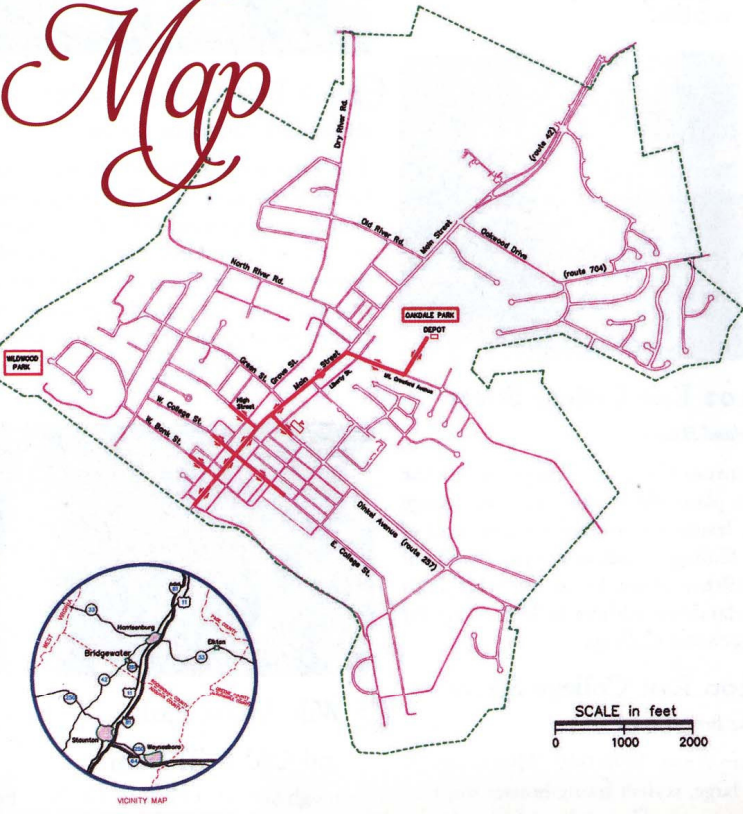


Bridgewater

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Map




Historic Bridgewater

We have highlighted 25 structures for our Walking Tour, hoping to create a diverse, interesting experience as you explore here in the town of Bridgewater.

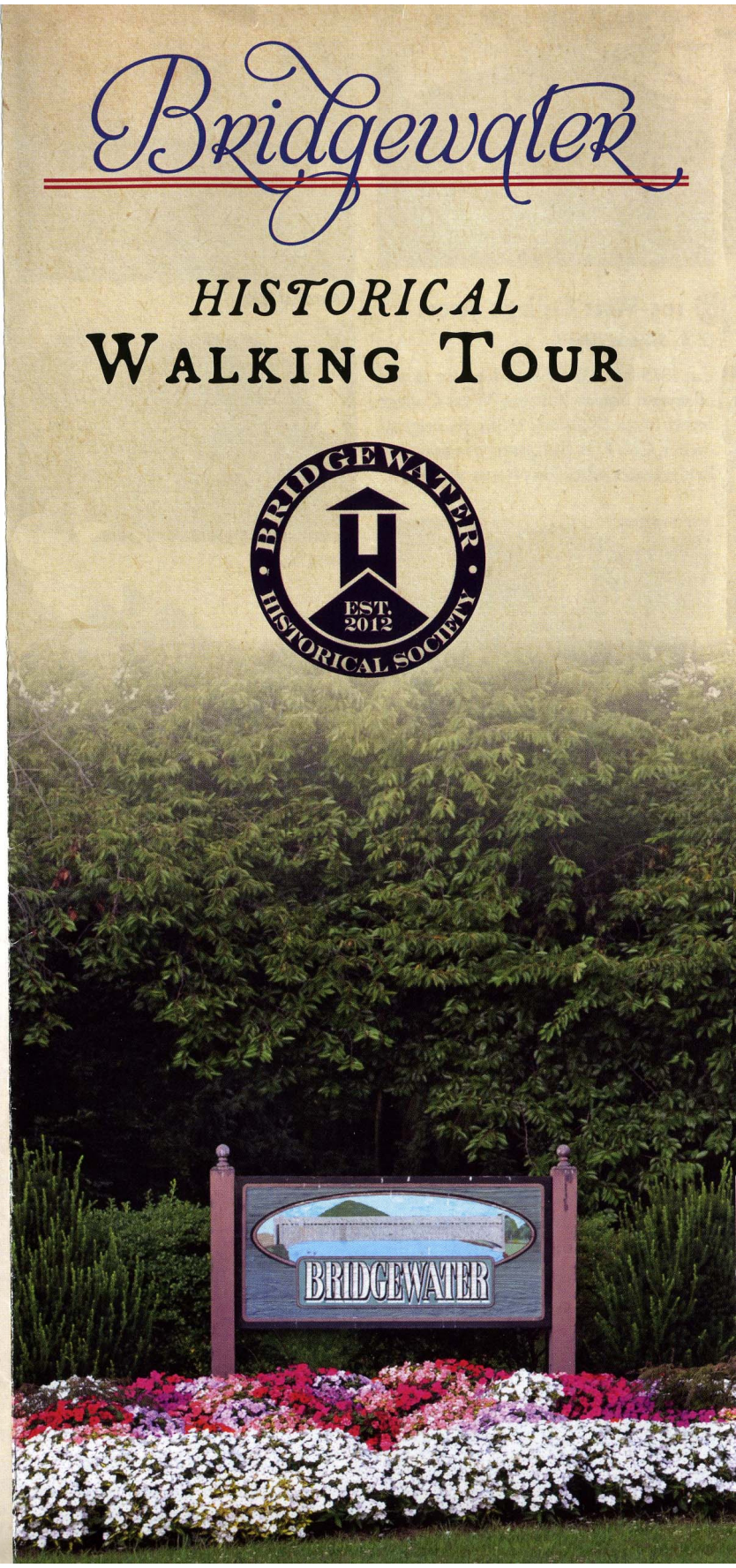


109 South Main Street
Bridgewater, VA 22812
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Find us on 

Bridgewater

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR



WELCOME TO *HISTORIC* Bridgewater

Bridgewater has always been one of the largest, most prosperous towns in Rockingham County and is still the largest incorporated Town in the County today. Located seven miles southwest of Harrisonburg where the Harrisonburg-Warm Springs Turnpike crosses the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The community was first known as McGill's Ford or Bridgeport, recognizing its early use as a river port for neighboring farmers to send their goods downstream to Port Republic. Although the Dinkle family had established a sawmill, gristmill, and tavern along the river by 1820, it was not until the turnpike was begun in the late 1820s that John and Jacob Dinkle laid out lots for the present town. In 1835, soon after the completion of the turnpike, the Virginia General Assembly established the Town of Bridgewater, giving it its present name. Bridgewater's rapid growth in the antebellum years led to the construction of a number of fine brick residences, which still stand, and the extension of its boundaries to include approximately twenty more acres along the turnpike in 1852. New turnpikes connecting Bridgewater to other neighboring communities, the construction of the Chesapeake and Western Railroad, the proposals for many others, and the improvement of the Harrisonburg-Warm Springs Turnpike through town attracted many businesses and industries to the town in the late nineteenth century. With its improved transportation network, Bridgewater became a major commercial center for the surrounding northern Augusta County and southern Rockingham County area. The establishment of Bridgewater College in 1882 provided a further catalyst for local growth in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because of its continued prominence and prosperity since its settlement, Bridgewater retains one of the largest and finest collections of vernacular architecture in Rockingham County and the central Valley. The district focuses primarily on Main Street, with its rows of closely packed mid nineteenth-century dwellings, but it includes several of the earliest cross streets and the original, pre-1910 portion of the Bridgewater College campus. Many of the earlier as well as late nineteenth-century buildings have been cloaked with rich Victorian decoration typical of the Valley's turnpike towns. With few major intrusions in this older part of town, Bridgewater Historic District exhibits the charm and character of the town at the turn of the century.



1. Bridgewater Depot

(Located in Oakdale Community Park)

The Depot was constructed around 1885. The first train entered Bridgewater Saturday, September 14, 1895. Estimated attendance was 10,000 to 12,000, many of whom arrived free of charge over the brand new steel rails for the celebration of the Chesapeake and Western rail service in Bridgewater. The Train ran from Stokesville to Elkton with the last train from Bridgewater departing on January 9, 1987. The rails and track were removed in 1988. Being a historic artifact, the depot was moved to Oakdale Community Park in August, 1992 for preservation. The Town of Bridgewater leased the depot to the Shenandoah Valley Railroad Club and the Archaeological Society of Virginia, July 14, 1993, for historical displays. The town of bridgewater leases the deopt to Rockingham-Augusta Search & Rescue.



2. North River Baptist Church

(Mt Crawford Avenue)

Black members of the Bridgewater Methodist formed a separate congregation about 1870 and met for worship in a school house on the southwest side of North River, near Warm Spring. In May 1879, they dedicated a new church on Grove Street next to Greenwood Cemetery, which has since been demolished. North River Baptist Church had its origins in the same years. In 1902, this congregation built its present church on Mt. Crawford Avenue.



3. 405 North Main Street

Gothic Revival. 1885-95. One of two late 19th century brick houses built on the north end of Main Street, this house is built on the front of an older, brick, room, possibly a part of the house that was here in 1877. Note the double-pane window creating a pointed arch motif in the second floor of the projecting gabled block.



4. 403 North Main Street

(Barbee House)

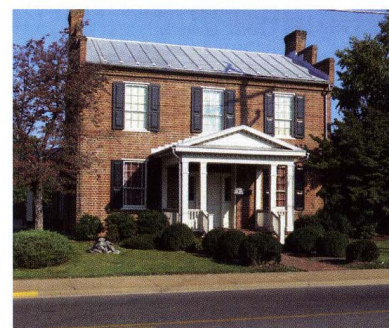
Ca 1840. The Barbee House is one of the oldest and most imposing houses on the north end of Main Street. It illustrates the style of architecture popular in the 1840s in the Central Valley. The house was enlarged several times by the late 19th century, when Col. Gabriel Barbee ran an inn called the Barbee Hotel. Barbee also used the house as his private residence and as a private school.



5. 401 North Main Street

(Riddle House)

Victorian. 1885-95. Brick. One of a pair of brick houses built on the 400 block of North Main Street in the late 19th Century, this irregular design currently displays little decoration except for the corbeled brick cornice, front porch, and second-floor south side porch with sawn balustrade.



6. 317 North Main Street

(Raun House)

Mid 19th century. The Raun House is one of the oldest houses on this block of North Main Street and the only older brick house. The three-bay I-house design with parapeted end chimneys became popular in the Valley in the 1840's and 1850's.



7. 219 North Main Street

(Bridgewater United Methodist Church)

Church. Gothic Revival. 1855/1902/1925/1992. One of the most stylish of Bridgewater's turn-of-the-century churches, the Bridgewater United Methodist Church displays the popular Gothic Revival styles as interpreted by some of Bridgewater's finest local builders-the Shrum Brothers, brick masons; and Thuma and Dovel, contractors.



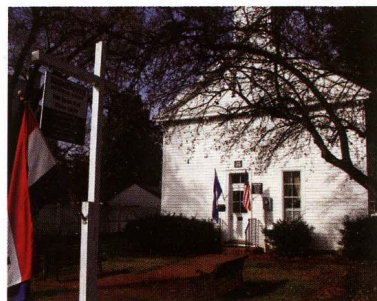
8. 100 Dinkel Avenue
(Bridgewater Elementary/High School 1911–1958)

Educational. In 1911 the present school building was constructed. - One of the earliest and most stylish consolidated schools in Rockingham County. At this time, three years of high school were added to the curriculum with the fourth year added in 1916-7. Bridgewater became the first accredited High School in Ashby District. This two-story school rests on a full basement. A tall, two-story portico, supported by Doric columns and trimmed with a modillion cornice highlights the school, providing an entrance into the level mid-way between the first floor and basement. A stairwell leads directly up to the main level. The school still retains its original sash and granite window sills, but a few exterior changes have been made, such as the removal of the original belfry.



9. 112 North Main Street
(Dr. J. G. Minor House)

This is the oldest of only two houses still standing on the 100 block of North Main Street. Built as a residence by Dr. J. G. Minor (1856).



10. 109 South Main Street
(Old Town Hall) Currently home of the Bridgewater Historical Society

This is the oldest building surviving in the Historic District but has been remodeled and enlarged several times since its construction. This frame building dates from the 1830's and was the first Methodist Church in Bridgewater. Jacob Dinkle and his wife deeded the lot to the Methodist Episcopal Church of North America, stipulating that the lot should become property of the town should the church cease to use the lot. In 1844, the church body amicably split and the town bought the building and acquired the lot in 1855. It was used as a Town Hall for most of the 19th-century. Belfry is still in existence. Owner is the Town of Bridgewater.



11. 111 South Main Street
(Dr. J.G. Brown House)

1849. Brick. With its massive two-story portico and deep double-pile, central-passage plan, the Brown House is one of the largest, most pretentious mid 19th-century houses on this block. The paired parapet gable end walls were popular features of mid 19th-century brick houses in this region. The interior preserves most of its original Greek Revival woodwork. Dr. Brown was a physician, planter, money lender, and politician. He was a member of the Rockingham County Court from 1848 to 1857 and a member of the Virginia House of Delegates in 1847 and again in 1857.

12. 115 South Main Street
(Dr. T. H.B. Brown House)

Built 1839. Brick. Central bay with leaded glass transom and side lights. The early 20th-century porch and wooden cornice provide the only decoration to this house. An original one-bay, one-story porch and the 9/6 sash were removed in the 1910 remodeling

13. 114 South Main Street
(Myers House)

1885-95. One of a handful of late 19th-century houses on this block of South Main Street, the Myers House boasts one of the few mansard roofs in town. The rounded arch, second-floor windows break the roofline, creating round, wooden hood arches.



14. 116 South Main Street
(St. Claire Kyle House)

Mid 19th-century. Brick. This is one of several mid 19th-century houses located along South Main Street, and one of the few to sit back from the road. The exterior alterations, including the modern door frame and first-floor facade window, were made in the mid 20th-century.



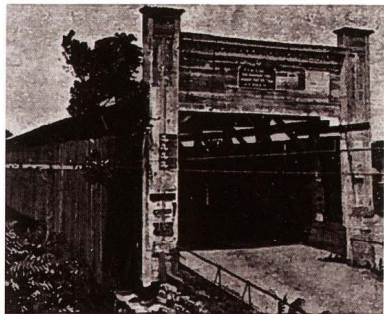
15. 201 South Main Street
(Formerly Farmer's Bank)

Commercial. Renaissance Revival. 1882-83. The Farmer's Bank is one of the most stylish late 19th century commercial buildings on South Main Street. The first floor contains a store front with central entrance and flanking windows to the south. The second floor windows have been framed by round, layered brick arches, connected to low projecting brick piers to create an arcade effect. The building contained the bank and a drug store on the first floor. Two doctors offices on the second floor with an entrance on Bank Street to the north side of the building.



16. 215 South Main Street
(John Dinkle House)

Early 19th century, 1809-20. Brick. The Dinkle House is one of the oldest houses in Bridgewater, although it was remodeled in the late 19th century when part of the house collapsed. The north end appears original, along with the one-story brick ell. Jacob Dinkle was one of the founders of Bridgewater, laying out the lots with his brother John, and operated Dinkle tavern at this house in 1820, which became Riverside Inn in 1929.



17. Bridges of Bridgewater

The first bridge was an old wooden structure which was laid near the surface of the water. In 1853, another wooden bridge was built by Abram S. Williams. In 1862, the Confederates burned the bridge. Not until October, 1866, was the third bridge completed by John W. Wood. On September 29, 1870, the northern end of the bridge was washed away by a great flood. In December of the same year the fourth bridge was completed by William F. Fifer. On November 24, 1877 the fourth bridge was swept away by a flood. The last wooden bridge to be built was completed in April 1878 by William H. Grove. It is said this bridge was the longest single-span wooden bridge in the world. This bridge was tom down in 1916 and an iron bridge replaced it. In 1956, the current concrete bridge was constructed.



18 105 West College Street

(E.B. Simpson House)

Ca. 1878-85. This frame I-house is one of several houses built on West College Street in the 1870s and 1880s. Its original owner, Col. E. B. Simpson, was mayor of Bridgewater when this house was built.



19 107 West College Street

(Luther Myers House)

1870-85. Two-bay wooden porch with round columns wrapped around east side. The Luther Myers House is one of several two-story frame houses built on College Street in the 1870s and 1880s.

20 Bridgewater College

(East College Street)

D. C. Flory organized Spring Creek Normal School and Collegiate Institute a short distance outside of Bridgewater. By 1882, he relocated to Bridgewater and later changed the name to Bridgewater College. From that day forward, Bridgewater College has played an integral role in the progress of the community.



(Wardo Hall)



(Memorial Hall)



(Yount Hall)



21 301 East College Street

(Dr. Flory House)

Victorian/Vernacular. Ca 1900. Frame (weatherboard); two stories; gable roof (wood shingle); four-bay facade. This is one of the fairly large frame houses at the corner of East College and Second Streets. The somewhat irregular plan has been highlighted with a shingled front gable with fan-design gable screen; bay window on the north and west end; and decorative wooden window cornices.



22 400 East College Street

(Formerly Bridgewater Church of the Brethren) Currently part of Bridgewater College Campus

First Tunker Church built in Bridgewater in 1878 at the corner of Routes 42 and 704; dismantled in 1937. New building at 400 East College Street constructed in 1915 with a large addition added and dedicated on December 13, 1953. Brick; three stories; roof (composition); eleven-bay facade; round arched windows, most of which are stained glass. Steeple added and dedicated March 7, 1982.



26 110 East College Street

(Bridgewater Presbyterian Church)

The Presbyterian Church organized in Bridgewater June 10, 1878. The present church was begun in 1888 and finished in 1889. This frame, Gothic Revival church is one of the most stylish late 19th-century churches surviving in Bridgewater. A fully projecting, square, three-story tower highlights the design.



23 302 East College Street

(Wayland House)

Victorian Ca 1890. This is one of the more plain, three-room, central-passage plan frame houses built on this end of East College Street in the last decade of the 19th-century. Local historian John Wayland moved here in 1893 to attend Bridgewater College.



27 Wild Wood Park

and Old Mill Dam

Although not in the Historic District, the lovely Wildwood Park is located on West Bank Street, as the street winds toward the River. The primary purpose of the Old Mill Dam, aside from its recreational function, is to create an impoundment for the Town's water supply intake. This intake is located approximately one-half mile upstream from the dam. The elevation of the intake is approximately 16 inches below the elevation of the top of the dam. The Old Mill Dam was constructed around 1880 and, according to the best information available, the concrete gravity dam was built to direct water into a concrete mill race which supplied power for a milling operation. A rock ledge, one of the many that jut out of the river bed in a line almost exactly perpendicular to the flow of the river, serves as the foundation of the dam. The concrete dam replaced a wooden dam which is still visible just below the water surface.

24 300 East College Street

(Cyrus Berry House)

Queen Anne. 1890-1910. This is one of two large, stylish frame houses inspired by the popular Queen Anne designs at the corner of East College and Second Streets. The facade is highlighted by a shingled three-story turret on the east side and a shingled cross gable with sawn gable screen and bracketed cornice.



25 210 East College Street

(W. H. Sipe House)

Queen Anne. 1890s. This is one of the most stylish of a string of two-story frame houses built around the turn of the century on this street. This house was built for W. H. Sipe, a prominent local merchant and civic leader.