



III. Historical Perspective & Culture

History

The Town dates back to the early 1860's when a small post office, bearing the name 'Pin Hook' was built. Although not a town at the time, this post office was the beginning of what is now Bluefield, Virginia.

This area became significantly important upon construction of the Norfolk and Western Railway. It was during this period shortly before 1883 that the post office was renamed 'Harman' to honor a confederate war hero Colonel E. H. Harman.

In 1884, Thomas Graham arrived from Philadelphia to survey for the N&W Railway. He purchased a tract of land and laid out the streets of an embryo town. The post office was renamed 'Graham'. It was also in the year 1884 that the fledgling town of 'Graham' elected its first mayor, one John T. Linkous.

In 1924, a general election was held to change the name to Bluefield due to its close proximity to Bluefield, West Virginia. Five hundred-eighteen (518) votes were cast and it was decided by only sixty-four votes to change the name.

The name Bluefield, Virginia became official July 12, 1924. It was a memorable event celebrated by a day-long spectrum of activities. An actual wedding ceremony between Ms. Emma Smith and Mr. L. Wingo Yost, occurred to symbolize the "marriage" of the two towns.



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The ceremony was attended by over 15,000 people including the governors of both Virginia and West Virginia. It received national news coverage and congratulatory messages were sent by then President Coolidge to the mayors of both Bluefields.

The name Bluefield is derived from a species of chicory that has a dark blue flower, and from the bluegrass that grows in abundance in this area.

For many years, Bluefield, Virginia was a bedroom community for Bluefield WV, which served as the commercial and economic center of the region. During the last 20+ years, Bluefield, WV has declined in population and prominence. In the last 10 years Bluefield, Virginia has seen an increase in commercial activity and establishment of numerous new businesses. The more favorable business and tax climate has made Bluefield, Virginia the commercial center for the region.

General History

As with many smaller communities, Bluefield has less cultural amenities than more urbanized areas. While lacking in the diversity of programs, the area does offer a great variety of recreation and entertainment alternatives.



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Parks and Recreation

Graham Recreation Park is a 57-acre outdoor recreation park with picnic shelters, playground equipment, tennis courts, two softball fields, two little league baseball fields, a soccer field, two horse shoe pits, a sand volleyball court, half court basketball court, amphitheater and hiking trail. The park also is home to a private shooting range for Bluefield Police Department, and NRA sanctioned gun safety programs.

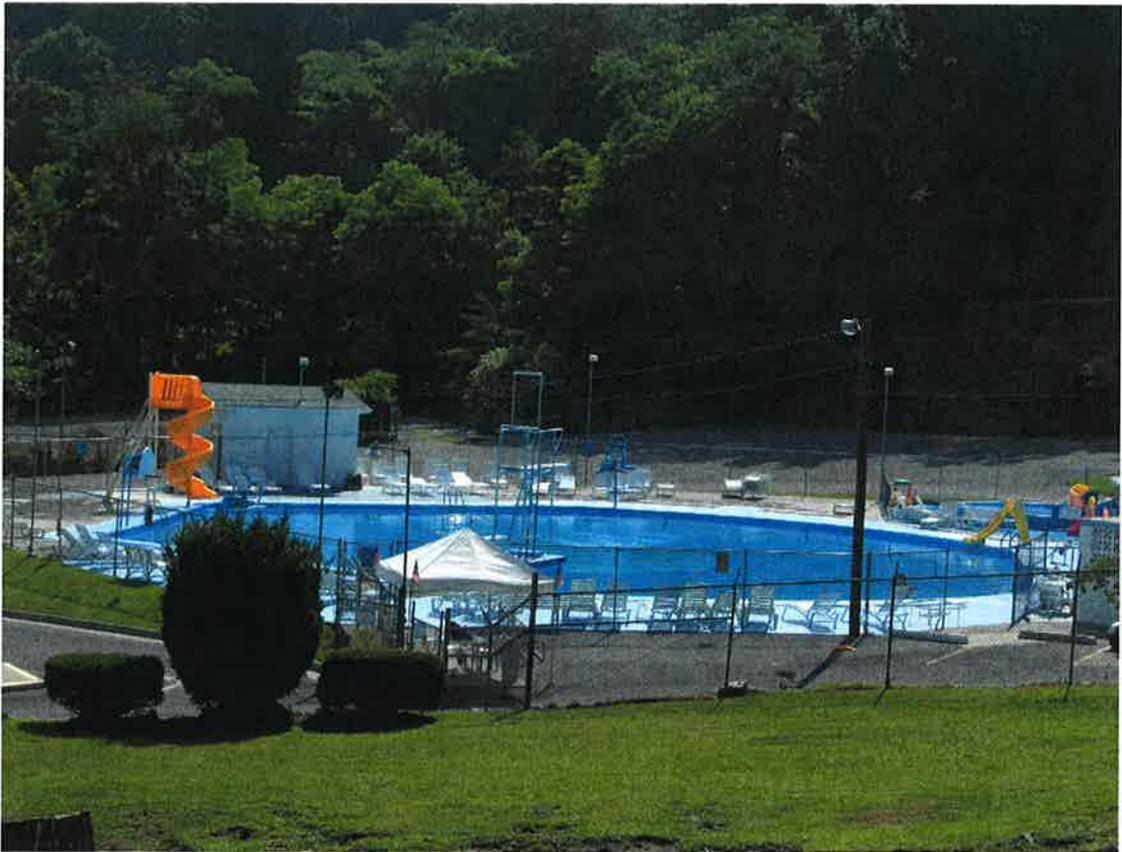




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Parks and Recreation

Harmony Acres swimming pool is open from early June through the beginning of school. The pool offers showers and bathrooms, concession stand, high dive and slides, water basketball goal, a children's pool, basketball goal, and playground equipment.



Numerous outdoor activities that can be enjoyed just outside of town within the region are hunting, camping, swimming, white water rafting, horse back riding, hiking, skiing, driving ranges, skating, tennis, gymnastics, rifle range, gun club, fishing, and golf.



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The Autumn Jamboree is held each year downtown on the second Saturday in September and provides visitors of all ages a relaxing day of arts and crafts and a variety of food and vendors. Downtown is the center of a wide variety of music and entertainment. The town provides free shuttle bus service between downtown Bluefield and the other venues every half hour throughout the day.





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Jack Asbury Park & Graham Square has created a lot of new opportunities for the downtown area. The park has a walking track around the perimeter for people to enjoy. The lighting of the Inaugural Christmas tree takes place at the center of the square. Two of the most popular events that the Recreation Department has added is Sunset in the Square and Evening Shade. Evening Shade is a local band performs on Friday evening in the gazebo area and Sunset in the Square is a movie is shown on Saturday evening.





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In June 2015 Bluefield, Virginia passed a Commitment to Obesity Prevention resolution. The resolution recognizes the importance of healthy eating and active living within our community.

One of The Town of Bluefield, VA's first steps to implementing the HEAL, Healthy Eating, Active Living, policy will be the development of a one mile paved fitness trail that will outline the Graham Recreation Park in West Graham. HEAL stands for Healthy Eating Active Living, two critical components to a healthy lifestyle and the focus of the HEAL Cities and Towns Campaign in its effort to prevent reduce obesity throughout the region. The FIT Trail will expand opportunities for residents in the Southwest Virginia area to be more physically active. Bluefield has passed a resolution to join the HEAL cities & Towns Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic, a program specifically designed to help municipal leaders proactively foster healthy environments through policies that increase access to healthy eating and active living for residents.

- The FIT Trail will consist of 10 stations and is capable of serving a diverse range of users, contributing to the overall health of the community, providing such benefits as:
- Providing a free social outlet for exercise, a much needed resource in underserved communities
- Combatting obesity through well-rounded workout opportunities that can be enjoyed by people of all abilities and fitness levels throughout the community
- Increasing interest in related community services, such as nutrition education and health screenings
- Outdoor Fitness Parks located within sight lines of a playground promote active behavior in adult family members, increasing the time spent at the playground, which can help develop a lifelong fitness mindset in children
- Promoting a sense of pride within neighborhoods where Outdoor Fitness Parks are located

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Parks and Recreation





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The City of Bluefield, WV maintains and operates a city park which is partially located within the Town of Bluefield, Virginia. This park also provides recreation opportunities for the local residents.



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Community, Cultural Arts, and Tourism

If you are a fan of baseball, you need look no further than Bowen Field in Bluefield, Virginia. The Bluefield Orioles Appalachian League Club played every summer since the late 1950's until 2010 and the Bluefield Blue Jays Appalachian League Club has been playing every summer since 2011. The Princeton Rays, an affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays plays, at Hunnicutt Field in Princeton, WV, some 20 minutes away. The annual Blue-Gray Horse Show draws thousands of enthusiasts each year and is held adjacent to the city park.

In 2000, the Graham Historical Society gained ownership of the Sanders House. This historic structure was constructed in the late 1800's and is one of the architectural landmarks of the community. The house, outbuildings and yard are currently listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. The Sanders family has graciously donated original furnishings, artifacts and papers to be displayed in the house. The Tazewell County Visitor's Center, also on the grounds, is housed in a former tenant house known as the "Rosie Trigg Cottage." Open 9-5 seven days a week, the visitor center is the only county owned and operated visitor center in southwestern Virginia. The Bailey Log Home has also been relocated to this area and is used as a tourist attraction.





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There are many events throughout the area that residents like to attend.

- Athens Town Social
- Country Craft Guild Show
- Four Seasons Women's Conference
- Oktoberfest
- Princeton Summerfest
- Better Living Show
- Shriner's Oyster Dinner
- Bramwell Millionaire Homecoming
- Holiday of Lights
- Bluefield Coal Show
- Mountain Bike Challenge
- Monte Carlo Night
- Mercer County's Bluestone Valley Fair
- Chicory Square Summer Concert Series
- Kicks Country Annual Homecoming
- Evening Shade
- Wings & Wheels
- PMCCC AutumnFest
- PMCCC ShrimpFest
- All Together Arts Week
- Culturefest
- Southern Thunder
- Winter Warmer
- Downtown Countdown
- Bramwell Home Tours
- Italian Heritage Festival
- Bluefield Coal Rally
- Parkways Authority Fall Festival
- West Virginia State Fair
- Tazewell County Fair
- The Old Time Fiddlers Convention
- Bluefield Blue-Gray Horse Show
- Nat'l Railroad Historical Society Train Show
- Lemonade Days
- Civil War Re-Enactment
- Cole Chevy Mountain Festival
- Nemours Ruritan Harvest Festival
- Ground Hog Breakfast
- Sunset in the Square
- Autumn Jamboree
- Mercer County Heritage Festival
- PMCCC Women's Expo
- Music in the Square Summer Concert Series
- Bluefield Downtown Street Fair
- Camp Creek Fall Festival
- Bramwell Ghost Tours
- Bluefield Lemon Drop

Folks interested in the history of the region can visit the historic Pocahontas Exhibition Mine in Pocahontas, Virginia, and the Beckley Exhibition Mine, in Beckley, West Virginia, to get a feel of what it was like to mine coal, or cross over the ridge to Bramwell, WV to see how the mine owners and superintendents lived. The historic Crab Orchard Museum, in Tazewell, Virginia offers a glimpse of the lifestyle for the earliest residents of the region. The Sanders House Museum offers an opportunity to view farm life in the early 1900s.



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Those who are interested in the cultural arts will find regular performances at the Summit Players in Bluefield, WV. Professional stage shows can be seen at the Wohlfhart Haus Theatre in Wytheville, the Amphitheater in Pipestem State Park, and the Barter Theatre in Abingdon. You can also find performances at the WV Theatre and at local college theaters around the area.

Other historic sites around the area are:

The Hatfield and McCoy Trail,
Mercer County War Museum,
Eastern Regional Coal Archives,
Four Seasons Antique Mall,
Lick Creek Natural Area,
Grayson Highlands,
Vietnam Memorial,
Landmark Antique Mall,
The Southwest Virginia Museum,
Historic Bramwell,
Princeton Railroad Museum,
The McNutt House,
Brainerd's Galley
The Ugly Duckling Antique Store
Spear Head Trail

Higginbotham Museum,
Virginia City Gem Mine,
Wiley Cabin and Museum,
Hokes Mill Covered Bridge,
Lost World Caverns,
Burkes Garden,
Wolf Creek Indian Village and Museum,
Hank Williams Sr. Memorial Bridge,
Camp Washington Carver,
Pocahontas Exhibition Mine,
Crab Orchard Museum & Pioneer Park,
Chuck Mathena Center
Coal Heritage Interpretive Center
Mercer County Agricultural Museum

If you enjoy resorts, Bluefield has a nice selection within a 2 hour drive. Some of these are: Canaan Valley Resort located in Davis, WV, the Greenbrier Resort located in White Sulphur Springs, WV, Mountain Lake Resort located in Pembroke, Virginia, Glade Springs Resort located in Daniels, WV, Winter Place Ski Resort in Ghent, WV, and the Homestead, which is located in Hot Springs, Virginia. All of these resorts have a wide variety of entertainment, fine dining, luxury, and relaxation.



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The Town of Bluefield, Virginia also has numerous State Parks within a 2 hour drive. Camp Creek, New River Trail, Creeper Trail, Pinnacle Rock, Babcock, Twin Falls, Pipestem, Bluestone Lake, and Moncove Lake are all located just across the line in West Virginia. In Virginia we have Smith Mountain Lake, Hungry Mother, and Claytor Lake state parks.

