



# Historic Road Tours of Augusta County Virginia



## TOUR 1 TWIN VILLAGES RAMBLE | *Augusta County Historical Society*

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Distance 34 miles, driving time 2 hours

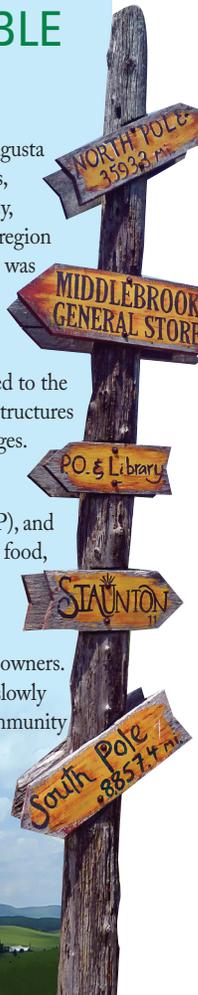
This tour will take you through the gently rolling hills of southern Augusta County, past prosperous farms, historic homes, 18th-century churches, and picturesque country villages. In this part of the Shenandoah Valley, American Indians had few settlements but they traveled through the region to reach common hunting grounds. In the early 18th century the area was settled mostly by immigrants from the north of Ireland and German-speaking people from Europe, many of them traveling the Great Wagon Road from the north. Other important commercial routes – highways and railroads both north/south and east/west – contributed to the region's prosperity in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many antebellum structures can be seen on this journey through rural farmland and turnpike villages.

Driving directions are in **BLUE**. Numbered points of interest are in **RED**. Sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and historical highway markers are noted in **PURPLE**. Opportunities for food, drinks and restrooms are marked in **GREEN**.

**All homes on this tour are private and not open to the public.** Please do not trespass on private land, drive up driveways, or approach homeowners. Please close cemetery gates when you leave. Be careful when driving slowly or pulling off and onto the road. Remember that this is a farming community and be on the lookout for slow-moving agricultural vehicles at work.



*This map was made possible with a grant from the Augusta County Department of Economic Development & Tourism.*



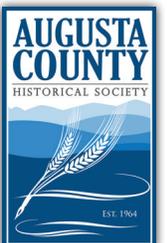
### *In the Beginning:*



When Augusta County was formed from Orange County in 1738, it was America's "Wild West"—stretching to the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Inspiration for the name of the new county came from the British royal family – Princess Augusta, mother of King George III of Revolutionary War fame. Although land-wise Augusta was huge, governmental functions centered at the mill of the largest landowner, William Beverley. Staunton, originally called Beverley's Mill Place, became the county seat, named for Lady Rebecca Staunton, wife of colonial governor William Gooch who encouraged valley settlement. Staunton is one of two independent cities within the county, the other being Waynesboro, which began as the village of Teasville and was renamed in honor of Revolutionary War general Anthony Wayne.

Today's more moderately-sized county lies nestled between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. Virginia's second largest county, at just under 1,000 square miles, has witnessed history ranging from frontier clashes to Civil War battles. Daniel Boone, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert E. Lee did sleep here, President Dwight Eisenhower's mother was born here, and folk artist Grandma Moses and her husband Thomas farmed here. The main road through the county, once known as the Warrior's Path, the Great Wagon Road, and the Valley Pike, has been trod by Native Americans, settlers, travelers, and warring armies. The streams of settlers who put down roots here turned the lush limestone valley into a grain-producing capital, creating thriving milling and distilling industries.

Since 1964 the Augusta County Historical Society has been dedicated to preserving and promoting the history and heritage of Augusta County and its many communities. The Society office, research library, archives, and artifact collections are located on the third floor of the R.R. Smith Center for History and Art, 20 South New Street, in the heart of Staunton's historic downtown. This restored railroad hotel also houses a History Gallery featuring rotating exhibits about our area's history and heritage. We invite you to visit the Society either in person or at [www.AugustaCountyHS.org](http://www.AugustaCountyHS.org).



# Road Tour

*Start at the Staunton Visitors Center, 35 S. New Street (open 9-5). Drive north 1/2 block and turn RIGHT on E. Beverley Street. Drive two blocks and turn RIGHT on S. Coalter Street. Proceed through the stoplight and continue straight on Greenville Avenue (Rt. 11) for 2 miles. Exit RIGHT onto 262 North, drive 3 miles, and take the Parkersburg Turnpike (254) exit. At the end of the ramp turn LEFT, and then LEFT again on Cedar Green Road (693).*

The community of Cedar Green was settled by African Americans after the Civil War. Beverley Manor Elementary School on the left was opened as a high school in 1961 to provide a “separate but equal” place for the county’s Black students before integration in 1966. It eventually became an elementary school, which closed in 2017.

*Continue .5 mile on Cedar Green Road (693).*

On the right is the **Augusta County Training School [1]** (now an American Legion post). Founded in 1938, the school was Augusta’s first consolidated Black school, serving students in grades one through nine. Around 300 students from throughout the county attended school here until 1966 when the county schools were integrated. See **historical marker**.

*Continue on 693 for .4 mile, turn RIGHT on Hebron Road (703) and drive .9 mile.*

The road here parallels the route of Augusta County’s first railway, the Virginia Central Railroad. This section was constructed in 1854; within five years the line was carrying some 135,000 passengers annually. During the Civil War the railway was a frequent target of Union forces, but it was rebuilt shortly thereafter and remains in use today as CSX.

**Hebron Presbyterian Church [2]**, known originally as Brown’s Meeting House, is one of the county’s oldest congregations, founded in 1746 by Ulster Scots settlers. This is the fourth church built on this site, designed in 1900 by noted Staunton architect T.J. Collins. The earliest grave markers in the picturesque cemetery overlooking the church date to the late 18th century.

*Leave the church parking lot and drive straight onto Eidson Creek Road (710).*

On the right is a 1923 school building that now houses **Taylor & Boody Organbuilders [3]**. For nearly 40 years George Taylor and John Boody have pursued high quality organ building in the historical tradition. All the parts of the organ are handcrafted in this workshop, including beautifully carved casework, wooden and metal pipes, keys and tracker actions. The organ in Hebron Presbyterian Church was made here.

*Continue on Eidson Creek Road for .5 miles and bear RIGHT on Glebe School Road (708, turns into 876). Drive .7 mile.*

The **Inn at MeadowCroft [4]** is centered around the farm’s original c1820 log house, flanked by log wings taken from an area house dating to c1795. A few hundred yards up the road on the left is MeadowCroft Farm, which houses a small shop offering jams, jellies, and relishes made on the premises.

*After MeadowCroft Farm continue 1 mile on Glebe School Road and enjoy a lovely panorama of the Alleghenies to the west.*

On the right is **Walnut Grove [5]**, built c1807 by Jacob Baylor. Interior woodwork is almost entirely made from black walnut, including doors and shutters, and the dining room and kitchen floors. The bricks for the house were made on site, and Baylor maintained the 1,600-acre property with 28 slaves.

*Drive 2.4 miles to the historical marker on the roadside.*

Augusta Parish purchased 200 acres here in 1749 to serve as a “glebe,” farmland set aside to support the minister in colonial days when the Anglican minister was part of the local government. Just to the west in the woods on the hill, the parish established a public cemetery. The **Glebe Burying Ground [6]**

**NRHP** has grave markers that reflect English, German, and Scots-Irish funerary art traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries. Revolutionary War soldiers are buried here, as well as settlers killed in Shawnee Indian attacks during Pontiac’s War in the 1760s.

In the hollow near the cemetery stands the **Glebe Schoolhouse [7]** **NRHP**. Built before the Civil War as a private school and later integrated into the public school system, it is the oldest surviving brick schoolhouse in Augusta County. The school was closed in the early 20th century and was later converted into a private home.

*Continue 2 miles to Mish Barn Road (876), turn LEFT and drive 1.6 miles.*

On the right, Heritage Hill provides an excellent example of a prosperous antebellum farmstead. The **Henry Mish Barn [8]** **NRHP** is a Pennsylvania-type brick bank barn built c1849. One of only two surviving brick barns in Augusta County, it is noted for its decorative brick ventilator patterns and a heavily-trussed interior. Bricks for the house and barn were made from clay taken from the banks of Back Creek that flows in front of the house.

*Continue 1.3 miles and turn RIGHT on Middlebrook Village Road (252). Park at the Middlebrook General Store (serving snacks and hot lunches Monday-Saturday) on the right. Village walking tour flyers are available at the General Store.*

**Middlebrook [9]** **NRHP** is one of the oldest and best-preserved rural villages in Augusta County. It was founded in 1799 and settled by Scots-Irish, German, and English immigrants. By the mid-19th century the village was a flourishing community at the intersection of two important trade routes in the Valley. The main street is lined with many 19th-century homes and commercial buildings that reflect the popular regional styles of the time, including log, frame and brick structures. After the Civil War a substantial Black community developed at the south end of town, consisting of 10 homes, a church, and a school. As commercial traffic shifted away from the village at the beginning of the 20th century, Middlebrook began to decline and little development has followed since. The entire village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Take a break at the picnic tables at the village’s **historical marker**.

*Leave the village on Middlebrook Road (252) heading north, and drive .6 mile.*

The large white house on the left at the end of a graceful allée of trees was historically known as **Oak Hall [10]**. Built in the 1850s, it is one of the area’s earliest examples of the double-pile Georgian architectural style. Oak Hall was a large and prosperous wheat farm associated with the prominent McChesney and Hogshead families.

*Continue .8 mile and turn RIGHT on Howardsville Road (701).*

Howardsville Road was once an important turnpike constructed in the mid-19th century. The road carried daily caravans of wagons of iron, whiskey, flour, and corn from the Shenandoah Valley across the Blue Ridge to Howardsville for transportation on the James River and Kanawha Canal to Richmond.

*Proceed .9 miles, turn LEFT on Arborhill Road (695) and drive a short distance.*

**St. John's Church [11]** was founded by German Reformed and Lutheran settlers who built a log meeting house near here in 1780. The two congregations were a union church, sharing the building until 1839 when the Lutherans formed and built nearby Mt. Tabor. In 1850, a growing German Reformed congregation built a brick structure to replace the log building. Since then two other brick buildings have been built on the same general site; the most recent church was built in 1979. Burials in this cemetery go back to the 18th century and some of the inscriptions are in German. The Rev. Adolph Spindle, the famous circuit riding preacher who died in 1826, is buried here.

*Return to Howardsville Road (701), turn LEFT and drive .4 mile.*

On the right, **Bethel Green [12] NRHP** was built just before the Civil War by prosperous farmer and distiller James Bumgardner. The architecture and interior decoration have survived virtually intact to this day and provide a fine example of mid-19th century architectural style. It is embellished with bracketed cornices, elaborate brick chimney stacks, an Italianate entrance, scrolled latticework, stained and painted glass sidelights, and elaborate Gothic porch railings. Nearby, Bumgardner operated the family distillery, celebrated throughout the country for its "Old Bumgardner Rye Whiskey."

*Drive on a few hundred feet and turn LEFT.*

**Bethel Presbyterian Church [13]**. Bethel, originally known as the North Mountain Meeting House and formed in 1746, erected a log church on this site in 1779. There are a number of Revolutionary and Civil War soldiers buried here, as well as Rev. Francis McFarland, born in Ireland, who served the church for 43 years. The first brick church was built in 1822, when the congregation (including slaves) exceeded 300. The present church was built in 1888 using bricks from the earlier church. When Prohibition shut down the distillery across the road, the congregation was proud to reuse the beams from the distillery building to remodel the church interior – thus bringing demon whiskey to its knees.

*Drive 1.1 miles and turn RIGHT on McClures Mill Road (604). Continue 1.7 miles and turn LEFT on Stover School Road (662).*

Near this area of numerous springs and streams is the watershed divide between waters flowing north to the Shenandoah River and south to the James River. Augusta County's Riverheads Magisterial District was named for this geographical feature.

*Continue 1.4 miles to Lee-Jackson Highway (Route 11) and turn RIGHT. At the top of the hill turn sharp LEFT at the Greenville Grocery and Deli (serving snacks and hot lunch specials daily. Fishing supplies). Proceed north on Greenville's Main Street.*

The village of **Greenville [14]**, located on the Great Wagon Road, was established in 1794 and named after Gen. Nathanael Greene, who commanded many local residents during the Revolutionary War. During the 19th century Greenville was a bustling stagecoach stop. After the Civil War the now defunct B&O Railroad had a depot in the village. Along Main Street you will find several log structures, cozy frame homes, and fanciful Victorian buildings.

*At the end of Main Street turn LEFT and then make an immediate RIGHT onto Lee-Jackson Highway (Route 11).*

The road known today as U.S. Route 11 or Lee-Jackson Highway is the most historic road in the Shenandoah Valley and actually predates European settlement. The byway began as the Great Warriors Path and served as the main trading corridor for Native Americans. This pathway turned into the Great Wagon Road and became the route for migration and settlement into the Valley and beyond to North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. In the 19th century the road, improved and hard surfaced, became a toll road called the Valley Turnpike. In the 20th century the tolls were removed as Route 11 continued to be the main route for both locals and long-distance travelers until Interstate 81 was built in the 1960s. Traces of history from the last three centuries can be seen all along the road.

*Drive north on Route 11 for 1.2 miles.*

The Hometown Inn on the right incorporates the **Hessian House [15]**, a sturdy limestone dwelling said to have been built around 1800 by former Hessian prisoners. While this is unlikely, there were Hessian prisoners interned in the area during the Revolutionary War, and many stayed on.

*For travelers looking for a respite, turn RIGHT from Route 11 onto Stuarts Draft Hwy just past the Hessian House and follow the sign to the Edelweiss Restaurant, a popular local establishment offering authentic German cuisine. (open daily except Mondays).*

*Continue on Lee-Jackson Highway (Route 11) 3.6 miles toward Staunton.*

As you pass through the unincorporated railroad and turnpike community of **Mint Spring** you will see an **historical marker** on the right for the **Avenue of Trees [16]**. Sponsored by the local VFW chapter, the trees were first planted in the 1930s to honor the war dead of WWI. Over the years additional trees have been added further north in the city of Staunton to commemorate fallen soldiers from all wars.

*Continue on Route 11 for 1.7 miles. Take care if you slow down. There is a pull-off on the left side of the road.*

On the left, perched on a ridge overlooking the Great Wagon Road, is **Folly Farm [17] NRHP**, a Jeffersonian-style house built c1818 by Joseph Smith, who served with Thomas Jefferson in the Virginia House of Delegates. The elegant one-story porticoed dwelling reflects Jefferson's designs for the University of Virginia and other buildings. Folly Farm retains its original springhouse, smokehouse and icehouse, and also features rare serpentine brick walls on three sides. The only other brick barn in Augusta County is here. Folly remains in the same family to this day.

**TOUR ENDS HERE.** *To return to Staunton, continue north on Route 11 to downtown.*

