

MARYLAND  
BYWAYS

Historic National Road



Two centuries ago, the easiest way for thousands of settlers to cross the Appalachian Mountains and go west was on the dirt, macadam and cobblestone-covered National Road, America's first federally funded highway. Horse-drawn Conestoga wagons lugged building materials and supplies, while families rode stagecoaches and carriages, stopping frequently along the way to take advantage of friendly towns that quickly sprouted inns, taverns, blacksmith shops and wagon yards.

Congress approved funding for the interstate highway in 1806 to open up trade and communication with the growing frontier in the Ohio River Valley, but four decades of hard labor were required to complete the project from Baltimore all the way through to

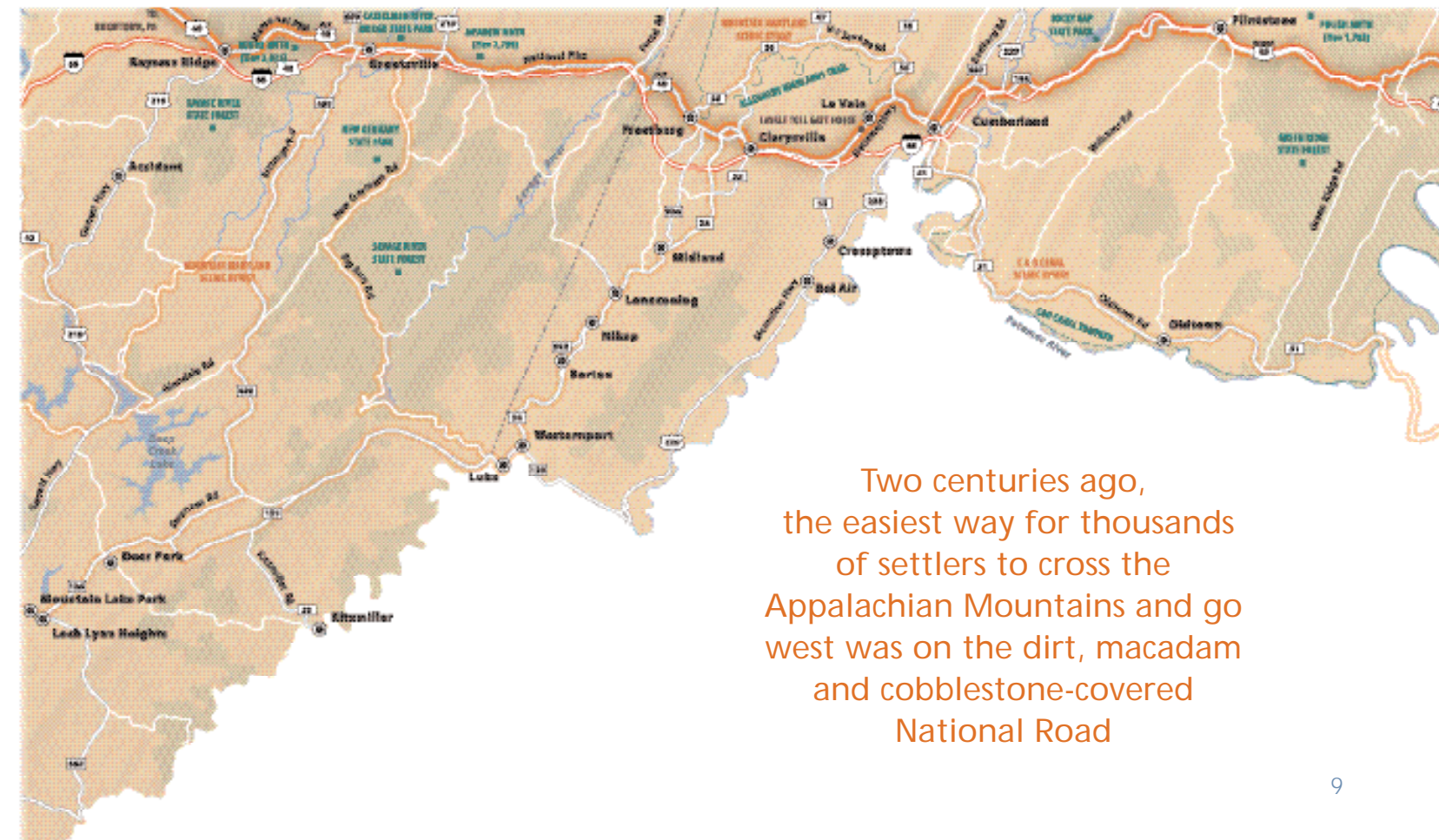
Vandalia, Illinois. Soon after, however, the sight of train tracks signaled a shift in transportation priorities.

Today's adventurers enjoy traveling 170 miles along Maryland's portion of this All-American Road, seeing the highway as it progressed west (rather than following the eastward course of most other byways in this guide). While passing through cozy towns featuring attractions, eateries and accommodations that hearken back to the road's earliest days, feel free to romanticize about life as it was for those first, rugged pioneers.

The Historic National Road also passes through three Maryland Heritage Areas: Baltimore City, Heart of Civil War (in Frederick) and Canal Place (in Cumberland).



170 miles from Baltimore to Pennsylvania Line



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**Baltimore  
to Frederick –  
Lombard Street, MD 144,  
MD 27 & MD 144**

The Baltimore to Cumberland portion of the road, designated the Baltimore National Pike, begins at water's edge in the Inner Harbor area, where you are also linked to the Charles Street and National Historic Seaport byways (pages 89 and 97, respectively). Follow Lombard Street west and stop at the Baltimore

& Ohio Railroad Museum, located at the site of the oldest railroad station in the country. Pass through several historic neighborhoods, including Union Square, which journalist H.L. Mencken called home. While leaving Baltimore, you pass many National Pike-era hotels, taverns and warehouses before crossing the Gwynns Falls Greenway, which is an excursion through natural landscapes and historical landmarks on a 14-mile paved hike and bike trail.

West of the city along MD 144 (Frederick Road) is the National Historic District of Catonsville, which was developed in 1810 and became a hot spot for summer homes when linked to downtown Baltimore by electric trolley lines. Before crossing the Patapsco River, drive through the town of Oella, which still contains old stone and brick buildings that once housed textile and



paper mill workers and was home to African-American mathematician Benjamin Banneker. Banneker, who helped layout Washington, D.C.'s boundaries, and is honored in Oella, with a 142-acre historical park and museum. You're also in the vicinity of Patapsco Valley State Park, with its 14,000 acres, five recreational areas, and the Avalon Visitor Center. Beyond the Patapsco River, antiques shops, unique restaurants and historic buildings await in Ellicott City. This former flour milling town features the first railroad station in the nation, as well as Thomas Isaac's Log Cabin, which served as a National Road way station.

Once a railroad and turnpike town, the Mount Airy of today and New Market its neighbor feature an array of vineyards that are open for tours

and picnics. This area is also popular for boutiques and antiques shops. You will pass historic hotels, restaurants and taverns that hosted National Road travelers as you make your way toward Frederick.

### **Frederick to Hagerstown – US 40, US 40 Alt.**

When it became connected to Baltimore via the National Pike, Frederick flourished as a commercial center that transported agricultural products toward Baltimore's port. Take advantage of sight-seeing opportunities in the town's historic district, where numerous homes and public buildings represent two centuries of architecture. Visit Francis Scott Key's law office and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine before moving on to the Children's Museum of Rose Hill

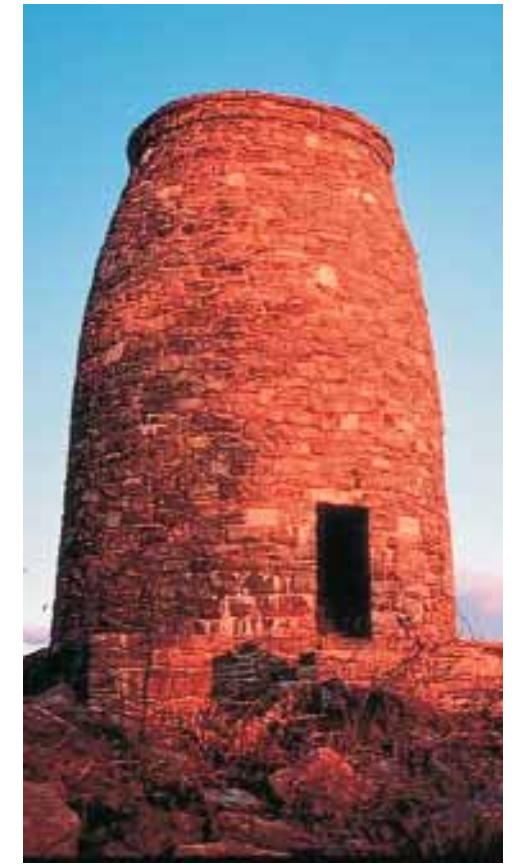


Manor, which is more than just kid's stuff: A 43-acre park featuring early American gardens and an orchard surround an elegant, 18th-century Georgian mansion, the former home of Maryland's first elected governor, Thomas Johnson. The town also features every form of entertainment from dinner theater to minor-league baseball, and it is the first of three "Arts & Entertainment Districts" found along this route. At the end of a long day, one of Frederick's inns or bed and breakfasts is a welcome sight. Rest up, because you'll be heading for the mountains in the morning.

Enjoy the awe-inspiring view from Braddock Heights before heading down into the farming village of Middletown. This part of the Historic National Road byway also overlaps

with the Antietam Campaign byway (page 39) as you pass Civil War markers within South Mountain State Park and enter Boonsboro. Make time for a sidetrack into Washington Monument State Park, site of the first monument erected in George Washington's honor. The park also happens to be located along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail in the Cumberland Valley, a noted migratory bird flyway, so bring your binoculars.

Continuing west on US 40 Alternate, the farmland of Funkstown is dotted with Pennsylvania-Dutch bank barns and smaller English-style structures. Beyond the farmers' fields lies the town of Hagerstown.



**Hagerstown to Cumberland – Frederick, Baltimore, Locust and Franklin Streets, US 40, I-70, MD 144, Scenic US 40, MD 144, I-68, Baltimore St, Henderson Ave**

In Hagerstown, US 40 Alternate becomes Frederick Street and reveals a vivid glimpse of America's transportation past. So many early railroad companies were linked into Hagerstown that it earned the nickname "Hub City". It is also a major crossroads for east-west and north-south traffic through the Cumberland Valley. The town features the South Prospect Street Historic District, which has a roundhouse museum among several other sites dedicated to preserving the town's rich history. Hagerstown is also a hub of culture and creativity, earning it the distinction of being the second of "Arts &

Entertainment Districts" found along the Historic National Road.

Continue west on US 40 through a region of large, mid-19th-century farms and homesteads, and look for the small waterfront park on the Conococheague River that offers a fine view of the Wilson Bridge. Dating from 1819 and poised upon five stone arches, it's the oldest and longest bridge of its kind in Washington County. Pass through Wilson, site of the 160-year-old Wilson's General Store/One Room Schoolhouse, and head toward Clear Spring where you can sidetrack south along MD 68 and 56 to Fort Frederick State Park. The fort, based in Big Pool, has been restored to its 1758 appearance, when it was the cornerstone of Maryland's defense during the French & Indian War.



Next in line is Hancock, an important link to the C&O Canal byway (page 27), and where the Western Maryland Rail Trail parallels the C&O Canal to offer panoramic vistas of the Potomac River. A national historic park visitor's center offers a close look at canal life. After a scenic climb up Sideling Hill, which was the scene of many stagecoach mishaps due to the steep turns, enjoy the view from Town Hill where you can see into three states at once. Then stop for a relaxing round of golf amid the ridges and valleys of Rocky Gap State Park near Flintstone. Another option is a challenging bike ride through Green Ridge State Forest.

**Cumberland to State Line – US 40 Alt, US 40**

Road, railway and canal come together in Cumberland. It's also a cross-

roads for three state byways, as the Historic National Road mingles once again with the C&O Canal and flirts briefly with Mountain Maryland (page 19). And if you're wondering what the third "Arts & Entertainment District" is along this route, look no further. In addition to galleries, theaters and museums, Cumberland has a brew house that was built in 1819 as a National Pike tavern and was later struck by a cannonball during the Civil War.

A steam-engine train ride on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad or an exhilarating bike ride on the Allegheny Highlands Trail will take you to Frostburg, where a nationally recognized carriage museum is located. In LaVale, the route passes one of Maryland's few remaining historic toll houses, outside of which a plaque



still displays the cost for wagons, animals and pioneering pedestrians to pass.

Conestoga wagons once crossed the Casselman River Bridge, a single-span, stone-arch structure built for the National Road near Grantsville in 1813. The town is largely populated by descendants of mid-19th-century Amish and Mennonite farmers. Today, travelers can access the bridge from a former stagecoach stop known as Spruce Forest Artisan Village that serves as a cultural center promoting local arts, crafts and music. US 40 Alternate then winds through the northern section of Savage River State Forest and over Keyser's Ridge to the Mason and Dixon Line.

**OLD LINE LORE:** *The National Road's first toll gate house, built during the 1830s in LaVale, had seven sides so that the gatekeeper would have an easier time watching for "toll crushers." The design must have been effective – \$9,745.90 in tolls was collected during the gate house's first year of operation, 1836.*

**Appalachian National Scenic Trail**  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
799 Washington Street  
P.O. Box 807  
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
304-535-6331  
www.appalachiantrail.org

**Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum**  
2711 Maryland Ave  
Ellicott City, 21043  
410-461-1945  
www.ecborail.org

**Benjamin Banneker Historical Park & Museum**  
300 Oella Ave  
Oella, 21228  
410-887-1087  
www.thefriendsofbanneker.org

**Canal Place Heritage Area**  
Western Maryland Railway Station,  
13 Canal St  
Cumberland, 21502  
301-724-3655, 1-800-989-9394  
www.canalplace.org

**Casselman River Bridge State Park**  
349 Headquarters Ln  
Grantsville, 21536  
301-895-5453  
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/casselman.html

**The Children's Museum of Rose Hill Manor**  
1611 N Market St.  
Frederick, 21701  
301-694-1650,  
www.rosehillmuseum.com

**Fort Frederick State Park**  
11100 Fort Frederick Rd.  
Big Pool, 21711  
301-842-2155  
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/fortfrederick.html

**Francis Scott Key's Law Office**  
Roger Brooke Taney & Francis Scott Key Museum  
121 S. Bentz St.  
Frederick 21701  
301-228-2828, 1-800-999-3613

**Green Ridge State Forest**  
28700 Headquarters Dr NE

Flintstone, 21530  
301-478-3124  
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/greenridge/html

**Gwynns Falls Greenway**  
Windsor Mill/Franklintown  
Baltimore, 21207  
410-396-0440  
www.gwynnsfalltrail.org

**Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum**  
300 S Burhans Blvd (U.S. 11)  
Hagerstown, 21740  
301-739-4665  
www.roundhouse.org

**LaVale Toll Gate House**  
14302 National Hwy  
LaVale, 21502  
301-777-5138  
www.mdmountainside.com

**National Museum of Civil War Medicine**  
48 E. Patrick St  
Frederick, 21701  
301-695-1854  
www.CivilWrMed.org

**Patapsco Valley State Park**  
8020 Baltimore National Pike  
Ellicott City, 21043  
410-461-5005

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/patapcovevalley.html

**Rocky Gap State Park**  
I-68, Exit 50, 12500 Pleasant Valley Rd  
Flintstone, 21530  
301-722-1480  
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/rockygap.html

### **Savage River State Forest**

127 Headquarters Ln  
Grantsville, 21536  
301-895-5759  
[www.dnr.state.md.us](http://www.dnr.state.md.us)

### **South Mountain State Park**

21843 National Pike  
Boonsboro, 21713  
301-791-4767  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/southmountain.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/southmountain.html)

### **Spruce Forest Artisan Village**

Rt. 40 next to Penn Alps  
Grantsville, 21536  
301-895-3332

### **Thrasher Carriage Museum**

19 Depot St  
Frostburg, 21532  
301-689-3380, 301-777-8678  
[www.thrasher-carriage.com](http://www.thrasher-carriage.com)

### **Washington Monument State Park**

South Mountain Recreation Area  
21843 National Pike  
Boonsboro, 21713  
301-732-8065  
[www.dnr.state.md.us/publicland/western/washington.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publicland/western/washington.html)

### **Western Maryland Scenic Railroad & The Old Frostburg Depot**

13 Canal St  
Cumberland, 21502  
301-759-4400  
[www.wmsr.com](http://www.wmsr.com)

### **Wilson's General Store/One Room Schoolhouse**

14921 Rufus Wilson Rd.  
Clear Spring, 21722  
301-582-4718  
[www.wilsonsgeneralstore.com](http://www.wilsonsgeneralstore.com)