

# Beverly, West Virginia – Small Town, Big History

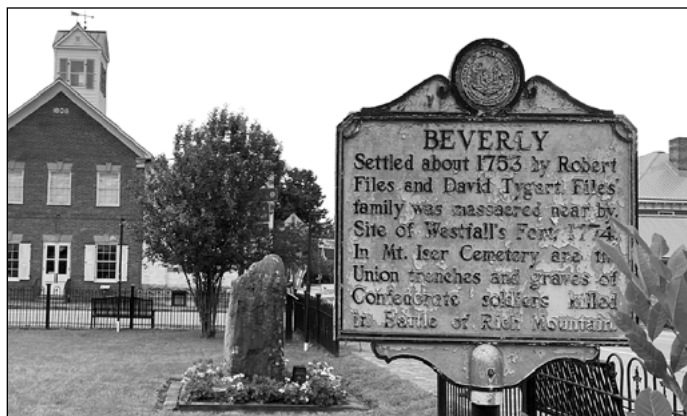
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## Educational Objectives

- Participants will recognize the significance of the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike to Beverly.
- Participants will be able to identify three historical landmarks in Beverly.
- Participants will be able to distinguish museums and experiences available in Beverly.

Beverly is a small, rural town in Randolph County, West Virginia. Situated in the Allegheny Highlands Region of Eastern West Virginia, Beverly is within 1½ to 3 ½ hours driving distance of Morgantown

and Charleston, West Virginia, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Charlottesville, Virginia, and within four hours of Columbus, Ohio and Washington, D.C. Beverly also serves as a gateway to the Monongahela National Forest and its many recreational uses.



## Town History

Beverly is a small town with a big history. First known as Edmundton, the town was chartered as Beverly in 1790 and established as the county seat of Randolph County, Virginia. The county seat remained in Beverly for over one hundred years. Between 1790-1830, 12 of the town's most pivotal structures, including the county courthouse and jail, were built from brick, logs and sawn lumber.

The 1840s brought the construction of the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike, a historic road from Virginia's upper Shenandoah Valley to the Ohio River. The turnpike had a toll booth at Beverly and traveled straight through the town on what is now the main road. The Beverly bridge builder, Lemuel Chenoweth, was contracted to build many bridges on the turnpike including a covered bridge once in Beverly directly beside his residence. Although not on the turnpike, his talents can still be seen in the famous Philippi Covered Bridge.

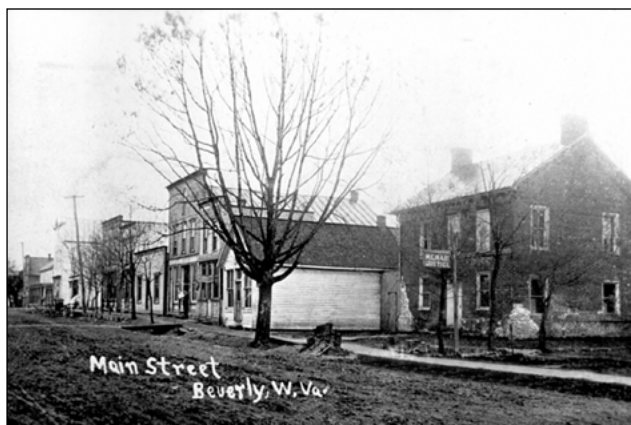
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The 20 years prior to the Civil War were good ones for Beverly. The town had at least 400 residents, three hotels, two taverns, numerous stores, furniture builder, a small toy factory and shops for blacksmiths, gunsmiths, shoemakers and a harness maker. Beverly had become an important trade center in the Tygart Valley.

Contributing to the growth of Beverly and many other towns, the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike was worth fighting for. The turnpike was a vital link between central Virginia and its western counties, and it gave access to the B&O Railroad. In one of the first campaigns of the Civil War, troops fought for control of this turnpike at the Battle of Rich Mountain, five miles west of Beverly. The battle gave Union troops control of the turnpike, the Tygart Valley, the Western part of Virginia and the railroad. Much of the area crossed by the turnpike is now West Virginia.

Following the Union victory at Rich Mountain, many Southern supporters left their homes empty and headed south. Union troops occupied Beverly, boarding soldiers in homes, building huts and forts, and setting up hospitals. Visitors today can still see graffiti from soldiers on the walls of many buildings in town, including the antique shop, which served as a hospital during the Civil War. Beverly was raided four times by Confederate troops during the Civil War but remained in Union control.

After the war, Beverly, now in West Virginia, slowly recovered as homes and stores were rebuilt and new businesses came to town. The nearby railroad town of Elkins was founded in 1890, and although the railroad was brought to Beverly in 1891, Elkins remained the primary shipping center. The commerce of Elkins brought much expansion to the town and within three years Elkins had five times the population of Beverly. This began Randolph County's own "civil war"—a struggle for the county seat. Beverly built a new courthouse in 1894 in hopes of remaining the county seat, but suspiciously, this courthouse burned in 1897. After near-bloodshed events, the court eventually ruled in Elkins' favor in 1899 and Elkins became, and remains today, the county seat of Randolph County, WV.



Even without the county seat, Beverly continued to grow. The Beverly Bank, a notable building in the town, opened on Jan. 1, 1900. Several other buildings including stores, the Masonic Lodge, and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall were constructed over the next ten to 15 years. These structures completed the look that Beverly still has today.

## Historical Landmarks

Having such a significant history, it's fitting that Beverly has an abundance of significant sites to see. There are nearly four dozen historical landmarks of note within Beverly, and most of these locations are recognized by the National Register of Historic Places under the Beverly Historic and the Butcher Hill Historic designated districts. Most of these structures are residential, with a commercial section centralized around the public square. Architecturally, the dominant design features are of Federal and Victorian styles, with elements of Neoclassical, Greek and Gothic revivals also present.

The Beverly Heritage Center, an absolute must-see, is a local interpretive museum and visitor center. It is made up of four prominent landmarks: the 1900 Beverly Bank, the 1808 Randolph County Courthouse, the 1912 Aries Hill Building and the 1856 Bushrod Crawford House. The 1808 Courthouse helped Beverly serve as the county seat until 1899 when it moved to Elkins. In 1861, the Bushrod Crawford house also served as General George McClennan's headquarters.



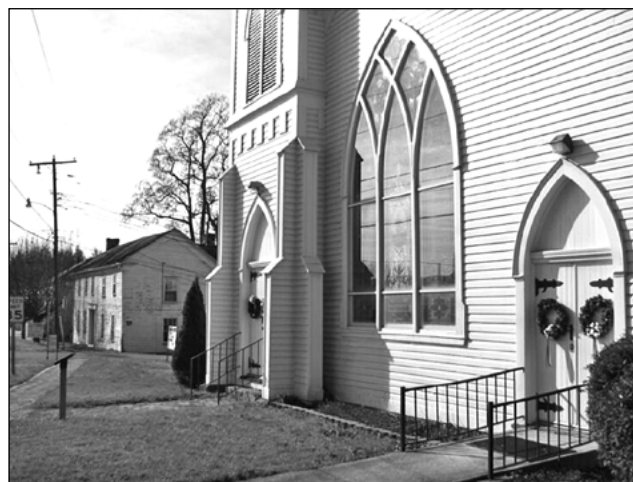
Another historic building is the Blackman-Bosworth Store. Built in 1828, the building served as a mercantile store run by David Blackman until the Civil War, when it was used as a commissary by Union soldiers, who even left their marks as graffiti on the upstairs walls. The building later became a post office and print shop, where the first Randolph Enterprise was printed. In 1881, Squire Newton Bosworth acquired the property for the operations of his store and family home. In 1973, the Blackman-Bosworth Store was purchased by the Randolph County Historical Society and restored to its present state as the Randolph County Museum.

Beverly is also home to numerous noteworthy residences which make up the majority of historical sites. The Chenoweth House, built in 1856, belonged to the remarkable architect and bridgebuilder Lemuel Chenoweth. Aside from constructing this home, Chenoweth is best known for building the many covered bridges which can be found along the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike. The Humboldt Yokum House is a visually unique Queen Anne-style home, built in 1890 by Dr. Humboldt Yokum, once president of the Beverly Bank. One of the oldest houses is the Montgomery Hart/Collett House, built circa 1772. The earliest known Civil War graffiti is located here, and this building was once a tavern, hotel and Civil War hospital.

Other sites include the Beverly Cemetery, in which the first recorded burials date 1768, as



*The 1900 Beverly Bank and the 1808 Courthouse, both part of the Beverly Heritage Center.*



*Beverly Presbyterian Church with Montgomery Hart/Collett House in the background.*

well as the Mt. Iser Confederate Cemetery. Two churches, the Beverly Methodist and Beverly Presbyterian, which has a distinct stained-glass window, showcase details of Gothic revival architecture. Beverly also has two jails, the 1813 jail also known as the second Randolph County jail, and the 1841 jail, currently an exhibit and escape room experience.

## Visiting Beverly

One of the best ways to experience all Beverly has to offer is by taking a self-guided walking tour of the town. If one is looking for guided tours, the Beverly Heritage Center offers many options, the most popular being the Lantern Tour. Set in October, guides lead guests through the town by lantern light, sharing Beverly's more macabre history.

Aside from sightseeing, Beverly is also host to many events worth attending. The Beverly Heritage Days is a weekend-long event, annually in July, celebrating the town's rich history. The event features interactive experiences such as reenactment camps with living history demonstrations and activities. Old-Fashioned Christmas is later in the year, taking place the first weekend of December. Local families flock to this event, with giveaways, music and a visit from a 19th century inspired Father Christmas.



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A visit to Beverly is unique in every season. Year-round, visitors can experience an escape room in the 1841 jail and tour the Beverly Heritage Center. Outdoor enthusiasts love Beverly's proximity to the Monongahela National Forest and several state parks and forests. There is plenty to see and do in this region on a day trip, long weekend, or an extended stay. Along main street and beyond, the quaint town of Beverly is an exceptional place to explore.

## Club Ideas:

- Share where you grew up or where you live now. What is the historical significance of your hometown?
- Learn more about the Battle of Rich Mountain by exploring [beverlyheritagecenter.org/rich-mountain-battlefield/](https://beverlyheritagecenter.org/rich-mountain-battlefield/)
- Explore the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike by vehicle or at [www.spturnpike.org/](https://www.spturnpike.org/)

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