

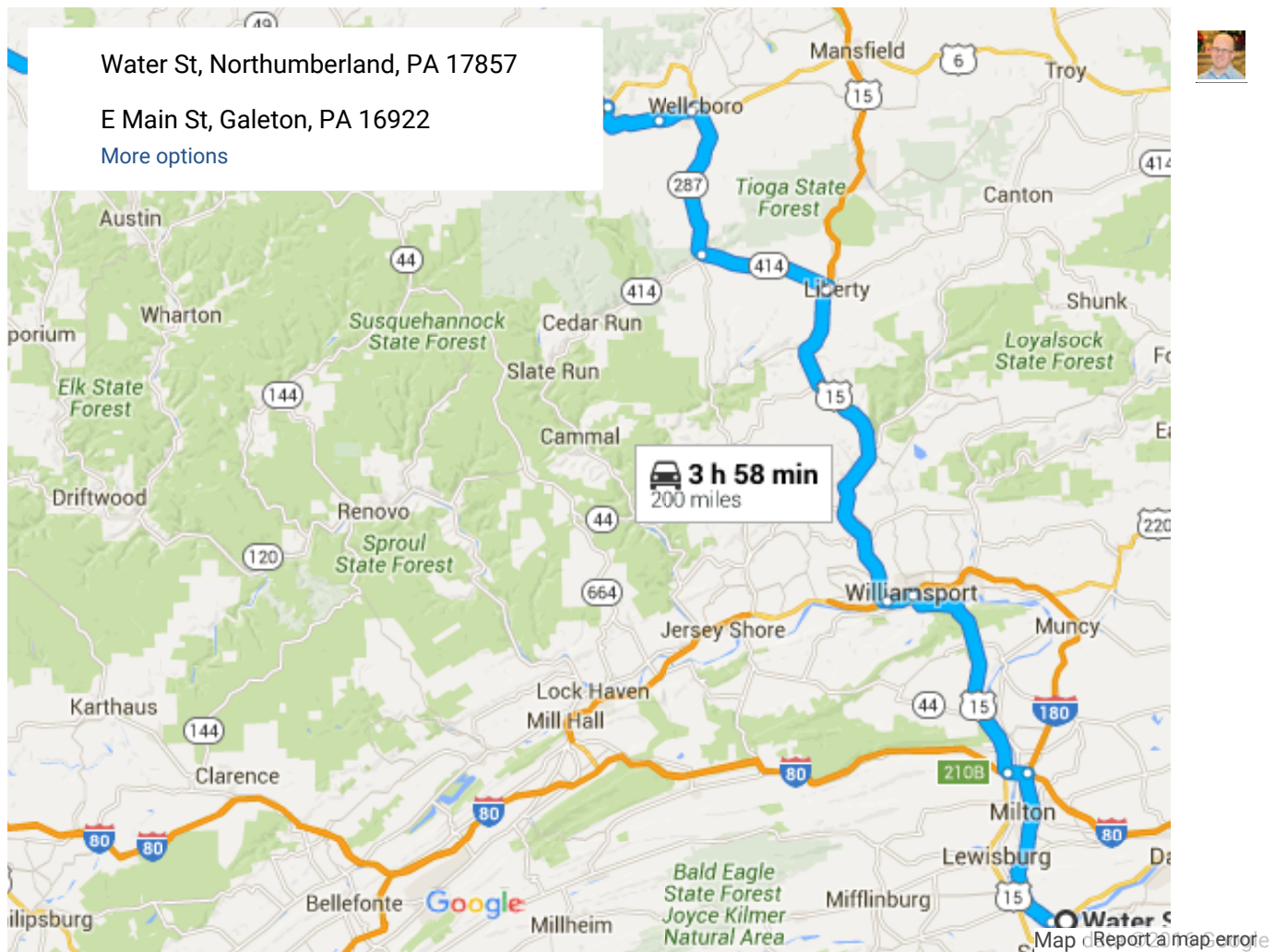


MOTORCYCLE TOURING

US 6 – THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HIGHWAY

JUNE 23, 2010 | PA MOTORCYCLE TOURS

US 6 cuts across the Northern tier of Pennsylvania, offering 290 miles of pleasurable, scenic riding for the entire route. The road is in great condition and traffic is generally light – particularly in the mid-section. There are plenty of open spaces for passing when needed. Throughout the entire route, US 6 offers many gentle curves, a few nice sweepers and some modest elevation changes. It's an easy road to navigate – no hairpin turns or switchbacks – just miles of great scenery and enough curves and hills to keep you interested.



[View Larger Map](#)

As you might expect – this route is a favorite of motorcycle touring enthusiasts from all over. Many of the picturesque small towns along the route are very ‘motorcycle friendly’. Traveling through the area – it is obvious that there is a degree of “old money” wealth in the region. The lumber industry fueled an economic boom in 1870s through early 1900s and the entire region was in an economic explosion that created some of the wealthiest entrepreneurs in the country. This is evident as you travel through the small towns of Wellsboro, Coudersport and Smethport in particular. This economic boom explains the many grand Victorian homes that grace US 6 as you travel through these towns. Along the way there are also several attractions that are worth visiting, such as the Lumber Museum and the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. For this blog post – I focus on the mid section from Wellsboro to Sheffield. When I am in this area, I usually utilize the town of Wellsboro as my basecamp.

Wellsboro, like most of the towns along this route, is a picturesque town that was built upon lumber industry wealth – it is a charming place with tree-lined streets that are adorned with street lamps, well kept Victorian homes and local shops. Wellsboro is an inviting place and

its hotels cater to motorcycle touring enthusiasts. I'm a sucker for old, historic hotels so I usually stay at the [Penn-Wells Hotel](#) when I am traveling in the region. Below are a few pics showing the street view of downtown Wellsboro and one of its beautiful Victorian homes.





Heading West from Wellsboro – I recommend a brief detour to to [Pine Creek Gorge](#), commonly referred to as the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania. Surrounded by approximately 165,000 acres of the Tioga State Forest, the Canyon begins south of Ansonia along US Route 6 and continues for approximately 47 miles. The overlooks at the Leonard Harrison and Colton Point State Parks offer the most spectacular views – like the one below:



Back on US 6 – headed to Coudersport





Midway between Galeton and Coudersport is the [Pennsylvania Lumber Museum](#). The Museum preserves and interprets the colorful heritage of the Commonwealth's prosperous lumber era when white pine and hemlock were the wealth of the nation. You can take a tour of the grounds where a 1912 Shay-gearred logging locomotive, Barnhart Log Loader, Brookville locomotive and restored CCC Cabin are on display. Experience the rugged lifestyle of the woodhicks in a re-created logging camp.



Back to the road !





Coudersport is the county seat of Potter county. Like many of the small towns along US – it's an inviting and attractive place to visit, with a rich and interesting history all its own. Coudersport, like other towns in the area experienced an economic boom in the late 1800's but much of the town was destroyed in a fire in 1880 and was then severely damaged by a flood in 1941.

Coudersport was the home of the now infamous Adelpia Communications company, whose

vacant former corporate office building (shown below) dominates the center of town. Adelphia (the Greek word for 'brothers') was founded in 1952 by John Rigas and his brother Gus who bought their first cable franchise for \$300. Fifty years later, the tiny town of Coudersport was home to one of the largest Communication companies in the world as it claimed over 5.5 million customers. Unfortunately, Adelphia become another accounting scandal plagued company along the likes of Enron, World Com, Tyco, Health South et al. John Rigas, was eventually **sentenced to 15 years in prison** and his son Timothy, the ex-finance chief, got 20 years, for conspiracy, bank fraud and securities fraud. This beautiful building is available.



Near the palacial Adelphia office is the Old Hickory tavern, hotel and restaurant on North Main Street. It was built in 1880 by attorney Franklin W. Knox who was impressed by a similar house he saw in Pittsburg and decided to build one exactly like it in Coudersport. Subsequent owners named it 'Old Hickory,' in honor of Andrew Jackson, the celebrated military commander in the Battle of New Orleans who was later elected President. More than two decades have passed since the Old Hickory was in operation. A tavern in the basement had remained open for several years after the restaurant and hotel were no longer in business. Dorellenic Corporation, owned by the John Rigas family, purchased the property in 1987. For several years, the Rigases intended to renovate the Old Hickory with a goal of operating it as a bed and breakfast, primarily for guests of Adelphia Communications Corp. Any chance of that was dashed when Adelphia plunged into Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2002. The building had fallen into a state of disrepair by the time Polliard bought it. He did some initial repair work, but in recent years the weather, pigeons and other natural elements have taken a

heavy toll. I think this is the most attractive 'fixer-upper' I have ever seen!



Here is an interesting factoid about Coudersport for you – **Eliot Ness** moved to Coudersport, PA, in July of 1956 – which is where he stayed until he died at age 54. Ness was a major partner in a company that had moved from Cleveland, OH to Coudersport, PA to cut costs and be closer to investors. Ness and Oscar Fraley **worked on the book “The Untouchables”** in what is now the restaurant area of the Hotel Crittenden on Main Street in Coudersport. Built in 1891, The Hotel Crittenden is still in operation and it's another historic Hotel that I have enjoyed – if you like to get inside the 'way back machine' then you will definitely enjoy a stay at the Crittenden. It's a nice place that it's well maintained and everything works – it's just really old. To my knowledge, the hotel does not have a website so reservations must be made by phone.



The train station has been restored and is the site of the Boro Offices. It also contains the local police offices. This building is located on Maple and West Street.



Ok – back to the road and onward to Smethport !







Smethport is the county seat of McKean county and it is a real hidden gem of town that is very **motorcycle rider friendly**. As a result of vast wealth generated by various aspects of the lumber industry during the economic boom of the late 1800's, Smethport was blessed with numerous exquisite mansions– most of which are still impeccably maintained. The Smethport Mansion District is one of the community's paramount attractions, and is one of the best-maintained historic architectural areas in the region. Examples of Victorian style architecture include Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Stick and Italianate. Visitors can view these masterpieces through walking tours that are offered periodically during special events, or by taking a casual stroll with the aid of the **Smethport Mansion District** walking tour guide. Here a just a few of the spectacular Mansions that grace landscape of Smethport.





Back to the road !







This pictorial tour ends just East of Sheffield – I could (and probably will) add much more to the US 6 tour though the Northern Tier of Pa, but I think you get the basic idea of what this road and the region is like.

As always – your comments are welcome and appreciated!



Brad <XX><

Blog author **Brad Morgan** of Carlisle operates a **SERVPRO** business in the Harrisburg metropolitan area. The link to his business website is the only compensation he receives for producing/maintaining this blog:



◀ ADLEPHIA ▶ COUDERSPORT ▶ MOTORCYCLE ROADS ▶ OLD HICKORY ▶ PA ▶ PA GRAND CANYON
▶ PENNSYLVANIA MOTORCYCLE ROADS ▶ PENNSYLVANIA MOTORCYCLE TOURS ▶ SMETHPORT ▶ WELLSBORO