

Blue Ridge Summit, Pa

For a small mountain town, Blue Ridge Summit is rich in history and interesting facts...

The highway elevation at Blue Ridge Summit is **1,330 ft. and rises to 1,700 ft.** This explains why it is usually about 10° cooler on the mountain—great in the summertime!

After the introduction of the railroad in 1872, this area grew to become a lively and fashionable vacation community. The railroad ran to Baltimore and Washington and many of the city's elite constructed summer houses here (before the advent of air conditioning) to escape the urban heat. The region was in its hey-day at the beginning of the twentieth century. People donned their "Sunday best" and rode the trains to the resort, where several posh boarding houses and grand hotels catered to the comfort-seeking elite. The biggest attraction was **Pen Mar Park** which remained a popular resort area until its decline during the Depression of 1929 and the following years of limited travel during World War II (1939-1945). Today, Pen Mar Park is still a wonderful place to pack a picnic lunch and go in the warmer months. Enjoy the gorgeous view of the valley from the Overlook and take a step back in time as the Dance Hall still hosts bands on Sundays—the dance floor is always full! A great playground for the kids too.



It is also home to one of the 15 oldest golf courses in the United States. Built before 1885, the **Monterey Country Club** has served as a summer retreat for many Washingtonians, and Presidents. Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge and Dwight D. Eisenhower have all played the Monterey Country Club course.

During the American Civil War, at the time of the **Gettysburg Campaign** of 1863, there were several cavalry skirmishes including Monterey Pass. Following the events at the Battle of Gettysburg, J.E.B. Stuart's soldiers were engaged in some small skirmishes as he made his way back to Gen. Robert E. Lee's army. A mountain swamp at Monterey Pass bogged down Stuart and the Army of Northern Virginia as they retreated. The Monterey Country Club sits upon 37 acres that were once part of that swamp.

HISTORY OF THIS PROPERTY...

This area was well known for it's "camps," where boy scouts, girl scout troops and church groups came to enjoy the summer. Camp Louise is still in operation as a girls camp near PenMar Park. We've been told that, back in the day, this property was part of one such camp which included the green house with three cabins just down the road, along with a large Victorian house that once stood where the trailer sits just around the corner. This house, before the addition was added (kitchen and master BR) was the dining hall. Imagine the bustle of the great room with a roaring fire and long tables lined with children eating and laughing! There used to be four small rooms and a bathrom in the "workshop" that, we are guessing, housed camp staff. The cabin also showed evidence of being used by campers years ago. Fun to imagine this property in this way...when life was much simpler!

Camp David is but a few miles away, as the crow flies, and you will often see the tell-tale 2 or 3 helicopters flying to and from with the President and various dignitaries. Vice Presidents of the United States often reside in an underground complex, known as **Site R**. It is in the next ridge over, and is where the Vice-Presidents go in case of an attack on the United States.

Around the beginning of the century, those with **tuberculosis**, called "lungers," often moved here or lived in the homes of residents because of the healing qualities of the fresh mountain air. There was also a sanitarium in this area where many came to "take the airs" in hopes of curing themselves of TB, known as consumption.

This community was the birthplace of **Wallis Simpson**, the wife of Prince Edward, Duke of Windsor (previously King Edward VIII of the United Kingdom).



The Blue Ridge Summit railroad station was built in 1891 and today houses the local library.