

MARYLAND
BYWAYS

Catoctin Mountain

5



While the hardwood forests encircling Catoctin Mountain are a natural wonder, serving as a sanctuary for wildlife and plants, surrounding towns offer a deep exploration of the area's rich industrial heritage. The mountain's old paths and roads trace a variety of traditional Appalachian entrepreneurial endeavors, including farms, sawmills and the making of moonshine.

Catoctin Mountain – the easternmost spur of the Blue Ridge Province – rises to its greatest elevation of 1,885 feet above sea level in Thurmont's Catoctin Mountain Park and then is split by a gap at Point of Rocks on the Potomac River. In between, travelers on this state and national scenic byway can follow two "loops" for easy access to a variety of historic

sites, the state's highest waterfall, and abundant trails for hiking and biking.

Emmitsburg to Point of Rocks – US 15, MD 806, US 340, US 15

Just south of the Pennsylvania border is Emmitsburg. To orient you to the heritage and culture throughout this byway, a great place to start your adventure is at the Mason and Dixon Discovery Center. During the Civil War, troops passed through this area while going to and from the Battle of Gettysburg. Union troops camped on the grounds of the former St. Joseph's College, and officers planned battle strategies in the former home of the school's founder, Elizabeth Ann Seton. A National Shrine honors Mother Seton, who was the first American-born saint, has a visitor center, basilica and restored period



95 miles from Emmitsburg to Point of Rocks



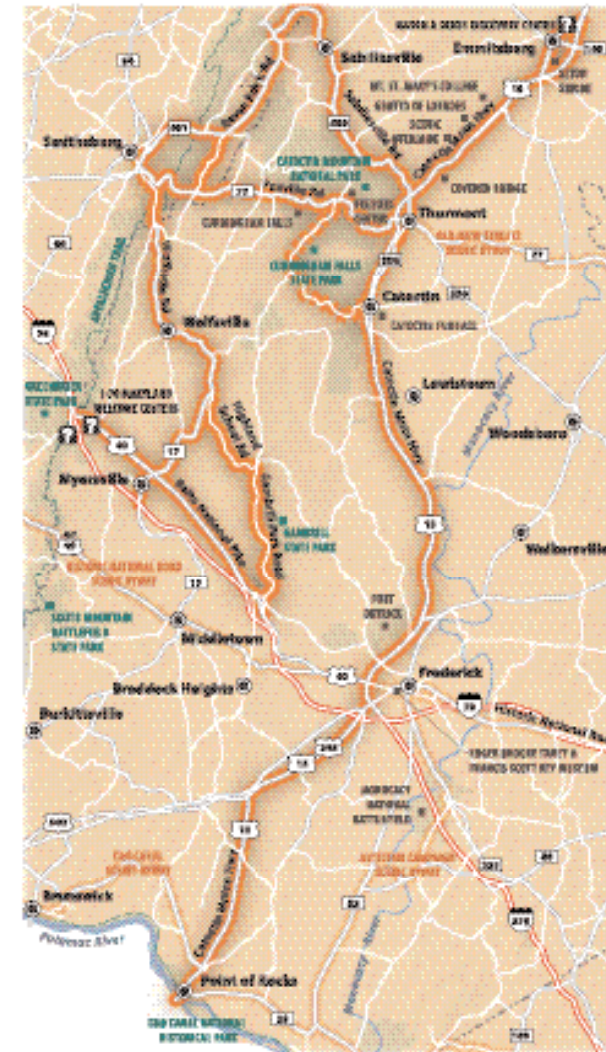
buildings. Nearby, you will find the National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes, which is situated high on the mountainside, where nature displays itself in all its wild and picturesque glory.

Continue south to see the circa-1856 Roddy Road Covered Bridge, which stretches for 40 feet over one of the area's finest trout streams. Here, you can branch off from US 15 onto MD 77 and enjoy an Upper Loop tour that traverses both a national park and a state park. The Upper Loop is connected via MD 17 to a Lower Loop that touches the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. See descriptions for both the Upper Loop and Lower Loop below.

Nearby is the 50-acre Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo, where, for nine months out of the year, you can

visit with lemurs, monkeys, panthers and more than 400 other animals.

Back on US 15 and entering Frederick, this byway overlaps with two others – the Antietam Campaign (pages 39-46) and Historic National Road (pages 7-18). The town has seemingly played a part in every major chapter of American history for the last 260 years. Guided walking tours and candlelight ghost tours take visitors past breathtaking architecture and several sites linked to celebrated "locals" such as "Star-Spangled Banner" writer Francis Scott Key and



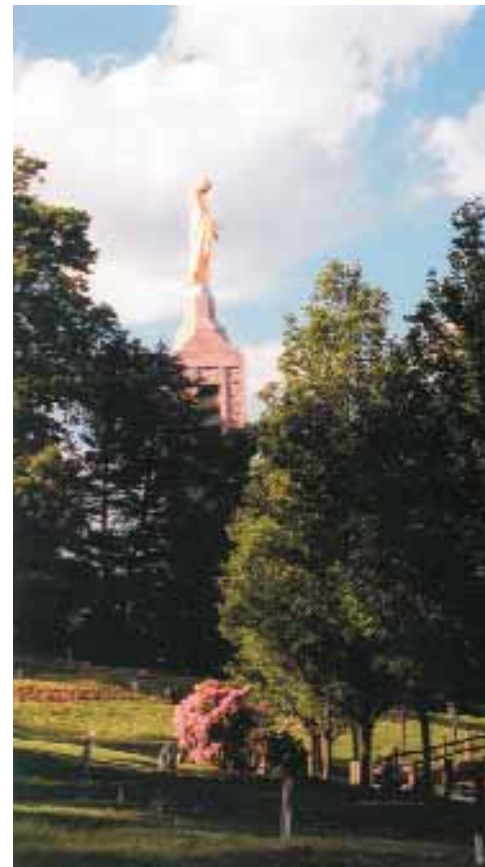
Key's father-in-law, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney. Dozens of specialty shops, art galleries, antiques stores and restaurants also occupy Downtown Frederick.

This byway concludes at Point of Rocks, which achieved national recognition in 1830 when the B&O Railroad and C&O Canal fought over the right of way between Catoctin Mountain and the Potomac River. The railroad finally tunneled through the mountain in 1867, but you can pick up the C&O Canal scenic byway (pages 27-38) here at its midway point.

Upper Loop from Thurmont – MD 77, 491 & 550

Head west on MD 77 to cross Catoctin Mountain and ascend beside cool, clear Big Hunting Creek and its

tributary, Cunningham Falls. The creek is a favorite among anglers seeking trout. Catoctin Mountain Park, which lies to the north of the highway, is federal property acquired in 1936 as an experiment in developing forest on marginal land. The Camp David presidential retreat located here is closed to the public, but several nearby paths trace the history of the industrial use of the mountain. Near the park's visitor center, a short interpretive trail takes you to the Blue Blazes Still, where moonshine makers turned out 25,000 gallons of corn whiskey before the still was raided and shut down in 1929. At the other end of the park is a sawmill replica built on the site of a real sawmill that operated into the late 1890s. Other trails explore the wood-cutting industry and the life of colliers who practiced charcoal making.



On the south side of MD 77 is Cunningham Falls State Park, the centerpiece of which is a 78-foot waterfall that cascades into a rocky gorge. Hike from a picnic area off Catoctin Hollow Road, and also enjoy a swim in the 43-acre Hunting Creek Lake. At the southern end of the park is the Catoctin Furnace, which was in operation from 1776 until 1905, and once was manned by African craftsmen. Trails lead to a furnace stack and the iron master's manor house.

Pass through the town of Smithsburg, which, when founded in 1806 at the base of South Mountain, served as a banking and trading center for the area's fruit growers. Follow MD 491 beyond Cascade and into Pen Mar. The Western Maryland Railway developed this area as a mountain resort and amusement park. Next, take MD

550 through Blue Ridge Mountain forest and farmland toward Sabillasville. The highway here was originally called Old Gap Road and connected the Catoctin Furnace with forges in Pennsylvania.

Lower Loop from Smithsburg – MD 17, Highland School Rd, Gambrill Park Rd, US 40, MD 17

Travel over South Mountain into Wolfsville, and then continue south on MD 17, skirting the pastoral valley carved by Middle Creek. Bear left on Highland School Road, which crosses the summit of Catoctin Mountain, and then turn right to enter Gambrill State Park. Pause on the 1,600-foot summit of High Knob to view Middletown and the Monocacy Valley stretched out below, and also enjoy hiking and mountain biking throughout the area.



Don't put away your hiking boots just yet, because you'll soon be coming up on one of the premier hiking opportunities in the United States. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail stretches more than 2,000 miles from Maine to Georgia, and Maryland's 40-mile portion passes near Greenbrier State Park. Follow US 40 to Greenbrier, which also features a 42-acre freshwater lake, as well as "mountain stones" that provide a glimpse into the earth's geologic history. From Greenbrier, take Route 17 to complete the lower loop and join MD 77.

OLD LINE LORE: *Camp Hi Catoctin, in what was then known as the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, was adapted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as his personal mountain*

retreat during World War II and named "Shangri-La." Dwight Eisenhower renamed the presidential retreat Camp David after his grandson.

Blue Blazes Whiskey Still
Catoctin Mountain Park
6602 Foxville Rd
Thurmont, 21788
301-663-9388
www.nps.gov/cato

Catoctin Furnace
Cunningham Falls State Park
Catoctin Furnace Rd, Rt 806
Thurmont, 21788
301-271-7574
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/cunninghamfalls.html



Catoctin Mountain Park
MD Rt 77, 6602 Foxville Rd
Thurmont, 21788
301-668-9388
www.nps.gov/cato

Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo
13019 Catoctin Furnace Rd
Thurmont, 21788
301-271-3180
www.cupzoo.com

Cunningham Falls State Park
14039 Catoctin Hollow Rd
Thurmont, 21788
301-271-7574
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/cunninghamfalls.html

Gambrill State Park
US Rt 40, 3 miles west of Frederick,
Gambrill Park Rd

Frederick, 21702
301-271-7574
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/gambrill.html

Greenbrier State Park
21843 National Pike
Boonsboro, 21713
301-791-4767
www.dnr.state.us/publiclands/western/greenbrier.html

National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
333 S Seton Ave
Emmitsburg, 21727
301-447-6606
www.setonshrine.org



Roddy Road Covered Bridge

North of Thurmont, off US 15

Thurmont, 21788

301-228-2888, 1-800-999-3613

www.visitfrederick.org

Roger Brooke Taney & Francis Scott Key Museum

121 S Bentz St

Frederick, 21701

301-228-2828, 1-800-999-3613

