

“History Rolls Along - Civil War Sites” - WV State Parks

Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park – The Battle of Carnifex Ferry

Nestled on the rim of the Gauley River Canyon near Summersville, West Virginia, Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park is an important Civil War battle site. On September 10, 1861 Union troops led by Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans engaged the Confederates and forced them to evacuate an entrenched position on the Henry Patterson Farm which overlooked Carnifex Ferry. The Confederate commander, Brigadier General John B. Floyd retreated across the ferry to the south side of the Gauley River and on eastward to Meadow Bluff near Lewisburg. This Civil War battle represented the failure of a Confederate drive to regain control of the Kanawha Valley. As a result, the movement for West Virginia statehood proceeded without serious threat from the Confederates.

Droop Mountain Battlefield State Park --

The Battle of Droop Mountain

Droop Mountain Battlefield State Park is located in the Greenbrier River Valley north of Lewisburg and is the site of West Virginia's last significant Civil War battle.

On November 6, 1863, the federal army of Brigadier General William W. Averell, in his second attempt to disrupt the Virginia-Tennessee Railroad at Salem, Virginia, faced again the Confederate troops of Brigadier General John Echols. Throughout the morning, Echols' smaller confederate army held the high ground and blocked the highway with artillery, but in the afternoon was overwhelmed by the crushing advance of federal infantry on his left flank. Following the collapse of his lines, General Echols retreated south into Virginia with the remnants of his command.

Federal Troops occupied Lewisburg on November 7, 1863, but being burdened with prisoners and captured livestock, General Averell elected to return to his headquarters in Beverly, West Virginia, waiting until early December to lead a third and ultimately successful attack on the vital railroad. Operations in the Shenandoah Valley in the spring of 1864 drew remaining confederate troops out of West Virginia, thus leaving the new state securely under the control of the federal government for the remainder of the war.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the Museum, Lookout Tower & other buildings in the 1930s.