

Big Walker Lookout is a 100-foot observation tower located in the Blue Ridge Highlands Region at the top of Big Walker Mountain in Wythe County on US Route 52 about 12 miles from Wytheville.

The tower is accessible from Interstate 77 in Bland County and Interstate 81 in Wythe County. The tower is atop a peak near the Big Walker Mountain Tunnel and overlooking the East River Mountain Tunnel.

The first store building burned in 2003 and a new store was built just to the right of the first. Originally, visitors crossed to the tower by way of a swinging bridge that connected to the back of the old general store. The swinging bridge was not destroyed in the fire and still stands. Visitors can cross to the edge where the original staircase connected to the bridge.

Big Walker Lookout hosts traditional arts demonstrations on weekends. The lookout tower is open to the public, and the cost to climb the tower is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

Located at an elevation of 3,405 feet, the view from the top of the tower encompasses mountain peaks in five different states.

The tower was originally built in 1947 and has been run continuously by the Kime family. According to the Virginia Department of Tourism, the tower is located at a mountain pass used by Molly Tynes, a woman who warned the town of Wytheville of impending raids by John Toland during the Civil War.

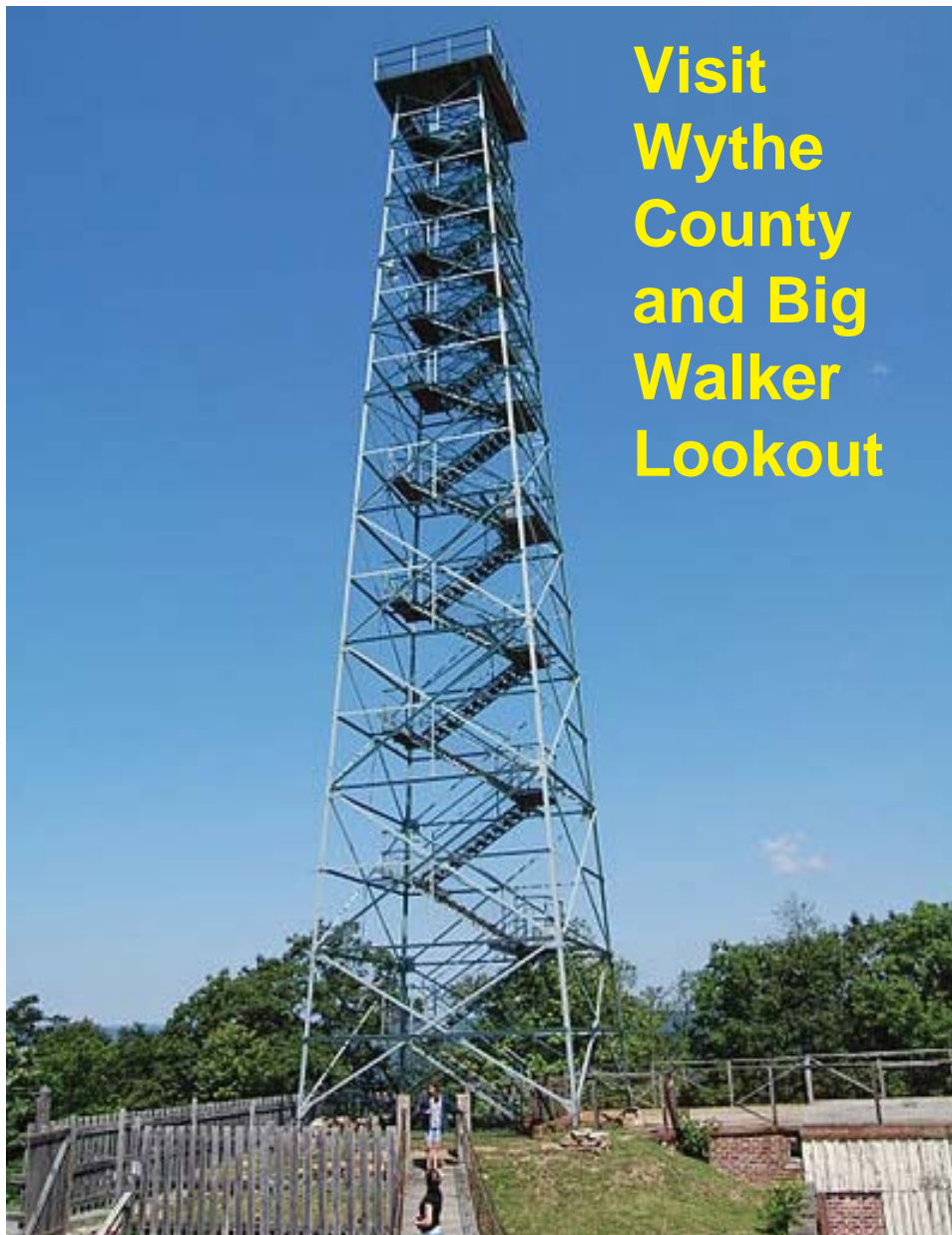
The tower is the beginning of a Virginia Civil War Trails driving tour detailing the Battle of Wytheville, which occurred on July 18, 1863 when a Federal raiding party marched to the Wytheville area intending to destroy the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad tracks and bridges. Troops also hoped to destroy key telegraph lines and damage nearby salt mines and lead mines.

Birds sited at the Big Walker Lookout include: turkey and black vultures, bald eagles and golden eagles, American kestrel, peregrine falcon, as well as sharp-shinned Cooper's, broad-winged hawk (bird), and red-tailed hawks.

Information

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