



Architectural Heritage of Historic Downtown Front Royal

(Prepared under the direction of Steve & Maggie Sill, Heaven Sent Shoppe & Americana Signs and Engraving, with assistance from the Warren Heritage Archives and the Front Royal Warren County Visitors Center.)

Quest Shenandoah is a program of the Front Royal/Warren County Appalachian Trail Community™ program. Front Royal/Warren County is a proud host of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and was designated an Appalachian Trail Community on April 21, 2012. Find other Quests, and guidelines for designing a Quest of your own at www.discoverfrontroyal.com or <http://frontroyalatcommunity.wordpress.com/>. Complete

five Quests and win one of 200 special edition patches (pictured left

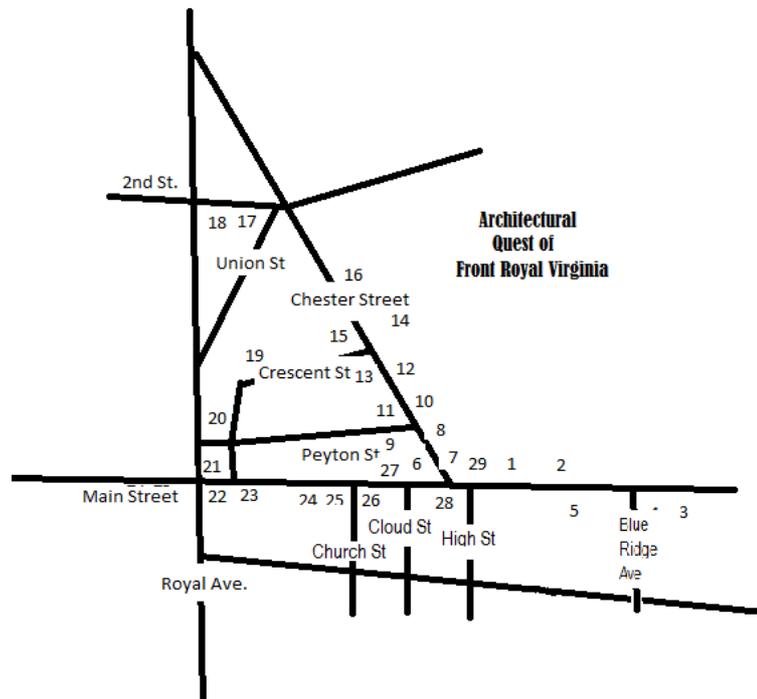
Front Royal, Virginia

Moderate/Architectural, Historic /Pavement.

Font: Directions – Ar Cena BOLD; History – *Cambria Italics*; Quest – Calibri BOLD

Begin at the Visitor Center.

- **From I-66 Westbound** – Take Exit 13/Front Royal. At end of ramp, turn **LEFT**. At light, turn **RIGHT** onto Rte 55. Follow five miles into town. Turn right at Rte 522/Commerce AVE. Follow to Main Street, one block past stop light. Turn **LEFT** onto Main. Visitor Center is on your **RIGHT** at the Village Commons.
- **From I-66 Eastbound** – Take Exit 6/Front Royal. At end of ramp, turn **RIGHT** onto Rte 340 South. Follow 340 across two bridges and into Front Royal. Follow signs for 340 South through two turns until it becomes Royal AVE. Follow to traffic light at Main Street and turn **LEFT**. Follow through downtown to Visitor Center, just after Village Commons on your **LEFT**.
- **From Luray** – Follow 340 North into Front Royal where it becomes Royal AVE. Follow to traffic signal at Main Street and turn **RIGHT**. Follow through downtown to Visitor Center, just after Village Commons on your **LEFT**.
- **From Flint Hill** – Follow 522 North into Front Royal where it becomes Commerce AVE. Follow to Main Street, one block past stop light. Turn **LEFT** onto Main. Visitor Center is on your **RIGHT** at the Village Commons.



**Your point of origin on this Quest
Shares Front Royal history most exciting and best.
Friendly folks at the Visitor's Center create for you a tour
To imagine growth in the Shenandoah during the Civil War.**

1. Train Station, 414 E. Main ST (Functional Train Station Design, circa 1885)

The railroad reached Front Royal in the mid-1850's. After its destruction in the Civil War, Service was restored in the 1870's. The Train Station was built sometime before 1885. By World War I, six passenger trains arrived in Front Royal daily. With the coming of the automobile, however, train service went into decline. The last passenger run to Front Royal came in 1946. Freight service to Front Royal ended in 1954.

The picturesque Train Station was refurbished during the 1980's as a result of the Downtown Revitalization Project. Bright yellow clapboards, orange trim and a terra cotta tiled roof recreate the appearance of an earlier period.

2. The Proctor-Biggs Feed Mill, 500 E. Main (c.1920's)

This is the most successful of the three mills that operated in Front Royal near the Southern Depot. According to newspaper reports, by 1921, Proctor Biggs' output was 150 barrels a day. The 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!"



**Every little village needs
A mill to buy your cattle feeds
Ours evolved into a place
Where folks just love to feed their face!**

3. 519 E. Main St (Private Residence)



Go east on Main and cross the street
A Queen Anne mansion can be seen.
A six-sided tower makes it sweet
The sign says it's five-thirteen

4. 507 E. Main St (Private Residence)



Just next door, don't overlook
The onetime home of Doctor Cook
If Gothic is the look you love,
Two chimneys, matched, the roof above



A two-story edifice, joined four together
Exhibits semi-arched hooded windows that shield from
weather
The Italianate-style look is completed with recessed doors
And decorative window frames, of course.

**5. Two-part Commercial Block, 409-415 E. Main ST
(Italianate)(circa 1880)**

Four storefronts are still unified by heavily accented shop windows, recessed entrances, a bracketed cornice atop the shop windows, & a series of second story windows that are adorned by Italianate-style, semi-arched hoods & decorative window frames.

6. Mullan-Trout House, 12 Chester ST (Colonial-Revival)(circa 1806)

Thomas Mullan built this early home & willed it to his wife. The Rev. David Trout, a Methodist circuit rider, bought it in 1853. Two of his three maiden daughters, all prominent in the Methodist Church & 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.



Up Chester street, close by the way,
Reverend Trout, back in the day
Lived with his lovely daughters three
Colonial-revival style you see.



Look around and you will see
A classic Italianate I-House from 1870
Beloved Doctor Garrison called it home
And practiced in the yard.

7. Garrison House, 15 Chester St.

Dr. Manly Littleton Garrison razed a wood framed housed to make way for this new brick home. During the Civil War, Dr. Garrison served as a field & hospital physician in the Confederate Army. The much beloved doctor moved to front Royal soon after the war & practiced family medicine for 50 years in a small building which stood in the yard to the left of the house.

8. Samuels Apartments, 29 Chester St.

One of the founding fathers of front Royal, Henry Trout, built & resided in the house until 1817. Well-known wheelwrights, the Trouts made wagons that transported many Valley families west before the Civil War. Dr. Anderson Brown, a beloved physician of Front Royal, owned & occupied this house until his death in 1869. Wounded Confederates were treated in his office here, & a sword was found under the floor during a recent renovation. Dr. Bernard Samuels converted the house to apartments in the mid-1920's. The Colonial—style pillars are original, as is the nineteenth century brick sidewalk.



**One of Front Royal's Founding Fathers
Built his house to honor the home
Of one of America's Presidents
Can you guess which one?**



**A Greek Revival Church ahead
The oldest in town
It once served as our courthouse
During the Civil War.**

9. Williams Chapel, 231 Peyton St.

Completed in 1845 by the Presbyterian congregation, it is the only surviving antebellum church in Front Royal. During the first year of the Civil War, it served as the seat of county government, replacing the Main St. courthouse that was turned into a hospital. When the congregation built a new church on Royal Ave, the building was sold to the School District & 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 & sea during the four years of blood & devastation." In 1899, The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church bought the building & named it "Williams Chapel" after its Minister. The congregation worships in the building to this day.

10. Chester House (43 Chester St.)

Chester House was built in 1905 by Charles Samuels, an international lawyer who had offices in New York City. It is said that he built it for his mother, Kathleen Boone, whose childhood home was on that property and he incorporated part of her old house into the Chester House. Her bedroom had a "speaker-tube" that goes down to the kitchen. Also, had a dumb-waiter, which has been removed.

Whether Italianate or Georgian, among its many amenities are 7 fireplaces, 3 of which are marble; the most ornate being in the dining room with carvings of birds, cherubs, flowers, and ladies. Ann and Bill Wilson were first to use this beautiful home as a B&B.



**Georgian or Italianate-He must decide soon
Son Charles did build this house for his Momma, Ms
Boone
A Barn for Geraldine was another main feat
For his pet cow must have a place to sleep and eat**



**Cross the intersection plus one abode
Built a big one to rent with dollars earned, seeds she
sowed.
Genteel, indentured, humble, her house meek at best
Sweet, faithful servant at Prospect Hill has found her rest.**

11. Mary Fristoe House, (46 Chester House)

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

12. The William Balthis House, 55 Chester St (Antebellum/Folk Architecture)(circa 1787)

Thought to be the oldest surviving structure, extensive renovations occurred as the house has been added to & altered several times. Originally built by James Moore, one of the Town's founders, the evolution away from its original construction & style was almost continuous. The core of the Historic Balthis House consisted of a two-story, three-bay-wide side-gable frame building w/one exterior chimney. A common Virginia construction technique known as "nogging" – a method where bricks were used to fill the spaces between the heavy-timber framing members before the exterior weatherboard cladding was applied – was used to promote stability, longevity, & insulation value to a building.

Two major additions include a two-story, two-bay-wide frame addition built on the north gable of the house, & a rear brick- "L"-shaped extension that was erected circa 1845 is located behind the original portion of the house. Circa 1950, the house underwent extensive renovation when interior elements from several local residences were removed & reinstalled on the interior of the Balthis House. The house is one of only a handful of residences in the district that retains original, domestic dependencies at the rear. These include a smokehouse, a separate kitchen, & workshop.

In 2000, The Warren Heritage Society purchased the Balthis House, together with its spacious gardens. They have become a museum & social center.



Cross the street and twenty feet more James Moore's Folk Architecture you will focus in the fore.

Front Royal's oldest surviving structure, a challenge for sure

Additions created over the years, even "nogging" employed, a true design lure.



Cross back over to see, built by the family Buck, this Victorian/Queen Anne

Envision a famous Front Royal diarist penning "Sad Earth, Sweet Heaven", if you can.

**Life during the Civil War before and throughout
Saw on this site a wagon factory owned by the family Trout.**

13. Cozy Corner, 64 Chester St (Queen Anne)(circa 1860)

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. Behind Ivy Lodge (101 Chester St.), the famed Confederate spy Belle Boyd, lived in this house with her aunt & uncle early in the Civil War. Belle's information on Union Troops helped General Stonewall Jackson win the Battle of Front Royal, May 23, 1862. Her efforts also landed her in Washington's Old Capital Prison! In May of 1982 the Warren Heritage Society moved the structure to this site from its original location behind 317 E. Main St.



Back across Front Royal's oldest street to visit the I-House, do tell, For another piece of Civil War history, General Stonewall's famous spy Belle.

The Washington Old Capital Prison for her efforts was earned And history recorded the folly once it was learned.



Now traipse back over to the west side of the street to see The magnificent House wealthy Gideon Jones built during circa 1870 history.

Its Italianate beauty, "life" as a funeral home and other interesting stuff

Made Front Royal's old-timer Amos Scott's memory tough

15. Gideon Jones House, 106 Chester St. (Italianate)(circa 1870)

This magnificent home was built by Gideon Jones, who orphaned at an early age, rose from apprentice to militia captain, postmaster, ferry company chairman, wealthy owner of a general store, & mainstay of the Methodist Church (he was Sunday School Superintendent for 50 years!) Front Royal old-timers remember this building as a funeral home run by Amos Scott. The house is now occupied by the Front Royal/Warren County Chamber of Commerce.

16. Petty-Sumption House, 123 Chester St. (Log Structure)(1788)

Built by George Cheek. Henry Petty purchased it for his aging parent, the Rev. & Mrs. James Spillman Petty, who reportedly "looked like a saint & was a saint"! In 1923, when the lot was sold to the school board, Charles Sumption bought the house & moved it cross the street to its present location, the site of a brick blacksmith shop. The Sumptions were known as the blacksmiths & owned the land running from the log house to Second St.



In 1923, on the west side of Chester you could have stayed put 89 years later –School bought the land, moved the House - but You have to beat it back across to see the house of a "saint" And the little Log House, yes, its trim could use a little paint.



North to the corner look at the land Mr. Beaty bought. Warren & Shirley, spent summers here as surely they ought. Ruth & Q.D. lived in the Colonial house, where they stayed. And till Aunt Ruth called them for ballet lessons, kick-the-can they played.

17. Beaty House, 11 E. 2nd ST (Colonial/Stucco)(circa 1905)

*This home was built 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, & eventually Superintendent of Schools. Now the residence of Steve & Maggie Sill, who received a visit from Warren Beatty & his lovely wife, Annette Bening in 2000, when Heaven Sent Shoppe & Tea Room were located in the house. Warren & Shirley spent their summers in this house as children –Aunt Ruth would call them in from playing kick-the-can at 6:00 in the evening to prepare to go to their ballet lessons. (Mr. Beatty denied that **he** had taken ballet lessons.)*

18. Wharton-Gatewood House, 9 E. 2nd ST (Two-story Traditional I-house)(circa 1850)

This home was moved to this spot in 1910 by Welton Beatty in order to make room for the new Methodist Church on the corner of Main & Royal AVE. It was once owned by Wright Gatewood, a State legislator & Warren County pioneer. It later became the birthplace of Ira Beatty, an educator & school administrator. His famous children, Warren Beatty & Shirley Maclaine, often spent their summers in this neighborhood.



Just 20 steps further west is a house with an interesting past. A traditional I-House more than 150 years old is the birthplace Of a movie-star dad. Both his son and his daughter would be famous as Warren Beatty and Shirley Maclaine.



**Take a shortcut, ring the bell
Hear the story Wilbur Trout did tell**

19. E. Wilson Elementary Elem. School, 40 Crescent ST (Front Gable/Dentil Moulding)(circa 1935)

Crescent Street probably originated as a shortcut from Chester to the Courthouse on Main St. 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.

20. Weaver House (35 N. Royal)

This imposing mansion 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 VII gave up the throne of England in 1938. Shirley Maclaine & Warren Beatty played in this house as children while visiting relatives in Front Royal. The massive columns are made of brick overlaid with mortar. It serves as the legal offices of Napier, Pond, Athey, & Athey.



**A few steps west and south on Royal for a while
Take a look at this foursquare Italianate pile
When Wallis Warfield Simpson sought from Mr. Simpson to be free
Aubrey Weaver took her case and built this house with the fee**



**1868 was quite the year – Montview flourished
Visitors from far and near
Now it's vacant, sad to say
Will it revive to see another day?**

21. The Afton Inn, at the northeast corner of Royal Avenue and Main Street, was formerly known as the Montview Hotel, it is the only one remaining of three hotels originally located on Main St. In the 1930's, 1940's, & 1950's, the influx of visitors spurred the development of extensive tourist facilities, most of which are outside the Historic District, as the Afton has been unusable for many years

22. Warren County Courthouse, Southeast Corner Main & Royal AVE (Two-story Stone, Colonial-Revival)(Orig circa 1836-37/Centennial Restructuring 1936)

The current Courthouse was built in 1936 as a WPA project. It is the second courthouse on this site – the first was constructed in 1836, the year Warren County was formed. 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. The W. C. Courthouse was used as a hospital during the Civil War.



**The Project – not the first on this site
Boasts a monument to those who fought the fight.**



**One would never think of this Front Royal Italianate/Masonry building with so many uses
Picture this - 1890 – a law office with a pot belly stove, shivering clients? No excuses.
High, voluminous ceilings, a bank with iron art deco-style vault door, restaurant and such
Gift shop, tattoo and beauty parlor and Warren & Rappahannock Trust Co., Oh, too much!**

23. Noel Building, 105 E. Main ST (Italianate, solid masonry)(circa 1890)

The lot was sold by the Methodist Church in late 1890 & first shows up in 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, a bank vault with iron door & sleek art deco styling. This building has served as law offices, a bank, restaurant, gift shop, tattoo & beauty parlor as well as the Warren & Rappahannock Trust Co.

24. Trout Building, 201 (& 203) E. Main ST (Queen Anne/Late Victorian)(circa 1908)

A more elaborate “survivor” of the era, the Trout Drugstore Building incorporates fashionable elements of Victorian, including the corner tower, the mansard-type roof (a steeply-pitched, hat-like roofline), & roof shingles laid in an elaborate pattern. The builder also availed himself of the Colonial or Classical Revival in the pedimented dormers, trademarks of that “new” style of architecture.



**A fancy lady in her time
A Victorian charmer in the prime
With towers, dormers and fancy roof
A new style was born and here is the proof.**



**A funny tower on this Colonial Revival building
Once held stage sets not in use
Before that it was a Church tower
Look at the lovely arched Nave windows at the top.**

25. Murphy Theater, 131 E. Main ST (Colonial-Revival)(circa 1879)

Prominent historic adaptive reuse in 1908-09 of former Front Royal United Methodist Church now relocated to Northwest Corner of Main & Royal. Original arched, nave windows are still visible on second floor.

26. Weaver's Department Store, 205 E. Main St.

New York City architect John Sloan was commissioned by Will Weaver, 3rd 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 E. Main ST & Cloud. The new location adjoined a tiny embrasure to its south, which contained a newspaper stand. A family member of the newstand owner tells the story that a woman ran out of the newsstand & into 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 & moved to the Royal Plaza Shopping Center. The grand old building went up for public auction.



**Have we fallen through a time warp? Do Greek temples abound?
Why, no, we're on Main St Front Royal, despite what it's not
A Greek Revival Carving above the door and Marble all around
A department Store for years and now a favored watering spot!**



A one-story, brick, pedimented front gable, and decorative cornice brackets do, in turn

Tell a story to passersby of an era that's gone, but not forgotten, exciting to learn.

Once they tell me, it was a Variety Store – hard to imagine on this narrow lot

Attorneys now inhabit offices within, the history's extensive about this town plot.

27. Bank of Warren, 222 E. Main St.(Queen Anne)(circa 1872)

Still in its original form, it occupies a narrow lot. This one-story, brick (now an attorney's office) retains its original, pedimented, front-gable form as well as its decorative cornice brackets. In recent years the face of the building was extensively rebuilt after a car came down Cloud Street and entered the building!

28. First Citizens Bank (2nd Bank of Warren)305 E. Main ST (Greek)(circa 1914)

Mr. Isaac Newton King commissioned New York-based architect, John Sloan, to design two buildings. This one, being one of the most elaborate architectural statements on Main St, with fluted Corinthian style columns, a pedimented door, & carved, classical figures mounted above the door; & the other, Weaver's Dept. Store.



Mr. John Sloan was called from New York - Mr. King wanted to develop a dream

The first was this Greek-style bank; then there would be a second, so it would seem.

Town was agog at the state of affairs – fluted columns, classical figures carved above the door.

Indeed, the wealthy Front Royal man would have Sloan design the Weaver Department Store.



Last on your search for the end, find a block once destroyed
by fire, your ultimate test
It was replaced years ago by dedicated friends, with an area
for you to retire and rest.
Now, if you'll just cross the street toward the Caboose, you
will be sure to see
Your Final Quest "piece," close to the original location of
The "Royal Oak" Tree.

29. Gazebo, Village Commons.

Here, in the vicinity of the town pump, the pioneer militia drilled beneath the enormous "Royal Oak," that gave the town its name. "Front the Royal Oak!" commanded the drillmaster. The Gazebo dominates the lovely commons area, providing a favorite spot for public events and entertainment. Destroyed by a major fire in 1969, this block of Main ST was transformed into the Village Commons by the Downtown Revitalization Project

Your Quest is done, success is sweet. You have proved you could compete.
So trot up Chester just a beat. At Heaven Sent you rest your feet.
And stamp your book to mark your feat!
(And if we're closed, just take a peek: the box in the flowers, smelling sweet.)

Architectural Heritage Quest Sponsored by:



HOURS
M-T 9-2
Th-F 9-2
Sat 10-4
Closed Sun & Wed



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