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# *A Day in Rices Landing*

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With a scenic riverfront, lush green space, and a well-preserved National Historic District comprised of 63 buildings, Rices Landing Borough is the perfect “off the beaten path” destination for an enriching and exciting day-trip.

Situated on the western bank of the Monongahela River, this town was once a bustling river port during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, area railroad and river barges were heavily used to transport coal for industrial use. Although no stores are located in the historic district, you can stock up on provisions in nearby Dry Tavern. The Giant Eagle grocery store<sup>i</sup>, at 999 North Route 88; the Dry Tavern Beer Distributor<sup>ii</sup> next door; and Ozie’s Sport Shop<sup>iii</sup>, located across the street at 1020 North Route 88, where you can purchase a fishing license, live bait, and other sporting goods, are all conveniently located minutes away.

Once arriving in Rices Landing, stretch your legs on a self-guided tour of several National Historic Sites in the area. Park at the community building in Kolat Park, located at 100 Water Street. This five acre park is home to an 1850’s, red brick, two-cell jail house with a bizarre tale. Read the plaque in front of the jail to find out what these walls would say, if only they could talk.

From here, stroll down Water Street until you spot the faded out, white letters “W.A. Young & Sons Machine Shop and Foundry” against a red paneled building surrounded by late Victorian double hung windows. This historic machine shop, a center of industry in Rices Landing during the First and Second World Wars, closed its doors in 1965, but the entire operation has remained intact. You can catch a glimpse of the century old equipment by peeking through the windows, or contact Rivers of Steel<sup>iv</sup> to find out when the next guided tour of the shop will be offered.

Across the street is the Excelsior Pottery plant, yet another key early industry of Rices Landing. Now a private residence, this two-story building boasts original, blue clapboards, a stone foundation and gable roof with boxed cornice and returns. Like many structures in the Historic District, this architecture was inspired by the Italianate, Eastlake, and Queen Anne styles, during the period between 1870 and 1910. As you continue your tour down Water Street, you will see several vernacular wood houses from the mid-to-late Victorian period that bear resemblance to these styles.

Water Street will pull away from the river bank and cross over the Greene River Trail, a 5.2 mile trail that extends north to Fredericktown and south to Crucible. Take this trail 0.8 miles east (right), until it crosses Main Street. You can walk (or drive) along Main Street for 0.2 miles until you reach the Rices Landing Borough Building on your right, located at 137 Main Street. Formerly the old lock 6 master's house, the second floor is now the Lock 6 Museum. Open from 9AM-3PM on Monday and Wednesday, one can easily get lost in the industrial relics and pictures, which date back to 1916. Directly behind the Borough Building sits the Art Deco Rices Landing National Bank. No longer operating, this site was once the focal point in town, during its industrial heyday. Art Deco, a blend of traditional motifs with machine-aged design, is a symbolical expression of the diverse historical background of Rices Landing, first as a commercial river port, then as an industrial center for the coal industry.

When Rices Landing emerged as a key player in coal country, company houses, collectively referred to as the "Red Row", were constructed by Frick and Company, along Main Street and extended to the mining complex. Two examples of these two-story semi-detached company houses are at 128 and 130 Main Street, as well as the Union Store at the corner of Third and Main Street. Continuing on Main Street you will come upon the United Methodist Church, later the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was erected in 1873. Now covered with aluminum siding, the vernacular Victorian building still has the original stained glass windows and a small tower. Behind the church and facing the Mon, is the two-story rectory, with clapboard siding and a gabled roof. This historical building marks the last stop on the Rices Landing historic walking tour.

While best known for its rich history, Rices Landing also offers opportunities for outdoor recreation. The gazebo located in Min Love Park is an ideal spot to take a break and cool off on a hot summer day. Wooden tables and barbecue grills make this an inviting location for a picnic. After lunch, spend a lazy afternoon, fishing from the benches and walk along the river while youngsters can enjoy the pirate ship inspired playground. If you brought a boat or kayak, a boat ramp is available to the public where Pumpkin Run and the Monongahela River meet in Min Love Park.

For a more active afternoon, head back on the Greene River Trail. From the trailhead parking lot, you can bike or walk west 3.2 miles to the Greene Cove Marina in Millsboro, offering a full service restaurant and bar. For a shorter trek, head east for two miles toward Crucible, where the trail will abruptly end at the fork of Old River Road and Old Ferry Road. Great views of the river are promised in either direction.

Check out the 67-acre Pumpkin Run Park for a quiet place to cool down. The entrance is located off of Water Street, across from the Old Jail Cell through the tunnel. Open daily between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the park offers fire pits, pavilions, and boat access to the Mon.

The perfect combination of history, architecture, and the outdoors, Rices Landing Borough is one of Southwestern Pennsylvania's best kept secrets.

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<sup>i</sup> Giant Eagle  
999 N Eighty Eight Rd  
Rices Landing, PA 15357  
724-592-6057

<sup>ii</sup> Dry Tavern Beer Distributor  
999 North Eighty-Eight Road  
Rices Landing, PA 15357

<sup>iii</sup> Ozie's Sport Shop  
1020 North Route 88  
Rices Landing, PA 15357  
724-592-5009