

# Walking Tour



Published by  
**Front Royal/Warren County Visitors Center**

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# BEGIN THE TOUR

The Walking Tour of Front Royal is approximately one mile long and will begin at the Visitors Center (Train Station, 414 East Main Street) and end just a block below.

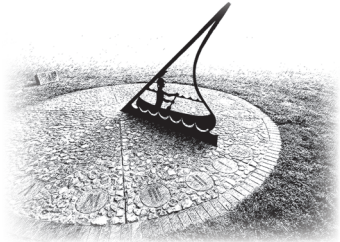
## 1. Train Station

(414 East Main Street) Railroad service reached Front Royal in the mid-1850's. After its destruction during the Civil War, service was resumed in the 1870s. The station was built sometime before 1885. By World War I, 6 passenger trains arrived daily. The advent of the automobile caused service to decline. Passenger service ended in 1946 and freight service ended in 1954.



## 1A. Millennium Sundial

(next to the Train Station). The Millennium Sundial was dedicated December 31, 1999. It commemorates the transition from the 20th Century to the 21st. Conceived, designed, and executed by Patricia Windrow and Bill and Eva Devlin, the project was made possible by contributions from the community.



## 2. Caboose

(in the park next to the Train Station) The Caboose on the Village Commons was given to the Town in 1989 by the Norfolk and Southern Railway Company. It sits on original tracks.



## 3. Village Commons

The Gazebo dominates the area which is used for public events and entertainment. Destroyed by a major fire in 1969, this block of Main Street was transformed into the Village Commons by a Downtown Revitalization Project.



## Chester Street

A remnant of the original road that, via Chester gap, linked the Valley to the eastside markets over the Blue Ridge, it was named for Thomas Chester, who operated a ferry across the Shenandoah River as early as 1736. Peter LeHew purchased land along "Chester's Road" in the 1750s and his son subdivided it into lots. Home to the leading nineteenth century families of the area. Chester Street retains at least seventeen historic buildings.

### 4. Mullan-Trout House

(12 Chester Street) Thomas Mullan built this home between 1806 and 1815, the year it was willed to his wife. The Reverend David Trout, a Methodist circuit rider, bought it in 1853. Two of his three maiden daughters, all prominent in the Methodist Church and public education, remained here through the First World War. One of them, Catherine "Brucie" Trout, a widely published poetess, wrote the dedicatory poem for the 1899 unveiling of the Mosby monument in Prospect Hill Cemetery (see the Third Diversion).



### 5. Garrison House

(15 Chester Street) was built by Dr. Manly Littleton Garrison who razed a wood framed house to make way for this new brick home, completed in the fall of 1882. The much-loved doctor moved to Front Royal soon after the Civil War and practiced family medicine for 50 years in a small building which stood in the yard to the left of the house. During the Civil War, Dr. Garrison served as a field and hospital physician in the Confederate Army.



*First Diversion: Bel Air – Time: 5 minutes. Difficulty: Flat (consult the Battle of Front Royal information located at the rear of this brochure)*

# CHESTER STREET

## 6. Scott House

(14 Chester Street) Constructed in 1936 by Amos B. and Ola Duncan Scott, this house replaced what was known as the old Jackson home. A mortician, Mr. Scott operated a funeral home, first on Main Street and later in the Gideon Jones house at 106 Chester Street (see stop 18).



## 7. Board House

(16 Chester Street) Luther and Lucy Board left their Warren County farm, Aspen Hill, and moved to Front Royal when the first of their four children were ready to attend high school. They purchased the lot from the Jackson family and built this two-story frame house in 1900. A successful farmer and stock dealer, Mr. Board continued to farm his Aspen Hill property.



## 8. Samuels Apartments

(29 Chester Street) One of the founding fathers of Front Royal, Henry Trout built and resided in this home until 1817. Well-known wheelwrights, the Trouts made the wagons that transported many Valley families west before the Civil War. Dr. Anderton Brown, a beloved physician of Front Royal, owned and occupied the house until his death in 1869. Wounded Confederates were treated in his office here, and a sword was found under the floor during the recent renovation. Dr. Bernard Samuels converted the house to apartments in the mid-1920s.



## 9. Williams Chapel

(40 Chester Street) Completed in 1845 by the Presbyterian congregation, Williams Chapel is the only surviving antebellum church in Front Royal. During the first year of the Civil War, it served as the County seat, replacing the Main Street Courthouse that was turned in to a hospital. When the congregation built a new church on Royal Avenue, the building was sold to the School District and used for public meetings. In the summer of 1888, Confederate spy Belle Boyd gave one of her famous dramatic recitals here, detailing her Civil War exploits "on land and sea during these four years of blood and devastation." In 1899, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church bought the building and named it "Williams Chapel" after its Minister. It continues to be used today.



## 10. Chester House

(43 Chester Street) This was formerly a bed and breakfast, now an attorney's office. It was built by Mr. Charles Samuels on the site of Abraham Boone's home.



## 11. Mary Fristoe House

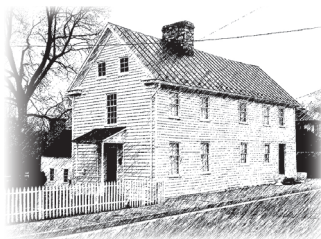
(46 Chester Street) Mary Fristoe, a "genteel and accomplished" indentured African American servant, purchased the lot on the corner of Chester and Peyton Streets in 1908 with money inherited from her guardian and employer, Mrs. Milton T. Fristoe. She rented the house on the corner and built the smaller one for herself, occupying it three years before her death. Mary Fristoe is buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery in the Fristoe lot: "Mary Fristoe, Faithful Servant of Mr. and Mrs. M.T. Fristoe. Died November 7, 1911, Age 55. Not dead but sleeping at rest."



# CHESTER STREET

## 12. Balthis House

(55 Chester Street) Built circa 1787 and named for the William Balthis Family, which lived here from 1838 to 1908, it is the oldest surviving house in Front Royal. In the 1840s, Balthis added the southern extension to the front and the brick wing to the rear. A blacksmith, Balthis had his shop where the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum stands today (see stop 14). During the Civil War, the Balthis family helped hide Green Berry Samuels in the attic for almost a week, to keep him from capture by a union raiding party. According to Dr. Bernard Samuels in the published memoir of his parents: *A Civil War Marriage*. A subsequent owner, Dr. Samuels restored the Balthis House to its antebellum glory. In 2000, the Warren Heritage Society purchased the Balthis House, together with its spacious gardens and several dependencies in the rear.



## 13. Cozy Corner

(64 Chester Street) Forced to sell their ancestral home, Bel Air, the Buck family built this Victorian Home after the turn of the century. The most famous family member, Lucy Rebecca Buck, was one of the South's premier diarists. Her published journal, *Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven*, vividly recalls life in Front Royal during the Civil War. The house sits on the site of an earlier Trout family wagon factory.



## 14. Warren Rifles Confederate Museum

(95 Chester Street) This two-story brick building was completed in 1959 on land donated by Dr. Bernard Samuels. It is the headquarters of the Warren Rifles Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy and houses one of the finest collections of local Confederate memorabilia in the country. The collection includes Stonewall Jackson's original cannon and the Union Flag surrendered to Jackson's troops after the Battle of Front Royal.





## 15. Belle Boyd Cottage and the Laura Virginia Hale Archives

(101 Chester Street, behind Ivy Lodge) The famed Confederate Spy, Belle Boyd, lived in this house with her aunt and uncle early in the Civil War. In May of 1982 the Warren Heritage Society moved the structure to this site from its original location behind 317 East Main Street.



Belle's information on Union troop dispositions helped General Stonewall Jackson win the Battle of Front Royal (May 23, 1862). Belle's efforts also landed her in Washington's Old Capital Prison! Visit Belle's Cottage to learn more about her fascinating Civil War adventures. To the rear of the Cottage, the Archives contain a collection of local historical and genealogical records. Both the Archives and the Cottage are owned and operated by the Warren Heritage Society.

## 16. Ivy Lodge

(101 Chester Street) This home houses the headquarters and museum of the Warren Heritage Society. Built by George Tyler in the 1850s, Dr. Bernard Samuels donated Ivy Lodge to the Town of Front Royal for a public library a century later. The museum contains special exhibits and a collection of artifacts dealing with Warren County/Front Royal history.



## 17. Gideon Jones House

(106 Chester Street) This magnificent Italianate home was built by Gideon Jones in 1870. Orphaned at an early age, Jones rose from apprentice to militia captain, post master, ferry company chairman, wealthy owner of a general store, and mainstay of the Methodist Church (he was Sunday School Superintendent for fifty years!). Front Royal old-timers remember this building as a funeral home run by Amos Scott (see the Scott House, #6).



# CHESTER STREET

## 18. Peterson-Martin-Wood Home

(109 Chester Street) The lot and its original property belong to John B. Petty a noted wainwright, whose wagon factory stood nearby. In 1870, Susan Peterson purchased the property and built this house. Sarah Martin purchased the property in 1914 and lived here until her death in 1945. Her heirs sold the house to the Lester Wood family.



## 19. Petty-Sumption House

(123 Chester Street) This log structure is believed to have been built by George Cheek in 1788. Henry Petty purchased it in 1873 for his aging parents, the Reverend and Mrs. James Spillman Petty. The Reverend Petty reportedly "looked like a saint and was a saint!" In 1923, when the lot was sold to the school board, Charles Sumption bought the house and moved it across the street to its present location, the site of a brick blacksmith shop. The Sumptions were known blacksmiths and owned the land running from the log house to Second Street. Dick Richardson restored this log house in 1976.



## 20. Dunover Apartments

(144 Chester Street) Built circa 1845, this home was known as a "hospital center of social and religious life" during the ownership of the Glasscock family, 1858-1878. The tenants declared the house haunted by the ghost of Mrs. Glasscock, who could be heard at night rattling dishes and rummaging around in search of her false teeth. Dr. and Mrs. Philip E. Wine purchased the property in 1966 and carried out a painstaking restoration.





## EAST 2ND STREET

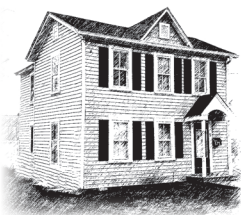
### 21A. Beaty House

(11 East 2nd Street) This late 19th century center-hall colonial home was originally built on land owned by H. Welton Beaty, a prominent owner of several businesses in Front Royal. Three generations of Beatys lived here, the last being Ruth Beaty Gasque, whose husband Q.D. Gasque was a Warren County High School principal, and later Superintendent of Schools.



### 21B. The Wharton-Gatewood House

(9 East 2nd Street) was moved to this spot in 1910 by Welton Beaty to make room for the new Methodist Church on the corner of Main Street and Royal Avenue. It was once owned by Wright Gatewood, a State legislator and Warren County pioneer. It later became the birthplace of Ira Beaty, an educator and school administrator. His famous children, Warren Beaty and Shirley MacLaine, often spent their summers in this neighborhood.



*Second Diversion: North Royal Avenue. Time: 20 minutes. Difficulty: Flat (see the Battle of Front Royal information located at the rear of this brochure).*

## CRESCENT STREET

*Retrace your steps to Crescent Street. Turn right on Crescent Street and follow it around to Payton Street. Crescent Street probably originated as a shortcut from Chester to the Courthouse on Main Street. Wilbur Trout described how he observed Union Troops fleeing up Crescent, pursued by Stonewall Jackson's troops the day of the Battle of Front Royal, May 23, 1862. He witnessed this scene from the front porch of his home, which sat where E. Wilson Morrison Elementary School stands today.*

*Turn right on Peyton Street and walk one short block to Royal Avenue. From this point you can see the next few sites.*

# ROYAL AVENUE

## 22. Weaver House

(35 North Royal Avenue) This imposing mansion to your right was built for Virginia's state Senator Aubrey Weaver, the attorney who secured the first divorce for Wallis Simpson, the Baltimore woman for whom Edward VIII gave up the throne of England in 1938.



## 23. First Baptist Church

(14 West First Street) Although the church was built in 1912, the First Baptist congregation celebrated its 175th anniversary as a community of worship in 2015 which makes it one of the oldest in Front Royal.



## 24. Former Front Royal Town Hall

(16 North Royal Avenue) Built circa 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the cupola, pediment and stone facing probably inspired the design used for the courthouse. The Front Royal Volunteer Fire Department once occupied the right side of this building where the Town Council Chambers were once located. Look closely and you can see where the fire trucks once exited the building.



## 25. Front Royal United Methodist Church

(1 West Main Street) On the corner of Main Street and Royal Avenue, the church was completed in 1909. The addition was completed in 1996. This new church replaced its former church located at 131 East Main Street.



*Third diversion: Prospect Hill Cemetery. Time: 20 minutes. Difficulty: Uphill (See Battle of Front Royal information located at the rear of this brochure).*

# ROYAL AVENUE

## 26. Afton Inn

(Corner of Main Street and Royal Avenue)

Built in 1868 and originally known as the Mont Vue Hotel, the Afton Inn was an elegant Front Royal “watering hole”. Many of its patrons came to Front Royal to escape the hot, sultry summer days in Washington.



*At the corner of Main Street and Royal Avenue turn left (East) on Main Street.*

# MAIN STREET

**Main Street** Known as Market Street when the Town was chartered in 1788, Main is the second oldest street in Front Royal (Chester is older). Since the completion of the Downtown Revitalization Project in the 1980s, the Town Government and the Chamber of Commerce continue the effort to protect and enhance the historical character of Front Royal's governmental and commercial center.

## 27. Warren County Courthouse

(Corner of Main Street and Royal Avenue) The current Courthouse was built on the same site as the first constructed in 1836, the year Warren County was formed. This Courthouse was built in 1936 as a WPA project. The stone additions in the rear, completed only in 2000, are remarkably harmonious with the rest of the building. On the lawn to the right is the Confederate Monument, built to honor Warren County's Confederate soldiers. To the left are monuments honoring soldiers who fought in World Wars I and II, Korean and Vietnam.



## 28. First Treasurer's Office and the Warren and Rappahannock Trust Company

(105 East Main Street) This unique turn of the century solid masonry structure sold by the Methodist Church in late 1890, first shows up in the records as a law office in 1905 – complete with pot belly stove. The intricate exterior reflects building styles of that period. The open space interior, completely renovated in 2005, features vaulted ceilings. This building has served as law offices, a bank, restaurant, gift shop, tattoo and beauty parlor and an art studio.



# MAIN STREET

## 29. Park Theater

(117 East Main Street) Built circa 1920, this 997-seat theater hosted the world premier of Bing Crosby's "Riding High" on April 1, 1950.



## 30. Murphy Theater

(131 East Main Street) Owner Col. Robinson Barr Murphy brought vaudeville, and later silent movies, to this theater's stage. In 1862, when just 13, Colonel Murphy enlisted as a musician. Later, as a General's aide, he voluntarily led two regiments as reinforcements into the line of battle, where his horse was shot out from under him. At 15, he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor, the youngest winner of this award.



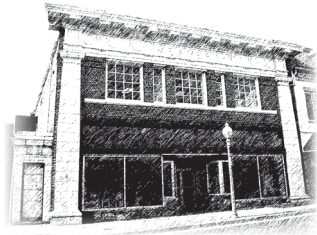
## 31. Trout Building

(201 East Main Street – corner of Church and Main Streets) This Queen Anne style building was constructed in 1900 by Isaac Trout. Turner and Trout Pharmacy opened for business here in 1912 and operated for 82 years. The tall second story windows were later installed to accommodate a photographer's studio.



## 32. Weaver's Department Store

(205 East Main Street) New York City architect John Sloan was commissioned by Will Weaver, third generation owner of the Weaver Department Store during the early nineteen hundreds, to build a facility to house his ever-growing business which occupied the current location of an antique store at East Main Street and Cloud. The new location adjoined a tiny embrasure to its south, which contained a newspaper stand. A family member of the newsstand owner tells the story that a woman ran out of the newsstand and in to Weaver's. A man in hot pursuit shot her as she ran up the stairs of the Department store. In 1978 Weaver's Store was purchased by Peebles and moved to the Royal Plaza Shopping Center. The grand old building went up for public sale.



### 33. Amiss Building

(corner of Cloud and Main Streets) Hubert Amiss' hardware store supplied the many small farmers surrounding Front Royal with a whole range of products – from cattle and poultry feed to farming implements and everyday tools and paints. At the turn of the century, the Front Royal Post Office operated in part of this building along with a drug store and Ramsey's Hardware. Cloud Street was once the driveway to the Amiss Stables, located to the rear of the building on High Street.



### 34. Bank of Warren

(222 East Main Street) A small structure, this was the location of the Bank of Warren, established in 1872 by Isaac Newton King. This was the second bank to be established in Warren County. The first, the Bank of Manassas, did not survive the Civil War.



### 35. First Citizens National Bank

(305 East Main Street) Constructed in 1914, this classical Greek style building was designed by architect John Sloan for the Bank of Warren. Sloan also designed the Weaver's Department Store building, which sits next to the Trout Building on East Main Street.



*Continue across the parking lot to Blue Ridge Avenue. Turn left toward Main Street to return to the Train Station.*

# MAIN STREET

## 36. The Proctor-Biggs Feed Mill

(500 East Main Street) This is the most successful of the three mills that operated in Front Royal near the Southern Depot train station. According to newspaper reports, by 1921, Proctor Biggs' output was 150 barrels a day. This mill survived 6 major fires and in 1981 Mr. William M. "Billy" Biggs said, "It's a sturdy old building. The 12x12 chestnut beams are still there. We just rebuild the rafters in it each time!"



## 37. Cook's Lane and Lane's Tavern

(507-513 East Main Street) the location of Lane's Tavern, though uncertain, is believed to have been at the site of the current Front Royal Laundry Center (507 East Main Street). Cook's Lane was at the site of the adjacent Victorian House. Catherine Lane, widowed in 1836 with three daughters and a need for income, rented rooms in her home, operated a dining room there, and converted part of her home into a tavern. The meeting that established the government of Warren County, after it was established from Frederick and Shenandoah Counties in 1836, was held in Lane's tavern.

Catherine's daughter Elizabeth married Giles Cook Sr. and lived next door. Cook, Sr. was a lawyer and judge whose son followed in his footsteps. Both men were prominent local citizens. Cook, Jr. was a Civil War soldier. The American Legion Post on 8th Street bears his name.

Another prominent occupant of Cook's Lane was C.A. Macatee, Sr. This multi-talented man was an architect who designed and built the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic churches. He was also a merchant, a Civil War soldier, Clerk of the Circuit Court, and one of the five incorporator's for the Royal Water Company in 1898.



# Battle of Front Royal

## Special Battle of Front Royal

### Walking Tour Supplement

Today's Front Royal is a dynamic and growing community with something for virtually every interest. As you visit, dine, shop or just pass through, be sure and see all that our community has to offer.

General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson 's Valley Campaign of 1862 is world-famous and Front Royal's part in it is a fascinating and enjoyable study itself.

This supplement to the popular walking tour booklet issued by the Front Royal/Warren County Visitors Center is intended to provide a starting point for your exploration of the rich Civil War heritage of Front Royal. Of foremost interest was that fateful day in May 1862, when "Stonewall" Jackson led his 13,000-man Confederate Army up the Page Valley, routing Col. Kenly, commanding the federal garrison at Front Royal, and completely surprising General Banks, headquartered to the west in Strasburg.

*Beginning the Walking Tour: The Three battlefield diversions which we've added to the tour should add less than 1 hour to your walking time.*

**First Diversion: Insert on Chester Street after #5, Garrison House. Time: 5 minutes. Difficulty: Flat.**

As you go north on Chester Street, turn right at Laura Virginia Hale Avenue, and walk to the railroad track. Visible ahead, and slightly to your left, with its distinctive columns and bright red roof is massive and venerable Bel Air, already 75 years old at the time of the Battle of Front Royal. From its balcony, Lucy and Laura Buck were said to have watched the skirmishers in the streets across Happy Creek. Robert E. Lee visited here in 1863. Laura Virginia Hale, in her book *Four Valiant Years*, tells of the incident in which General Lee, preparing to ride away after a visit, advised the girls "Don't let those handsome Yankee officers carry you off!" Bel Air is still home to the LeHew family, one of Front Royal's pioneer families.

Walk south on South Royal Avenue to Stonewall Drive. Turn west (right) and walk up Stonewall Drive to Prospect Hill Cemetery. Go through the gate and follow the cemetery road as it winds up the hillside. Stop at the Soldiers Circle. It was near this spot that Stonewall Jackson first positioned his artillery prior to his main assault on the federal garrison in town. Unfortunately, the smoothbore cannon did not have the range to hit the Federal emplacement on Richardson's Hill, to the northeast;

# BATTLE OF FRONT ROYAL

the first artillery shells to fall on Front Royal were Confederate! From this position, Jackson surveyed the little town that lay below him and ordered his artillery to another ridge further to the north where Randolph-Macon Academy now stands. From there, he was able to launch his artillery within range.

By the way, this spot is still a wonderful place from which to see Front Royal!

Retrace your steps to the Courthouse and rejoin the walking tour from there.

A word about further study of Front Royal and the Civil War. We recommend *Brother Against Brother, The Battle of Front Royal, May 23, 1862*, as a valuable source. It is published by The Battle of Front Royal Committee.

The Warren Heritage Society, the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum, the Front Royal-Warren County Visitors Center and the Samuels Public Library are all great places to learn more. We welcome your efforts to get to know us. You'll be glad you did.

**Thank you!**