the Methodist Episcopal Church. The present day Wood County Courthouse is upon that land.

Visit [www.parkersburg200.org](http://www.parkersburg200.org) for more information.

## Transportation

Transportation to and through Wood County played a significant role in the development of the state of West Virginia and the nation. While the first settlers in the late 1700s forged their way through densely populated forests on foot and horseback, future generations would come by way of the river, road or rail.

Running through the Ohio Valley, the Ohio and Little Kanawha Rivers carried a vast and varied panorama of thousands of travelers into the heart of North America at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By 1811 the outside world had begun to break into the quiet town when the Ohio River's first steamboat stopped in Parkersburg to refuel.

Travel by road improved when, the northwestern Turnpike, connecting Winchester, Virginia and

Parkersburg (paralleling present-day US Route 50), was completed in 1838. Nine years later, the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike (following modern-day WV Route 47) was finished. Parkersburg's greatest economic and population expansion came though after the railroad embraced it in her steel web. A branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad reached the river city in 1857, for the first time giving the town easy access to the East Coast and Cincinnati.

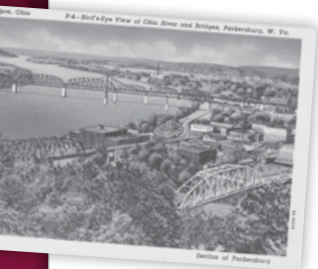


The railroad, in combination with the discovery of the world's largest oil fields in 1860 just north and east of Parkersburg, brought a great deal of prosperity to the region. Because of its strategic geographical

location on the B&O Railroad (exactly half way between Baltimore, Maryland and St. Louis, Missouri), and its fuel resources, Parkersburg became a major troop transfer and supply center for the Union Army during the Civil War. The completion of the B&O Railroad across the Ohio River in 1871 further ignited growth in the area.

The completion of Interstate 77 during the 1970s further improved access to the area from the north and south.

Today, the vast network of transportation routes leading to Wood County provides easy access to the area for goods and services, as well as residents and visitors.



## Oil and Gas Industries

During the 1770s, General George Washington was one of the nation's first fuel entrepreneurs when he surveyed and purchased several hundred acres of land in what was then western Virginia on the speculation that it was rich in oil and natural gas.

The oil and gas industries were a product of the state's salt industry. In 1859 the Rathbone brothers of Parkersburg, bought land located a few miles north at Burning Springs Run near the Little Kanawha River in search of salt.

What they found instead was a deep well of petroleum. The surprised brothers were disappointed but at the same time intrigued with their new findings and dug a second well. All told, the Rathbone wells produced more than 1,400 barrels of oil a day that year. Large quantities of oil were floated down river in barrels to Parkersburg and were then shipped to other cities across the country. This sparked a stampede of individuals looking to get rich quick with what was termed "black gold."

By 1860, additional oil fields were discovered a short distance away in the town of Volcano. These fields proved to be active for more than a decade and an oil pipeline was built from Volcano to Parkersburg. Wood County rapidly became a leading oil market.

The city of Parkersburg and Wood County benefited greatly from the prosperous oil and gas industries. Political and social power, as well as personal fortunes, were evident as the county prospered economically with new businesses, the building of luxurious homes and the election of multiple state governors and politicians. Businessmen from Parkersburg indeed played an important role in influencing and shaping the new state following the Civil War.

By 1900, oil production had subsided while the use of natural gas was on the rise. From 1906-1917 West Virginia was the leader in gas production in the United States.

To learn more, visit the Oil & Gas Museum in Parkersburg or go to [www.oilandgasmuseum.com](http://www.oilandgasmuseum.com).



*Burning Springs Oil Field Park*



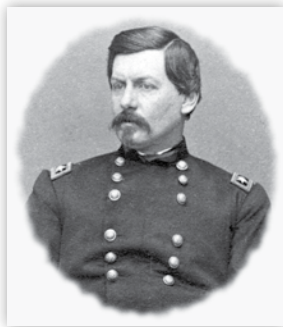
## Civil War

*Written by Robert D. Crooks, M.D.*

While there were no significant battles fought in Wood County during the Civil War, the county was greatly changed by this greatest event in American history.

When the war started, Parkersburg was a sleepy southern town. It lay at the junction of the Northwestern and Staunton turnpikes and also, the Ohio and Little Kanawha Rivers. It was on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

It is little wonder that when in 1861 Virginia seceded from the Union that the western counties, wanting to stay in the Union, formed a new state. Wood County provided more leaders for this cause than any other county and because of its strategic location became a dominant force in the establishment of West Virginia.



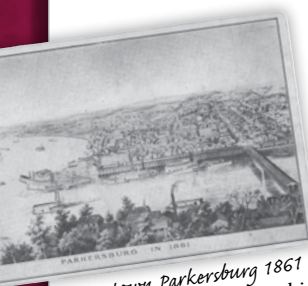
*General George McClellan*

Union Gen. George B. McClellan located his headquarters in Parkersburg on May 21, 1861, and Wood County remained under Union control throughout the war. It became a major troop transfer and supply center.

In recognition of its vital military importance the Federal government constructed a fort on Mount Logan overlooking Parkersburg and the two rivers, naming it Fort Boreman honoring West Virginia's first governor.

The only military action in the county was at Belleville on July 19, 1863, when Confederate General John H. Morgan attempted to cross the Ohio River after his raid through southern Ohio. Three hundred raiders successfully entered West Virginia while the remaining followed Gen. Morgan into northern Ohio where they were captured.

Wood County gave 3,000 soldiers to the Union army and 500 to the Confederacy. Out of this bloody conflict there emerged a new state – West Virginia. Parkersburg arose to become a bustling urban area whose newfound importance was symbolized by its wealth, civic pride and expanding population. Parkersburg had changed during the war from a sleepy, southern village to a prominent and progressive city.



*Downtown Parkersburg 1861*

## Civil War Trails Markers

Civil War Trails is a multi-state program that identifies, interprets and creates driving tours of Civil War campaigns and the lesser-known sites. Interpretive markers with maps, illustrations and text have been installed in six locations in the immediate area. For more information, call 800-752-4982.

### **Burning Springs Oil Field**

WV 5, Burning Springs

### **Fort Boreman Historical Park**

Just off US Rt. 50 at the Marttown Road exit, Parkersburg

### **Henderson Hall**

River Road, Off WV 14 south of Williamstown

### **Col. Adam "Stovepipe" Johnson's Crossing**

Belleville Locks, Belleville

### **Gen. George McClellan's Invasion into the Confederacy**

Point Park, Parkersburg

### **Oil & Gas Museum**

119 Third Street, Parkersburg



*WV First Governor Arthur I. Boreman*



*Johnson's Crossing at Belleville*

# G R E A T E R PARKERSBURG

## Historic Landmarks and Sites



While not every historic structure and site could be included, the following list reflects many of the county's most prominent sites and buildings and provides a glimpse into its glorious past as it impacted the region and state economically, politically and socially.

Please note that many of the places listed are private residences and are not open to the public. We ask your consideration in not attempting to enter these buildings or grounds without permission.

The Greater Parkersburg Convention & Visitors Bureau has compiled this information from several sources. While every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy, the bureau cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions. Unless otherwise stated, all locations are Parkersburg.

## Downtown

### ***Albright-Bradley Building***

*101 3rd Street*

Built before 1899, it is the site of the first Maxwell car agency, the first Chrysler car agency and the first Kaiser-Frazier car agency. It was formerly the location of Schilling Lumber, Bones Tire Service and Wallbrown Tire. After standing vacant for 20 years, it was restored and occupied in 1990 by the law offices of Albright, Bradley & Ellison.

### ***Blennerhassett Hotel***

*4<sup>th</sup> & Market Streets*

This chateau-like, Queen Anne style structure was erected in 1889 by W. N. Chancellor. Chancellor, was mayor of Parkersburg (1874-1886). The Blennerhassett Hotel originally housed several banking institutions and primarily served railroaders and traveling salesmen before becoming a residential hotel. After being closed for several years, the property was beautifully restored with 18th and 19th century antiques, enlarged and reopened in 1986. In 2005, the hotel completed a full renovation to equip it with the most modern and luxurious amenities. The Blennerhassett Hotel is one of only two West Virginia hotels to be recognized by Historic Hotels of America (the other being The Greenbrier) and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



*Blennerhassett Hotel*

### ***Blennerhassett Museum***

*2<sup>nd</sup> & Juliana Streets*

The north half of the Blennerhassett Museum building was constructed in 1902 as the home of the Star Grocery Company. In the 1920s the company added the present south half of the structure, but went out of business in the 1940s. Later the building housed the Gutherie-Morris-Campbell Company who sold it to the State of West Virginia in 1983. After a total renovation, it was opened as the Blennerhassett Museum on April 30, 1988. This museum, the second largest in West Virginia, exhibits a large array of area history from prehistoric Indian artifacts to items once owned by the Blennerhassett family. A 12-minute video on the history of Blennerhassett Island and the tragic couple who gave it their name is shown in the theater. The museum also houses a gift shop and offices for the park. (Admission fee)



*Blennerhassett Museum*



*First Baptist Church*

### **First Baptist Church**

*9<sup>th</sup> and Market Streets*

Constructed in 1871-1876 under the direction of Lysander Dudley from a design of a church in Wallingford, Connecticut, his former home. The first meeting was held in the basement of the new church on January 2, 1872. Built at the height of the Italianate period, the church displays, with excellent integrity, the characteristics of that style.

### **Henry Logan House (Civil War Hospital)**

*402 Avery Street*

This spacious two-story Federal style brick home, constructed in 1843, was one of five United States Army hospitals operated in Parkersburg during the Civil War, and is the only one still standing. It functioned circa 1863 to 1865 after having been purchased from its owner, Henry Logan. Since the house alone could not provide adequate space for the army's needs, two long wooden buildings were built adjacent to it to the

north to serve as patient wards and as an office. To the east of the house, tents were erected to also accommodate the overflow. In the 1890s this house served briefly as a civilian hospital. In 1986 an addition was constructed on its south side.



*Henry Logan House*

### **Logan Memorial United Methodist Church**

*6<sup>th</sup> and Ann Streets*

This church housed Parkersburg's first black congregation and stands as a memorial to the philanthropy of Henry Logan and his wife, Lavina, who were generous in supporting black causes. In 1871, this lot was purchased and used until the present church was constructed in 1892. The old church was then moved to the back of the lot and used as a Sunday School and social hall until it was razed sometime in the early 20th century.



*Logan Memorial United Methodist Church*

### **Neale-Tebay House**

*331 Juliana Street*

This orange-red brick with stone trim is one of Parkersburg's finest examples of Greek Revival architecture. It was constructed in 1840 by George Neale, Jr. (1802-1880) who 13 years earlier had purchased the upper end of Blennerhassett Island from Harman Blennerhassett's Philadelphia business partner. The bricks used in this structure were fired on the island. The building, whose exterior was restored in 1974, is now owned by Robert Tebay and houses law offices.

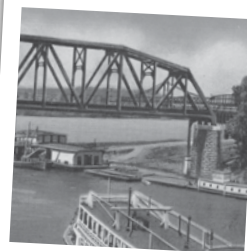


*Neale-Tebay House*

### **Ohio River Railroad Bridge**

*above 6<sup>th</sup> Street*

A branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad reached Parkersburg, Virginia in 1857, but lacking a bridge to cross the Ohio River, its trains had to be ferried across to Belpre, Ohio by barges. The first stone for the B&O Railroad Bridge was laid on July 9, 1869, and the structure was completed in December 1870. The first train crossed the bridge on January 7, 1871. At the time of its opening, it was the longest railroad bridge in the world, with a total length of 7,140 feet. Its construction cost was \$1,000,000 with money borrowed, as legend has it, from the eccentric and colorful financier Hetty Green, "the Witch of Wall Street." The bridge was remodeled around 1900, with the metal superstructure being moved from below the tracks to above them. The structure for many years has been the object of perennial complaints by river boat pilots who claim that it complicates what is already the worst bend in the Ohio River.



*Ohio River Railroad Bridge*

### **Oil and Gas Museum**

*108 3<sup>rd</sup> Street*

This museum, which opened in June 1990, is housed in a building constructed in 1874 by the W.H. Smith Hardware Company and used by it until 1988. The museum's many displays depict the origin and development of the American oil and gas industry and include engines, pumps and tools actually used in the oil and gas fields along with photographs and other early oil and gas artifacts. The museum includes displays on the history of local railroads and industry and an extensive exhibit of photographs and memorabilia from Parkersburg's past. A special room showcases a collection of Civil War items. (Admission fee)



*Oil and Gas Museum*

### **Point Park**

*through the Flood Wall at the foot of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street*

The site of Parkersburg's second oldest point of settlement, the north side of the mouth of the Little Kanawha River was called "The Point" in its earliest days. It served as the public landing for flatboats and river craft of all kinds that plied the Ohio River during the frontier era and westward migration. The State of Virginia had built a blockhouse at The Point in 1792 to shelter the soldiers stationed there to protect the settlers from Indians. Wood County's first courthouse was built at The Point following the settlement's selection as the county seat in November 1800. The two-story log structure was located at what is now the corner of First and Juliana Streets. In the Civil War days, the spot had not lost its bustle, for the Swann House, the city's finest hotel, stood



nearby at First and Ann Streets. This hotel was a magnet for army officers, politicians, oil men, merchants and many other travelers. In the 1920s and 1930s, "Murphy's Park" was created at The Point and proved to be a favorite gathering place. This park was destroyed when the Parkersburg flood wall was constructed in 1946-1950, but was reborn in 1982 under the name "Point Park," a venture developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and administered by the City of Parkersburg. In 2010-11 the park underwent a major renovation and expansion.

### ***St. Francis Xavier Church***

*532 Market Street*

Built in 1869 on the site of an earlier church and dedicated in 1870, this church is an adaptive Romanesque design with French Gothic influences. Designed by P. C. Keeley, the contractor was Lysander Dudley, Parkersburg's first architect. The church is distinguished by its magnificent murals and an imposing, hand-carved wooden altar. The building's exterior has changed very little over the years, thus preserving the original architecture.



*St. Francis Xavier Church*

### ***Smoot Theatre***

*213 5<sup>th</sup> Street*

Originally constructed in 1926 by the Smoot Amusement Company for vaudeville acts, the theater was converted as a showcase for films when live entertainment lost the public's favor. In 1930 it was sold to the Warner Brothers Company which redecorated the building. By the early 1980s, competition from television, video entertainment, mall cinemas and other entertainment rivals started the downhill decline of the large movie houses. The venerable Smoot closed in 1986, in a state of disrepair, and soon faced the prospect of a wrecking ball. At the last moment, however, it was saved when in 1989 a group of concerned citizens, utilizing both private and public funds purchased, renovated and reopened the theater. Its burgundy and cream color decor was restored along with its gilt molding. Hand-cut Austrian crystal chandeliers have enhanced the elegance of its art deco ceiling repainted with its design of yellow, lavender, burgundy, tan and blue. Although the theater's interior is now restored, many of its original features remain intact: Trap doors in the stage floor (which was made of maple and pine wood to vary the dancers' tapping sounds), a 65-foot-high stage height to accommodate the largest scenery and gas burners in the basement dressing rooms (which actresses used to heat their curling irons). Concerts, theatrical productions, comedy acts and vintage film showings now fill the Smoot Theatre's annual calendar of events.



*Smoot Theatre*

### ***Trinity Episcopal Church Complex***

*430 Juliana Street*

Built in 1878, the church's design is rich in architectural symbolism found in all true Gothic structures even to a single flying buttress and stained glass windows. The first permanent vicar, the Rev. Thomas Smith, who died in 1846, is buried beneath the floor of the church. The Rectory, erected in 1863, stands on the corner and is an excellent example of Victorian architecture. In the rear of the property is Trinity Hall. Built in 1881, it was originally a Sunday School whose construction was financed by children's events. Today it is used for church socials and other activities.



*Trinity Episcopal Church Complex*

### ***United States Post Office***

*4<sup>th</sup> and Juliana Streets*

Erected in 1930 at a cost of \$315,000 (well over three million dollars in today's inflated currency), this Renaissance Modern style structure remains a fine example of Depression era architecture. The marble-lined walls of its lobby and the brass work over the front doors are particularly striking decorative features. The adjacent Federal Building was constructed in the 1960s.



*United States Post Office*

### ***Wood County Courthouse***

*Court Square*

Begun in 1899, it is Wood County's fifth courthouse and the third one erected in Court Square on land donated by the heirs of Alexander Parker. The building is of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture featuring stilted arches and elaborate stone carvings. Caldwell & Drake of Columbus, Indiana, completed it at a cost of \$100,000, from plans by L. W. Thomas of Canton, Ohio. The sandstone used for the exterior was quarried from the nearby Quincy Hill.



*Wood County Courthouse*

# G R E A T E R PARKERSBURG

## Julia-Ann Square Historic District

Julia-Ann Square Historic District is one of two historic districts in downtown Parkersburg

and the largest historic district in West Virginia. Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, this section of Parkersburg contains 126 separate properties,

some of which are among the finest examples of Victorian architecture to be found in West Virginia. This area was once the social center of the county and home to Parkersburg's most prominent families. The majority of the district's structures date from 1850 to 1910.



Acton-Martin House

### Acton-Martin House

940 Juliana Street

Edward Acton, an Irish immigrant purchased this property in 1868 and resided there with his wife and seven children. In 1871 the home was purchased by Prussian born John G. Fischer in whose hands the home remained for many years. The home was built in the Italianate style, popular from 1850-1880. The bricks are handmade and the mortar is of sand and lime. (Private residence, not open for tours)



Ambler-Hanlon House

### Ambler-Hanlon House

109 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street

Built in 1870 by Benjamin Mason Ambler, this is one of the grandest homes in the district. The entry foyer contains a full 180-degree spiral staircase. The living room displays a sculptured marble fireplace and floor to ceiling windows. The home has five bathrooms, five bedrooms and a ballroom on the third floor. It also has a smoking room, music conservatory and den. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### Amiss-McCrory House

111 13<sup>th</sup> Street

Constructed in 1872, the Queen Anne Victorian style home has a continuous theme, "A Southern Victorian Serenade" that features a lush Southern style décor. Beautiful woodwork, magnificent crown moldings and hardwood floors are found throughout the house along with several stained glass windows and fireplaces in each room. (Private residence, not open for tours)



Amiss-McCrory House

### D.R. Bartlett-Wix House

1026 Ann Street

The home was originally built in the 1870s by D.R. Bartlett, a dentist. His dental office and his home were both housed here. The home has recently been renovated by Bonnie and Craig Wix. The home features a large main entrance with a 300 sq. ft. living room and library. The second floor is 1700 sq. ft. with three bedrooms, den and kitchen. (Private residence, not open for tours)



D.R. Bartlett-Wix House

### Boreman House

1201 Juliana Street

Established in 1830 the home was a part of the Demming Addition. It was purchased in 1861 by John F. Woods from Joseph Forsyth for \$900. Later it was sold to Arthur I. Boreman, the first Governor of West Virginia in 1863. In 1920 the house was inhabited by Boreman's daughter, Maude Cotton, who lived in the house until her death. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### Caswell-Critzer House

939 Juliana Street

Built by W.B. Caswell as a duplex for his two daughters in 1876, this home boasts six fireplaces and three sets of pocket doors. The sisters shared maids with quarters located on the third floor. Present day owners, Shawn and Brenda Critzer are restoring the home to its former Victorian glory. (Private residence, not open for tours)



Caswell-Critzer House

### Caswell-Smith House

1024 Juliana Street

This three-story 34-room house was constructed for Capt. William Butterworth Caswell, a West Virginia lumber baron. When completed in 1885, it was reported "There are no homes in the state that excel its finish." Caswell was one of the original partners that founded the Parkersburg Mill Company. Mr. Caswell served as one of the founding fathers of the Republican Party in West Virginia. Today the house has been completely restored to its original splendor. (Private residence, not open for tours)



Caswell-Smith House





*Chancellor-Burwell-Lowe-Brown House*

### ***Chancellor-Burwell-Lowe-Brown House***

*904 Juliana Street*

An architectural authority has called this 16-room red brick structure with 14-foot ceilings on the main floor "the most significant example of its style in the state." Of the Second Empire design, Colonel William Chancellor (1803-1908), a prominent oilman, railroad builder and real estate tycoon, completed the house in 1878. He served as mayor of Parkersburg (1874 and 1886) and in the state legislature. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Church-Currey House*

### ***Church-Currey House***

*1208 Ann Street*

Built in 1880 by M.C.C. Church, Civil War correspondent for the New York Tribune, and later a prominent oilman who built the first oil pipeline from the Volcano fields to Parkersburg, the house shows German and English influences. Artisans were brought from Europe to do stone work, lead glass windows and woodcarving. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Deming-Hayhurst House*

### ***Deming-Hayhurst House***

*1117 Juliana Street*

Constructed by Charles T. Deming circa 1853 (all told he built four homes in Parkersburg), this is one of the oldest houses in the district. Deming, a riverboat captain, added several additions to the house in his lifetime. Its architecture combines several 18<sup>th</sup> century styles including New England and Colonial Williamsburg. The original portion of the house (closest to Juliana Street) had two wood-burning fireplaces. The two buildings

in the rear housed servant's quarters and kitchen in one and a carriage house in the other. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Dils-Letich-Creel House***

*1103 Juliana Street*

This home was built in the Colonial Greek style circa 1899 for the Dils family who figured prominently in Parkersburg business circles. The structure features four imposing Corinthian columns adorned by rams horns and leaf carvings, 11 rooms, two staircases, eight fireplaces and a ballroom on the third floor. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Dils-Letich-Creel House*

### ***First United Methodist Church***

*10<sup>th</sup> & Juliana Streets*

This was the first church to be organized in Wood County and the first Methodist Church in the Mid-Ohio Valley. Organized in 1796 by a lay preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop Francis Asbury sent an ordained minister who established a church on June 1, 1799. After worshipping at four previous structures, the present church was erected in 1911.

### ***Galvin-Shaw-Burche-Link-Wilson House***

*931 Juliana Street*

The original part of this house was built in the early 1850s, but it has been enlarged and remodeled several times, the latest in the 1990s by the present owners. Some of the more notable owners have included Stephen Shaw, managing editor of a Parkersburg Newspaper and Dr. Samuel Quincy Adams Burche, a prominent local merchant. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Gerwig-Jones House***

*1008 Ann Street*

In 1891 this home was constructed by Edward Gerwig, a prominent businessman and civic leader, president of the Wood County Bank and partner in the firm of Bentley & Gerwig, whose furniture factory was located at 6th and Ann Streets. Exterior features are predominately Queen Anne. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Hornbrook-Smith House***

*1020 Ann Street*

Constructed in 1890 by Mr. W. Vrooman the home was later sold to Phillip Hornbrook a steamboat owner. The Hornbrooks lived in the house for the rest of their lives and their daughter Ruth founded the Wood County Humane Society. Upon her death the house was willed to the WCHS and then purchased by current owners Norman and Judith Smith. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Kahn-Vaughan-Atkinson House***

*1001 Ann Street*

This Victorian house was built circa 1890 by Samuel Kahn on property formerly owned by George Neal. Mr. Kahn was a clothier and his shop was located near the Blennerhassett Hotel. The structure features a round three-story turret, two bay windows with stained glass, 4.5 baths, seven bedrooms and hardwood floors. To the rear on West 10th Street is the Vaughan Funeral Home, originally the residence of Philip Neal. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*First United Methodist Church*



*Gerwig-Jones House*



*Hornbrook-Smith House*



*Kahn-Vaughan-Atkinson House*



*Leach-Mason House*

### ***Leach-Mason House***

*1214 Ann Street*

The land upon which this house is situated was deeded to the Leach family in 1796 from Judge Jackson. The original dwelling (the dormer-window section over the garage), was built of logs in 1840. In 1867, late Federal/Early Victorian style renovations and enlargements in front of the original structure gave the home its present appearance and relocated the main entrance to 13th Street. It is famous as the turn of

the century residence of Anna Leach, a young Parkersburg woman who gained fame as a New York newspaper reporter and was reputed to have been Jack London's mistress. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*McClandish-Blankenship House*

### ***McClandish-Blankenship House***

*1045 Ann Street*

Douglas Putnam, a wealthy Marietta, Ohio businessman, as a wedding present for his daughter, completed this Queen Anne style structure in 1884. Its interior is notable for its paneled woodwork, English winding stairways, fingered hardwood doorframes and hand carved mantles. Albert B. White, governor of West Virginia from 1901 to 1905, lived here. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*McClandish-Sammuel-Longacre-Leonard-Hollida House*

### ***McClandish-Sammuel-Longacre-Leonard-Hollida House***

*1121 Ann Street*

Constructed around 1880 by J. R. McClandish, a prominent oil and gas speculator, the house features a variety of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Italianate and Greek Revival. Three grand entrances off the back of the house allowed for lavish entertaining during the Victorian period and through the war years. Attendance was by invitation only and featured the elite of Parkersburg's society during the oil and

gas boom years from 1860-1920. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Neale-Sams House***

*1110 Ann Street*

Built about 1875 by Joseph B. Neale, this home is a fine example of French Second Empire architecture with a Georgian interior. The ceilings are 12 feet high, and the third floor has a large ballroom. The double front doors are solid walnut. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Neale-Sams House*

### ***Nelly-Estill House***

*1024 Ann Street*

This home was built in 1886 by Charles and Charlotte Bekurs. Their daughter Ida resided in the structure from 1895 until 1965. Ida was married to Ed Nelly who was the first president of Wood County Bank. Present owners Joe and Kay Estill purchased the home in 1972. The house's main lines are Eastlake and Victorian, featuring a hip roof and a gabled projection of wide dimensions on several elevations. Home features original gas chandeliers and nine fireplaces. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Nelly-Estill House*

### ***Shattuck-Huffman House***

*910 Juliana Street*

Charles Horace Shattuck, sheriff of Wood County in 1872, mayor of Parkersburg in 1871 and 1875 and founder of the Citizens National Bank, built the house in 1863. In 1890, he and James Monroe Jackson, Jr. organized the Parkersburg Electric Light Company. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Shattuck-Huffman House*

### ***Smith-Dodrill House***

*114 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street*

Gustavas Schmidt built this home in 1886 as a wedding present for his son Frank Smith and his bride Marcelena Clark Smith. The Queen Anne cottage features plaster works of bows and cupids on the ceiling of the first floor. The Dutch door and stained glass in the foyer are original. The exterior of the structure was restored by the present owners using a Victorian color scheme. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Smith-Dodrill House*

### ***Smith-Francis House***

*118 12<sup>th</sup> Street*

Contractor William Elliott built this home in 1895 for W. H. Smith Jr. The architect of this brick colonial was W. H. Patton. Attorney Levin Smith and his family were the original residents. The structure contains nine handcrafted gas fireplaces, several gas chandeliers and a butler calling system that remains in working order. The original carriage house is behind the main house, and Joseph H. Diss Debar, an artist from Doddridge County, WV, lived in a room on the second floor. While there he was commissioned by the state legislature to design the official state seal. His drawings were approved and have continued unchanged as the Official Seal of the State of West Virginia. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Smith-Francis House*





*Smith-Knapp House*

### ***Smith-Knapp House***

*1125 Juliana Street*

It was built in 1888 for William Haimes Smith and Columbia Duncan Jackson while they were honeymooning in Europe. Upon returning, they discovered the contractor had mistaken the internal room dimensions for the external ones making the house much smaller than intended. A point of interest is the original gas streetlight which is located near the fence. The columns forming the side patio were originally taken from the Bank of Virginia building that was located on Third

Street. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Van Winkle-Hiteshew-Duranti House***

*112 13<sup>th</sup> Street*

The house was built around 1872 by Walling Van Winkle, an attorney, director of the B&O Railroad and prominent entrepreneur in the early Parkersburg business community. Considerable remodeling and enlargements were done to the house around 1892 when electricity was installed. Intricate parquet floors of walnut, oak and mahogany are a feature of this structure. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### ***Van Winkle-Wix House***

*1209 Ann Street*

This Gothic-type red brick structure, built before 1870 and currently nicknamed "The Castle," was the home of the most important person to ever live in Parkersburg -- Peter Godwin Van Winkle. Born in New York in 1808, he moved to Wood County and quickly rose to prominence practicing law. He held a number of offices including that of president of the Parkersburg Board of Trustees (equivalent to mayor), treasurer and president of the Northwestern Virginia Railroad Company and West Virginia House of Delegates. He was one of West Virginia's first United States Senators (1863-1869) where he cast the deciding vote in President Andrew Johnson's 1868 impeachment trial that acquitted Johnson and ruined Van Winkle's career. A later owner greatly enlarged the structure by adding the wings and a third floor and reversing the stairwell. The home's original front faced Murdoch Avenue, a more fashionable thoroughfare at that time than Ann Street. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Van Winkle-Wix House*

### ***Waterman-Sullivan House***

*901 Juliana Street*

An elaborate Victorian home stood on this corner until its owner demolished it circa 1904. Mrs. Florence "Pink" Waterman then had this structure built, the finest example in West Virginia of a prairie school style house. Its architect, a follower of Frank Lloyd Wright, added definite Oriental touches. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Waterman-Sullivan House*

### ***Wiant-Davis-Badger House***

*1225 Juliana Street*

This frame house, originally constructed circa 1880, boasted one of the prominent architectural features of the Victorian Age -- a resplendent turret. Captain William T. Wiant, founder of Wiant and Barr Hardware, purchased the property in 1889, and in 1920 it underwent major remodeling and the turret was removed. The property underwent further renovation after 1974. The original iron gate and posts were preserved, keeping the integrity of the grounds intact. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Wiant-Davis-Badger House*



# G R E A T E R PARKERSBURG

## Other Wood County Locations

### **Belleville**

WV Route 68

Founded in 1785 by a group of Philadelphia merchants who owned a tract of 91,000 acres in the vicinity, Belleville is one of the earliest white settlements on the upper Ohio River. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, one of its founders, George D. Avery of Connecticut, built at least one ocean-going vessel at Belleville and grew extensive crops of hemp to supply the rope factories at Marietta, also a shipbuilding center. Belleville's prosperity was severely damaged by the Ohio River floods of 1884 and 1913 that successively destroyed most of the town. Since 1985, the Belleville Homecoming, held annually in September, has attracted former residents from all over the United States.



*Bickel Mansion*

### **Bickel Mansion**

WV Route 95

This stone house, completed in 1929, was the focal point for an elaborate private park (1929-1946) established by a Wood County oil and gas tycoon named William Henry "Wig" Bickel. Sitting on a knoll and surrounded by landscaped lawns, the house in the 1930s and 1940s -- until Mr. Bickel's death in 1946 -- was flanked by picnic grounds, playground and a zoo where bison, elk, deer, Texas burros, zebras or sacred cows, swans, geese, ducks, guinea hens, peacocks and turkeys were on display. Stables and a half mile race track, where harness races and horse shows were sponsored by Mr. Bickel, completed the estate's offerings to the public, who were admitted free of charge. Today the mansion serves as the home of a local law office.

### **Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park**

1.5 miles downriver from Point Park

This island, the fifth largest in the Ohio River, stretches 3.8 miles in length and contains 500 acres. Archeological excavations have revealed that the island was the home of Indians as early as 9000 BC. Since the early 1800s it has been the Ohio River's most famous island, deriving its renown from two exiled Irish aristocrats, Harman and Margaret Blennerhassett, who settled on it in 1798 after fleeing Ireland for political and personal reasons. They laid out a magnificent European-style estate



*Blennerhassett Island  
Historical State Park*

whose centerpiece, a Palladian mansion, contained 7,000 square feet of floor space. Landscaped gardens provided the backdrop for what became known as one of the most beautiful spots in the Ohio Valley. But the Blennerhassett's stay on the island was tragically short-lived. They allowed former vice president Aaron Burr to use their island as the base of operations for his controversial 1805-1807 military expedition to the Southwest, labeled by some historians as a "conspiracy." The local militia invaded the island in 1806 in search of Burr and the Blennerhassetts, causing Harman and Margaret to flee down river. They never returned to their island paradise. After the Burr treason trial, presided over by Chief Justice John Marshall, the wealthy couple lost the remainder of their large fortune and died in poverty. Their splendid mansion accidentally burned to the ground in 1811. Not until 1901 was it revealed that Harman and Margaret had come to America to hide a secret: that in addition to being husband and wife, they were also uncle and niece. Blennerhassett Island was farmed throughout the nineteenth century, and from 1886 to 1912 a private park was operated on the head of the island. During the 1920s, the suggestion was first made to develop the island into a state park. In 1966 the island was purchased by the E.I. DuPont de Nemours Company which leased it to the State of West Virginia for the development of a state park which opened in 1980. (Admission fee)

### **Avery Street Historic District**

19th, Spring, Quincy, 8th and Market Streets

National Register of Historic Places (1986). Mixed architecture (Queen Anne, Colonial Revival).

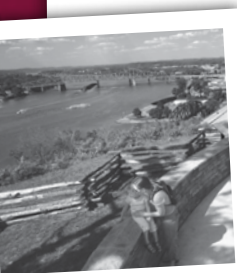
### **The Fenton Art Glass Museum**

420 Caroline Avenue, Williamstown

The Fenton Art Glass Company began its operations in Martins Ferry, Ohio, in 1905 decorating glass. Instead of making its own glassware, Fenton purchased other companies' products, which it then decorated and resold them to the public. Soon, however, Fenton officials decided they would have to start producing their own product. In 1906, Williamstown was selected as the firm's new home, and by January 1907 actual production had begun in the new facility. In an effort to preserve both its own heritage and that of the Ohio Valley glass industry, Fenton in April 1977 opened a museum exhibiting a collection of products made during the company's first seventy-five years (1905-1980) and examples of other glass companies. A stroll through the museum allows the visitor to see some of the most exquisite glass ever created in the United States and learn the story behind each piece. A 30-minute video tells the complete story of the making of Fenton glass.



*The Fenton  
Art Glass Museum*



*Fort Boreman  
Historical Park*

### **Fort Boreman Historical Park** *Off US 50, Marrtown Road Exit*

Overlooking Parkersburg and across the Little Kanawha River from the city, Fort Boreman Park was first named Mount Logan. During the Civil War, it was decided to build a fort on top of the hill to guard Parkersburg and the mouth of the Little Kanawha River which led to valuable oil fields at Burning Springs. The fort was constructed during the summer and fall of 1863 and named in honor of Arthur I. Boreman, West Virginia's first governor (1863-1869) and a leading citizen of Parkersburg. Upon completion,

136 Union soldiers were garrisoned here until the fall of 1865. The cannon at the fort was never fired in anger. The "pest house," structure used to house persons who contracted a contagious disease such as smallpox, was located at the south side of the fort's rampart and used by the city until the early 1900s. It was destroyed by fire early in the century. A tale about the "hangman's tree" is perhaps the most interesting facet of the hill's history. It involves three Wood County men who had murdered a neighbor in 1864 in an argument over the Civil War. The trio was arrested, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead on Fort Boreman. The sentence was carried out February 9, 1866, with considerable local ceremony. In prehistoric times, Fort Boreman was the site of a large Indian mound surrounded by a ditch and parapet. This magnificent structure survived until the 1860s when it was destroyed to make way for Fort Boreman. When Wood County's first courthouse was constructed circa 1802, the walnut logs that went into it were cut on Fort Boreman Hill, skidded down its sides into the Little Kanawha River, floated across and then retrieved for use. Today the hill is home to Fort Boreman Historical Park and features a partially reconstructed Union Civil War fortification, trenches, interpretive signage, picnic shelters and spectacular views of Parkersburg and the Ohio and Little Kanawha Rivers.

### **Henderson Hall**

*WV 14 south of Williamstown*

This ornate structure is a nineteenth-century time capsule.

The Hendersons, one of Wood County's pioneer families, once owned 25,000 acres in western Virginia in what are now Harrison, Wood, Wirt and Pleasants Counties with 2,600 acres of this tract in northern Wood County alone. The progenitor of the clan was Alexander Henderson, Sr., who came to Virginia in the late 1700s and grew wealthy by establishing what may have been America's first chain store operation. He was a close friend of George Washington and other Founding Fathers such as Thomas Jefferson and George Mason. It was Alexander's grandson, George Washington Henderson (1802-1866) who built in 1836

the first part that would evolve into Henderson Hall. This first, two-story rear section, called "Pohick Hall," was



*Henderson Hall*

enlarged from 1856 to 1859 into a Victorian Italianate mansion which, like its predecessor, was of brick fired on the estate. It was then given the name it still bears today, Henderson Hall. The mansion's interior has remained virtually unchanged from the way it must have looked in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and features two centuries of furniture, paintings, photographs, an extensive manuscript collection, tools, kitchen equipment and musical instruments. (Admission fee)

### **Henry Cooper Log Cabin Museum**

*Parkersburg City Park*

Believed to have been constructed about 1805 by Henry Cooper, one of the first settlers of Wood County, this two-story log house was originally located on Elizabeth Pike at Mineral Wells about nine miles from Parkersburg. In 1910 it was dismantled and moved to the City Park to serve as part of the city's centennial observance that year of its incorporation as a town and its renaming as "Parkersburg." In 1911 the house became the headquarters and museum of the Centennial Chapter of the Daughters of the American Pioneers which organized in 1899 and is Wood County's oldest surviving historical organization. The DAP is a ladies' national historic preservation group, which at its peak in the 1930s, consisted of nine chapters. The cabin was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The Cooper Log Cabin, which is Wood County's first history museum, is open to the public every Sunday (Memorial Day to Labor Day). It exhibits a fascinating assortment of artifacts dating from the 1700s to the 1900s including furniture, clothing, photographs, one of the United States' largest button collections and wood from a tree planted by Johnny Appleseed.



*Henry Cooper  
Log Cabin Museum*

### **Neal's Station**

*East Street and Camden Avenue*

This historic place is located on the south bank of the Little Kanawha River one mile from its mouth and just east of East Street. It marks the site of Parkersburg's first settlement made in 1785 by Captain James Neal. Captain Neal's "station" (the name often given in Kentucky and western Virginia to small fortifications) consisted of a two-story log blockhouse and a cluster of cabins. It was where Captain Neal and a number of settlers in the immediate area lived for the next 10 years while the danger of Indian attack remained. The population of the stockade (which was sometimes called "Kanawha Station" but never "Fort Neal") was small. According to one authentic account, it never sheltered more than six families during the Indian Wars (1791-1795). During the summer of 1789, two small boys who lived near the station were ambushed by Indians and tomahawked to death. Soon after, in the middle of the night, the Indians returned. They tried to set fire to the blockhouse while the people inside were asleep. Mrs. Neal happened to be

awake and managed to put out the fire. After 1795, Neal's Station gradually fell into ruins. What was left of it washed away during a flood of the Little Kanawha River in 1832. Today, a West Virginia state historical marker stands in the vicinity to call attention to the site where Parkersburg began.

### ***Oakland (James Stephenson House)***

*1131 7<sup>th</sup> Street*

This large, red brick Greek revival and late Georgian structure is one of the area's most gracious homes. Its builder, James McNeil Stephenson, was a prominent Wood County lawyer and businessman whose plantation encompassed 1,000 acres and stretched to the Little Kanawha River. The mansion's raising was long delayed. The reason is explained in the 1941 WPA-produced book, *West Virginia Guide to the Mountain State*: "Construction of the house...was started...in 1833 but not finished until 10 years later, largely because much of the work was done by slave labor of materials made on the estate. Early attempts to make brick without expert direction failed and the first walls erected fell of their own weight. Finally, a skilled German foreman was put in charge." The house is still occupied by the descendants of J.M. Stephenson. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Oakland*

### ***Parkersburg City Park***

*1920 Park Avenue between 17<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets*

In 1897, 40 acres on this site were purchased by the City of Parkersburg as a park for \$20,000. Another 15 acres were added later. Formerly owned by the Wood County Agricultural and Mechanical Fairground Association, the area had long been a fairgrounds and racetrack. Although the Parkersburg City Council officially named it "Oak Wood Park," the public disliked the name, choosing instead to simply call it "The City Park," which officially became its name in 1911. Improvement of the new facility soon followed with electricity installed in 1903 and the first water lines laid in 1911. This

later addition allowed for the creation of the park's most famous landmarks: two lily ponds and a large ornamental water fountain. The largest of the lily ponds was located near 23rd Street and Park Avenue and was originally built in the early 1890s as a quarter-mile racing track for bicycles. In the early 1900s, it was deepened and filled with water to become known as the largest man-made lily pond in the world. The lilies were removed circa 1980. In 1905, J.M. Jackson, Jr. bequeathed \$5,000 for the purpose of erecting a fountain at the park, and William Willard Jackson, executor of the will, purchased the fountain while on his wedding trip to New York City. This fountain, recently restored, stands at the park's main entrance at 17th Street and Park Avenue on land purchased by the city from John S. Camden.



*Parkersburg City Park*

### ***Phelps-Tavener House***

*2501 Camden Avenue*

Erected in 1808 by Colonel Hugh Phelps, one of Wood County's earliest settlers and its second sheriff, the structure was acquired by his son-in-law, Colonel Thomas Tavenner. Tavenner's family owned the house until his last grandchild died in 1940. The Phelps-Tavener House is the oldest residential dwelling now standing in Parkersburg originally built here. The structure was restored in the 1940s at which time its brick exterior was stuccoed and its early 19th-century outbuildings torn down. (Private residence, not open for tours)



*Phelps-Tavener House*

### ***Sumnerite African-American History Museum***

*1016 Avery Street*

In January 1862, seven black men established a free public school for their children. This was not only the first free public school for blacks in what is now West Virginia, but the first south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Sumner School, founded in 1874, was an outgrowth of the first school and became the first West Virginia high school to be integrated in 1955. The original Sumner School building has been razed, but its 1926 gymnasium remains. In 1991 it was opened as the Sumnerite Museum, the first black museum in West Virginia. Its large number of displays includes many old photographs, art, printed items and other relics including a "beaten biscuit machine" used by an early black caterer.



*Sumnerite African-American History Museum*

### ***Tillinghast Cook House***

*1301 Murdoch Avenue*

Built in 1829 by Tillinghast A. Cook, a son of Joseph Cook, one of the area's first settlers. The bricks for this small Federal style house were fired on the premises and the wood used was cut nearby. Restored by Elizabeth Wolfe Eddy and now the headquarters of the Junior League of Parkersburg, this is the second oldest house still standing in Parkersburg. (Not open for tours)



*Tillinghast Cook House*





*Tomlinson House*

### **Tomlinson House**

901 3rd Street (WV 14), Williamstown  
This Federal-style two-story brick home overlooking the Ohio River was built in 1839 by Joseph Tomlinson, III, and is Williamstown's earliest surviving dwelling. He was the grandson of the town's earliest settler, a member of the Virginia General Assembly and a civic leader. The house originally had nine rooms and was a social center for the area in the mid-1800s. Famed naturalist John J. Audubon spent summers here studying birds of the Ohio Valley.

Bricks on the mansion's exterior, which lay three deep, were fired on the grounds. The Tomlinson family owned the house until 1968. (Private residence, not open for tours)

### **Washington Avenue District**

Washington, Park and Dudley Avenues

Colonial, Late Gothic and Tudor Revival architecture present. Parkersburg High School is also included as part of this district.



*Veterans Museum of Mid-Ohio Valley*

### **Veterans Museum of Mid-Ohio Valley**

1829 7th Street

The museum offers over 1,700 square feet of displays honoring veterans of all services from World War I to the present while educating the public on their contributions. The museum also includes a video and book library for research.

### **Volcano**

Situated about 15 miles east of Parkersburg off US Route 50, Volcano is famous as Wood County's only oil boom town. The community was situated in a rocky ravine, and gained its name from a peculiar formation in the region's rocks which were thought to resemble that of a volcano. Volcano's brief period of glory began in March 1865 when a deep drilled well was brought in starting a stampede of drillers, mainly from Oil City, Pennsylvania, eager to get rich. At its peak, the town's population was 3,500. Its opera house was reportedly the largest in the state, and so lavish in scale and furnishings that it was frequented by most of the theatrical road companies of the day. In addition, the town contained several stores, hotels, saloons, warehouses, two newspapers, two schools, a post office, church and two sporting houses, "The Golden Horn" and "The Red Rooster." Volcano possessed its own railroad, constructed in 1866 and demolished in 1899, called the Laurel Fork and Sand Hill Railroad. It was said to be the first standard gauge built in West Virginia. Being located in a district of abundant natural gas, the town used this natural resource to light its streets, one of the first communities in the United States to do so. By the late 1870s the oil beneath the town was nearly exhausted. Then on August 8, 1879, a fire set by an arsonist burned most of the town within two hours. It was never rebuilt on its former scale. The site, now part of Wood County's Mountwood Park, has reverted to nature and is devoid of any buildings.



*Volcano*

## *Did You Know?*



*American Viscose*

### **The Shovel That Built America**

The largest shovel plant in the world, the Ames Company, resided in Parkersburg until the mid-1990s. Ames shovels are said to have been used to dig the trenches at the Battle of Bunker Hill. The company was founded in the early 1770s.

### **The World's Largest Rayon Mill**

At one time, Parkersburg was the site of the world's first and largest rayon plant, American Viscose, on the City's southside.

### **"Better Than Marble"**

One of two plants in the world to manufacture Vitrolite, the colored glass billed as "Better Than Marble," was operated in Vienna by Libby-Owens-Ford Company. Vitrolite was widely used in homes and public buildings, including the Empire State building in New York City.

### **It Floats**

Floating soap, later sold by Procter & Gamble as "Ivory," was first developed at Parkersburg's Upson Oil & Soap Works, also the home of world-famous French Process Laundry Soap.

### **Free City Delivery**

The Parkersburg Post Office was one of the first in the country to offer free city mail delivery beginning in 1887.

### **"Savings Bond Capital of America"**

Parkersburg could be called the "Savings Bond Capital of America." Since 1957, when the U.S. Treasury Department's Bureau of Public Debt was moved here, every U.S. Savings Bond bought or redeemed has passed through Parkersburg for processing.



*Post Office*

# G R E A T E R PARKERSBURG

## Historic Cemeteries

### *Dils Cemetery*

*East 7<sup>th</sup> Street (WV 618)*

Although the earliest tombstones have lost their inscriptions, it is known they date from the first decade of the nineteenth century. While the Dils family started this as a private burial ground, it gradually became a public cemetery. When the Northwest Turnpike (US 50) was built in 1837, the grounds were enlarged to meet its boundaries. On March 6, 1868, Wood County's last public execution by hanging took place here. The executed man was a murderer named Joseph Eisele, alias John Schafer. He was then buried in the cemetery in an unmarked grave.



*Dils Cemetery*

### *Holliday Cemetery*

*6<sup>th</sup> Street and Gale Avenue*

One of the most picturesque of Parkersburg's old cemeteries, Holliday is located near the Little Kanawha River and has a deep ravine running through its center.

Stone walls constructed during the

1930s by Civilian Conservation Corps labor mark two sides. The cemetery's earliest known burials date to 1811. At least two other markers record burials in 1818. Lying in an unmarked grave is Ransom Reed, Harman and Margaret Blennerhassett's favorite and most famous servant. A number of Civil War soldiers, both Union and Confederate, are buried in this small cemetery.

### *Mount Olivet Cemetery*

*23<sup>rd</sup> Street near the City Park*

This cemetery was established around 1900. It is one of the area's largest cemeteries comprising more than 65 acres. Many prominent local, state and national political figures, as well as community leaders, are interred here including former West Virginia Governor Albert B. White. Several Civil War veterans, both Union and Confederate, are also buried in this cemetery.

### *Neal Cemetery*

*12<sup>th</sup> Street, Vienna*

Also known in former days as the John Cook Cemetery. Among its interments are veterans of eight wars including the French and Indian War (1756-1783), the Civil War (1861-1865) and the Spanish-American War (1898). Other notables buried here include President Andrew Jackson's great grandfather and a relative of President Zachary Taylor.

### *Parkersburg Memorial Gardens*

*24<sup>th</sup> Street behind Parkersburg High School*

Formerly called the IOOF or Odd Fellows Cemetery.

### *Riverview Cemetery*

*13<sup>th</sup> and Ann Streets*

Also known in former days as the Cook Graveyard, this is one of the most beautiful and historic cemeteries in West Virginia. It started as a family plot but gradually evolved into public use. For many years Riverview was called the Cook Family Cemetery, as it was located on their farm.

There is some proof, however, that the spot may have been a cemetery before the Cooks acquired the land, as the earliest burial in the cemetery is one B.W. Jackson who died in 1801. More distinguished Wood County citizens are buried here than in any other local cemetery. The list of famous names includes two West Virginia governors, Jacob B. Jackson and William E. Stevenson; one congressman; eight Parkersburg mayors; four clerks of the Wood County court; three Wood County sheriffs; six justices of the Wood County court and many early pioneers. Peter Van Winkle, one of the first United States Senators from West Virginia and the man who cast the deciding vote in the 1868 impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, was interred here in 1872. One interesting marker is inscribed entirely in Chinese letters and another displays a sailing ship beautifully carved in bold relief.



*Riverview Cemetery*

### *Spencer Park*

*28<sup>th</sup> Street and Williams Avenue, Vienna*

Once the burial ground for the family of Vienna's founder, Joseph Spencer (died 1824), the City of Vienna purchased the ground, removed the markers to one central location and turned the property into a park for the use of neighborhood children.

### *Tavener Cemetery*

*Camden Avenue between Hugh and Hamilton Streets*

This cemetery is located on land granted to Colonel Hugh Phelps (died 1824) who came to Parkersburg in the 1780s with his father-in-law, Captain James Neal, and later served as the county's second sheriff. In 1823, Phelps sold the property to his son-in-law, Thomas Tavener. Born in Loudoun County, Virginia, in 1776, Tavener settled in Wood County in the 1790s. He amassed such huge quantities of property that when he died in 1857, he owned 2.5 square miles of land. According to its earliest legible tombstone inscriptions, burials took place in this cemetery as early as 1816. There are doubtless other gravesites predating even this year, however, the lettering on the oldest stones is worn away.



*Tavener Cemetery*


Sincere thanks to Bob Enoch, Jess Mancini,  
Dr. Robert Crooks and the many other individuals  
who contributed historical information to this guide.

G R E A T E R  
**PARKERSBURG**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau

350 7<sup>th</sup> Street | Parkersburg, WV 26101

304-428-1130 | 800-752-4982

[GreaterParkersburg.com](http://GreaterParkersburg.com)



*Parkersburg*  
Revolutionary for 200 years

**West Virginia**  
*Wild and Wonderful*