

# WEST VIRGINIA

105

## Lewisburg

Deep in the heart of West Virginia's Allegheny Mountains, Lewisburg seems out of place, a cultural and recreational enclave in a land known for poverty and struggle. Here, residents—artists, retirees, shopkeepers—inhabit tidy colonial buildings on tree-shaded streets and shop in quaint boutiques filled with upscale art, New Age remedies, and handmade crafts. They dine at notable restaurants and

companies offer bike rentals and shuttle services, including Blue Blaze Bike & Shuttle Service (540-475-5095 or 800-475-5095).

**William King Regional Arts Center** (415 Academy Dr. 540-628-5005. Closed Mon.; donation) Three galleries, working studios, and a sculpture garden  
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### NTS

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A local alley blooming with  
roads comes alive with music,  
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**lands Festival** (1st 2 weeks  
3440) This festival celebrates  
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8-1111. \$\$) Seafood, pastas,  
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ular hangouts.

**st Cafe** (134 Wall St. at  
528-8445. \$\$) Eat gourmet  
ish seafood, pasta, and  
rées; view local art exhibits

222 E. Main St. 540-628-1118. \$\$)  
e oldest building in Abingdon, the  
is classic American cuisine.

### STAY

**hington Inn** (150 W. Main St.  
or 800-555-8000. \$\$\$) One of  
veliest inns features 61 beautiful  
with canopy beds.

**Inn** (102 E. Main St. 540-676-  
; charming 1871 home, with four  
decorated rooms and a suite,  
the site of a silversmith shop.

**Id Inn** (101 W. Valley St. 540-  
800-668-5905. \$\$) The gracious  
home offers seven bedrooms.



Carnegie Hall



attend performances at a veritable Carnegie Hall, donated by the great industrialist himself. Though this town works hard to polish its contemporary face, it still retains an old-fashioned allure—a place where summer afternoons are best lulled away with rocking chairs and ice-cold lemonade.

Perhaps the nicest spot to while away some time is the **General Lewis Inn**, perched high on a knoll above Washington Street. Southern charm permeates this genteel hotel's creaky rooms, each carefully decorated with local antiques. Plenty of history has taken place here: The oldest section dates back to 1834,



Old Hardware Gallery, on Washington Street

and during the Civil War, it survived a skirmish in its own backyard. The inn itself, established in 1929, was named for the town's founder, Andrew Lewis. Wander into the sitting room and you'll surely meet the owners, Mary Noel and Jim Morgan. Ask Mr. Morgan how he fell in love with the "innkeeper's daughter" many years back; hear how their daughter and son, Nan and Jim, now run the place with verve. Then take a seat in one of the high-backed rockers lining the veranda and quietly watch the world go by as the house cat, Butterscotch, purrs against your legs.

At some point you'll have to get up to see the town and its medley of colonial and federal buildings, all edging quiet lanes and shaded by ancient trees. Begin a stroll at the town square, dominated by the white-columned **Carnegie Hall**, Carnegie's gift in 1902 to the Lewisburg Female Institute. Squeaking hallways lead to a variety of artist and dance studios, the crown jewel being the 398-seat performance hall. This stately, green-and-red room recently underwent a one-million-dollar restoration, and it gleams. From September through May, classical music, bluegrass, dance troupes, and touring theaters lure patrons from far and wide.

Nearby stands the **Old Stone Presbyterian Church**, reputedly the oldest church in continuous use west of the Alleghenies. Constructed of native limestone in 1796, its interior includes what once were slave galleries. In the cemetery out back, the names of some of the area's earliest settlers are etched into now crumbling tombstones—among them Capt. Matthew Arbuckle, a woodsman and early explorer; and Dick Pointer, a black slave who distinguished himself at the 1778 Battle of Fort Donnally. More history lies across the square at the **John A. North House Museum**, built in 1820 and characterized by finely carved woodwork. A guide leads you through rooms filled with

china, furniture, vintage clothing, a series of locally crafted figures of real townfolk. Ask your way haps the General Store, where

Down the street in Andrew Lewis began. Back in 1751, a young man. With Indian uprisings prevalent, the camp was soon fortified into a fort. It led an expedition of Virginia to Omaha, and Delaware, culminating in the Indian threat was gone around Lewis Spring was narrow.

Between the spring and the General Lewis Inn lies the town, a mix of urbane boutiques and antique stores. Continue your stroll, stopping now and then with locals, browsing what they have. **Robert's Antiques** (120 E. Washington St.) features a jaw-dropping window display with a horse-drawn hearse or some other oddity. Robert's meticulous search for antiques in the old general store, **Matt Morgan's** (120 E. Washington St.) is a New York-style restaurant serving coffee aromas and classic comfort food. Fresh flowers and local artwork are also available. **and Specialty Store** (128 W. Washington St., 645-7998), purveyor of New England pathic wares, is a place where overall-clad elders alike seek comfort. And much excitement surrounds the new **Greenbrier Valley Theater**.

For all its big-town flair, Lewisburg is a down-home place where people are never far away. The town is in the Greenbrier River Valley, a cool, carpeted hills, stone-strewn roads, covered bridges. Showcasing the 76-mile **Greenbrier River Trail** corridor along the Greenbrier River, bikers, hikers, horseback riders, and skiers alike. Beginning just east of town, ambles north through supreme scenery. If biking or hiking see the river, raft or canoe. With wildflower clouds drifting across the bridge, it's a secret to a perfectly languid



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**General Lewis Inn,**  
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china, furniture, vintage clothing, and other relics from the early town. In one room a series of locally crafted dioramas depicts local sites, all peopled with clay figures of real townfolk. Ask your guide to point out some of the favorites, perhaps the General Store, where locals gather around a pot-bellied stove.

Down the street in Andrew Lewis Park you'll find **Lewis Spring**, where it all began. Back in 1751, a young surveyor named Andrew Lewis camped out here. With Indian uprisings prevalent in the surrounding Greenbrier River Valley, the camp was soon fortified into Fort Savannah. From here, Lewis—now a general—led an expedition of Virginia militiamen against the Shawnee, Mingo, Omaha, and Delaware, culminating in the Battle of Point Pleasant on the Ohio River. The Indian threat was greatly reduced and, in tribute, the settlement around Lewis Spring was named Lewisburg.

Between the spring and your chair at the General Lewis Inn lies the town's core, a bustling mix of urbane boutiques and restaurants. Continue your stroll, stopping now and then to chat with locals, browsing what there is to see. Upscale **Robert's Antiques** (120 E. Washington St.) always features a jaw-dropping window display, a unique horse-drawn hearse or some other artifact that Robert's meticulous searching has dug up. Housed in the old general store, **Mattie's** (109 E. Washington St.) is a New York-style roastery where pungent coffee aromas and classical notes mingle with fresh flowers and local artwork. **Edith's Health and Specialty Store** (128 W. Washington St. 304-645-7998), purveyor of New Age and homeopathic wares, is a place where pierced youths and overall-clad elders alike seek out herbal remedies. And much excitement surrounds the old department store, which is being transformed into the new **Greenbrier Valley Theater** (304-645-3838).

For all its big-town flair, Lewisburg is still a down-home place where people smile and nature is never far away. The town snuggles in the lush Greenbrier River Valley, a countryside of tree-carpeted hills, stone-strewn streams, and rustic covered bridges. Showcasing this beauty best is the 76-mile **Greenbrier River Trail**, an abandoned rail corridor along the Greenbrier River popular with bikers, hikers, horseback riders, and cross-country skiers alike. Beginning just east of Lewisburg, it ambles north through supreme wilderness to Cass, a restored railroading town. If biking or hiking seems a bit too much, consider floating the river by raft or canoe. With wildflower-dotted banks moving slowly past and puffy clouds drifting across the bright blue sky above, you will have discovered the secret to a perfectly languid weekend.

### Battle of Lewisburg

A southern outpost for most of the Civil War, Lewisburg's only battle ended in a Union victory. Early on May 23, 1862, Confederates attacked Union troops occupying the town. In an hour-long skirmish, the inexperienced Northerners fought like veterans, and the Southerners were forced to retreat. The final losses: 80 Confederates, 13 Northerners. You can visit the Confederate Cemetery on McElhenney Rd. The Union casualties were buried at the National Cemetery in Staunton. Ask the visitors bureau for a battle tour brochure.

Barbara A. Noe



## Travelwise

### GETTING THERE

Lewisburg is off I-64 in southeastern West Virginia. The nearest major airport is Yeager Airport in the capital city of Charleston.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The best time is spring, when wildflowers are in bloom, and fall, when the trees display rich colors. The **Lewisburg Convention and Visitors Bureau** (105 Church St. 24901. 304-645-1000 or 800-833-2068. [www.greenbrierwv.com](http://www.greenbrierwv.com)), housed in Carnegie Hall, has walking tour brochures and information on driving tours.

### THINGS TO SEE AND DO

**Andrew Lewis Spring** (Andrew Lewis Park, on Jefferson St.) Discovered and named by early settler Andrew Lewis, the spring is enclosed in a stone springhouse more than 200 years old.

**Carnegie Hall** (105 Church St. 304-645-7917) This Greek Revival performance hall was built in 1902.

**Greenbrier County Courthouse** (200 N. Court St.) Last of several courthouses in Lewisburg, and typical of early Virginia courthouses with its red brick structure and white columns, this building was constructed in 1837.

**Greenbrier River Trail** (304-799-4087 or 800-CALL-WVA. Take US 60 E for 3 miles, turn left just before bridge at Greenbrier River, follow Stone House Rd. about 1.5 miles) Originally part of the Chesapeake & Ohio rail system, this 76-mile hike-and-bike trail runs along the Greenbrier River from North Caldwell to Cass. Bike rentals and transport services are available in Lewisburg.

**Greenbrier Valley Theatre** (304-645-3838) Live musicals, drama, and comedy on Wednesday through Saturday from mid-June to early August at the Old Barn at the Greenbrier Valley Airport. Additional performances are occasionally given in Greenbrier Valley Theatre on Washington Street.

**John A. North House Museum** (301 W. Washington St. 304-645-3398. Closed Sun.; adm. fee) Built in 1820, this house museum



contains the collection of the Greenbrier Historical Society.

**Old Stone Presbyterian Church** (200 Church St.) Lewisburg's most famous landmark dates from 1796, making it the oldest church west of the Alleghenies that has remained in continuous use.

### WHERE TO EAT

**Clingman's Market** (102 E. Washington St. 304-645-1990. Closed Sun. and dinner. \$) This local luncheon oddity hasn't changed much since its days as a pre-Depression meat market; farmers and businessmen alike sit at folding tables, their menu choices being generous portions of "meat" and "no meat."

**Julian's Restaurant & Coffee Bar** (102 S. Lafayette St. 304-645-4145. Wed.-Sat. \$\$\$) At Stephen Jackendoff's fine restaurant, favorites include pan-seared salmon with feta cheese and mushrooms; prime angus beef; and soft shell crabs.

### WHERE TO STAY

**General Lewis Inn** (301 E. Washington St. 304-645-2600 or 800-628-4454. \$\$\$) The inn is furnished with locally collected antiques, and all beds in its 26 rooms are at least a century old. The inn's restaurant features southern-style cooking (\$\$).

**The Greenbrier** (9 miles E of Lewisburg, in White Sulphur Springs. 304-536-1110. \$\$\$) One of the world's most famous and elegant resorts.



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Tennessee

Jonesborough 114

North Carolina

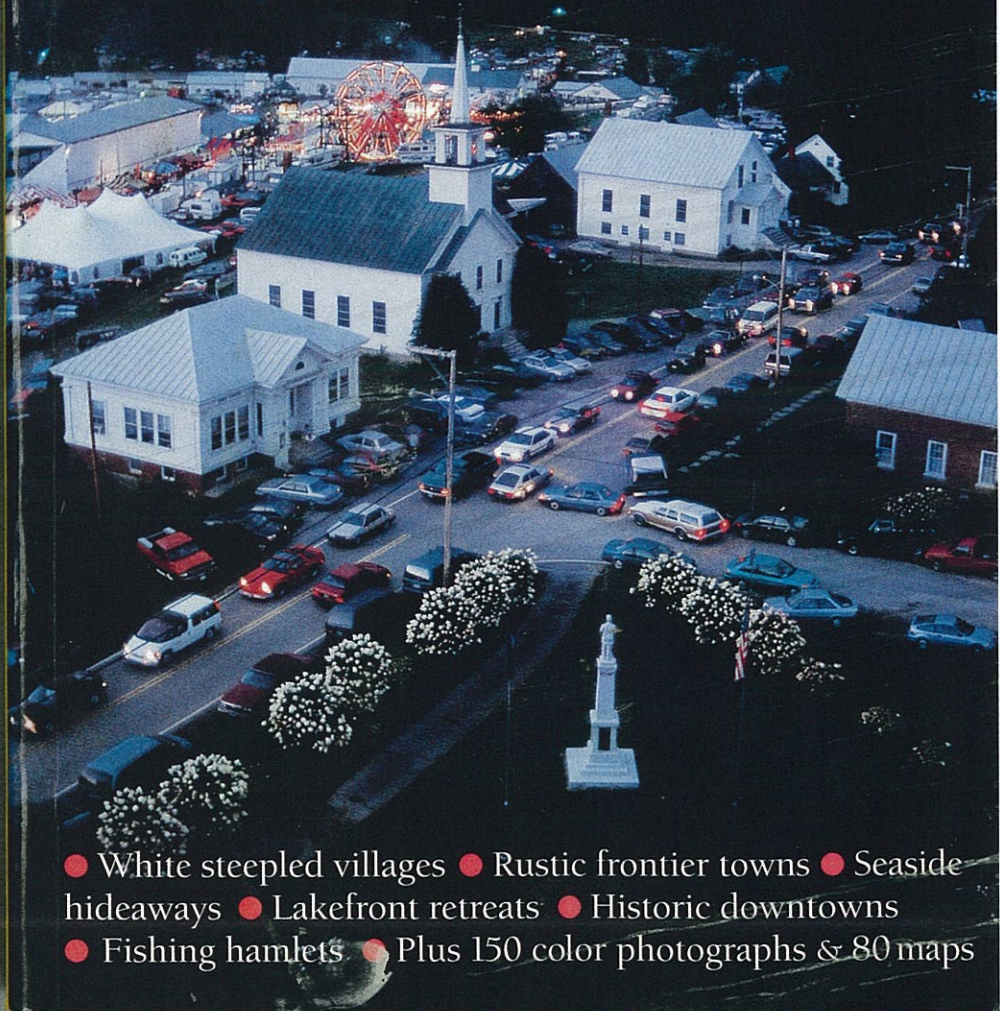
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□ NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

# Guide to Small Town Escapes



● White steepled villages ● Rustic frontier towns ● Seaside  
hideaways ● Lakefront retreats ● Historic downtowns  
● Fishing hamlets ● Plus 150 color photographs & 80 maps