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# *A Day in California*

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California is a brilliant river town destination to discover the great outdoors and to learn something new. The borough was named by settlers traveling west to the state of California, during the great gold rush of the 1800s, who, recognizing the overwhelming natural beauty of the area, decided to stay and build their own little “California of the East.” Historically, California was a well-known boat-building site; today the borough of California is a great place for residents and visitors alike to enjoy the waters of the Monongahela River.

California is also home to [California University of Pennsylvania<sup>i</sup>](#), which is situated on 294 acres of riverfront property. Serving more than 8,600 undergraduate and graduate students annually, Cal U has continually been ranked among the *Best in the Northeast* by the Princeton Review. The campus is an absolutely beautiful place to take a morning stroll.

If you plan to enjoy a day out on the water, you can launch your kayak, canoe, or boat at the public boat ramp, located at the corner of First and Union Street. Limited street parking is available on Union and First Streets or in the gravel lot behind the basketball court on Mechanic and Third Street. Once you have launched, head upriver for four and a half miles, along a scenic stretch of the Mon until the river town of Brownsville appears on your left. There is a beautiful wharf here, if you wish to exit the river and stretch your legs, before floating back to California.

A half mile upriver from where you originally launched is a public dock, located at Dowler Park in neighboring Coal Center. Dock your boat here and head up the bank to [Lagerheads<sup>ii</sup>](#). Located at 100 Spring Street, this bar and restaurant offers fresh food (try one of their bountiful salads) and outdoor seating. When you are ready for further exploration, navigate back to the public boat launch on the corner of First and Union Street. Exit the river and head into town to discover some California history.

The [California Area Historical Society<sup>iii</sup>](#), at the corner of Fifth and Wood Street, is a century old house, containing historical records of Washington, Greene, and Fayette Counties and the local Civil War regiments. [Jozart<sup>iv</sup>](#), a local nonprofit, is also located on Wood Street and is dedicated to offering a wide range of cultural programming. Lessons include everything from bass guitar to belly dancing, so be sure to call ahead and see what new skill is being taught today. Railroad enthusiasts may also enjoy a visit to the former train station, now the home of

the California Area Public Library. Located at the end of Wood Street, an authentically painted caboose from the Wabash Line sits in the adjacent park.

Speaking of parks, California Borough maintains two public parks that offer a relaxing escape from the hustle and bustle of a college town. Across the train tracks, along the Monongahela River is Wyatt Park. The park benches provide a relaxing place to read a book or simply get lost in thought, while overlooking the Mon. Rotary Park, located on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, is a handicapped accessible park that offers a half mile walking track, a gazebo, and a pleasant fishing spot on Pike Run.

Saving the best view for last, you must dine at the [High Point Restaurant and Lounge](#)<sup>v</sup>. Known for not only the outstanding view, but also the homemade sausage, High Point is located at 882 High Point Drive. Family owned and operated, this local favorite has an open air deck, as well as an indoor dining room that shows off an awe-inspiring bend of the Monongahela River. There is no better place to reflect on a day in California than from this vantage point.

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<sup>i</sup> California University  
250 University Avenue, California, PA 15419  
724-938-4000

<sup>ii</sup> Lager Heads  
100 Spring Street, Coal Center, PA 15423  
724-938-3470

<sup>iii</sup> California Area Historical Society  
The Gallagher House  
429 Wood Street, California PA 15419  
724-938-3250

<sup>iv</sup> Jozart  
201 Wood Street, California, PA 15419  
724-938-9730

<sup>v</sup>High Point Restaurant and Lounge  
882 Highpoint Dr Coal Center, PA 15423  
724-938-2877