

DRAFT: WATERFORD VILLAGE HISTORIC ROADWAYS DISTRICT APPLICATION

Submitted by Meredith B. Imwalle on behalf of the Waterford Citizens' Association

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Introduction

Waterford Village is one of 2,500 National Historic Landmarks, but even among those treasures the village is special. It is one of only three landmarks that encompass entire towns or villages and it is the oldest of those three by a century. It is home to the one-of-a-kind Waterford Homes Tour and Crafts Exhibit, which attracts close to 15 thousand visitors in just three days each October and contributes more than \$4 million to Loudoun County's economy annually.

To visit Waterford is to see what life was like in 18th and 19th century rural America, from its centuries-old buildings to the narrow, quaintly-askew historic streets that make up the proposed Waterford Village Historic Roadways District. Those streets contribute a great deal to the village's largely unchanged appearance and are integral to its landmark status. And, while Loudoun County's Historic District Guidelines help preserve the appearance of the structures in the Waterford Historic District, there are no such guidelines in place for the village's roads. Guidelines are sorely needed to protect the unique features of Waterford's roadways, including stone walls, hedgerows and open spaces.

Waterford's Historic Roads

Waterford's establishment as a village central to surrounding farms was due in large part to its proximity to existing American Indian pathways.¹ The first passageways through the unsettled wilderness that was North America "were those made over the centuries by the movement of herding animals and native North Americans following the easiest gradients between water and food sources during their seasonal migrations."²

Similarly, early roads within the Village were rudimentary pathways and trails that simply satisfied the requirement for passage. They were first colonial pathways and later developed into a network designed to support the village's grist mill.

Waterford's roads have changed little since the 1800s (Appendices A and B). Their storied past reflects Loudoun County's history — and the nation's.

¹Elizabeth Brabec with Mary Ann Naber, "Linking the Past to the Future: A Landscape Conservation Strategy for Waterford, Virginia" (Land Ethics, Dodson Associates and the Waterford Foundation: 1992) 27.

²Timothy H. McGinn, "How Has the Evolution of Paved Road Systems Impacted Rural Historic Districts? Waterford Virginia: Case Study" (Timothy H. McGinn: 2004) 4.

In 1755, they played a part in the then-British colony's history. Troops led by Colonel Sir Peter Halkett, who was under British Major General Edward Braddock's command, traveled through Waterford on their way to Fort Duquesne, PA, the site of Braddock's infamous defeat. From Leesburg, Halkett's brigades took two routes. One was down today's Old Waterford and Old Wheatland roads, which took them through the heart of the village.³

During the Civil War, both Confederate and Union soldiers had occasion to walk the village's streets. "Because roads radiated from Waterford to the principal river crossings, it became a key point of Confederate defense."⁴

When Confederates threatened to burn the town, a Union squadron came from Lovettsville to save it. One of the Union soldiers would later write, "The road [sic] were very good so we made good time ... We got to Waterford about 12 o'clock that night ... The people were all up when we came in and cheered us and waved their handkerchiefs, give us a good supper and a good place to sleep. You just ought to have seen how glad to see us Yankees, as they called us."⁵

Waterford's streets were also the setting for some of the darkest moments in its history: Main Street hosted a number of slave auctions where area farmers bought and sold laborers.⁶ More happily, the village was home to a relatively large number of free black families and, according to a local historian, may have been on the Underground Railroad route (Appendix C).

Purpose

The purpose of the overlay district would be to preserve the historic and scenic qualities of Waterford's roadways; to maintain and further develop the village's status as a day-trip and tourism destination in Loudoun County; and to encourage slow travel speeds and responsible use of the roads by a variety of travelers, including automobile and farm equipment drivers, pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists.

³ Eugene Scheel, "What a Wild Set of Creatures Our English Men Grew Into," <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2003/04/06/what-a-wild-set-of-creatures-our-english-men-grow-into/c1ad78c6-6b2a-4088-98c9-3b671d867884/>, (April 6, 2003).

⁴ John Divine, Bronwen Souders, and John Souders, *To Talk is Treason* (Waterford Foundation: 1996) 31.

⁵ John Divine, Bronwen Souders, and John Souders, *To Talk is Treason* (Waterford Foundation: 1996) 39.

⁶ Bronwen Souders, and John Souders, "Waterford's African-American Experience and Timeline," <http://www.waterfordhistory.org/history/waterford-african-american.htm>, (date unknown).

District Boundaries/Definition

The boundaries for the proposed overlay district almost exactly match the 1875-1937 town limits, as illustrated in Appendix D, with one addition: an approximately five-mile stretch of Old Waterford Road that begins in Waterford and ends at Southern Planter Lane — the entrance to Morven Park. The district would include First Street (Main becomes First at the Old Mill), Bond Street and a portion of John Brown's Roadway to the west and north and its northwestern boundary would lie at the point where First Street becomes Old Wheatland Road and crosses Catoctin Creek. To the east, the boundary would be just past the Y intersection of Water Street, Butcher's Row and Loyalty Road. The southernmost boundary would bisect Clarke's Gap where that road crosses Ball's Run.

The district would include the entirety of the following streets:

- Bond Street
- Church Street
- Factory Street (Rt. 662)
- First Street (Rt. 698)
- High Street (Rt. 665)
- Janney Street
- Liggett Street
- Main Street (Rt. 785)
- Patrick Street (Rt. 783)
- Second Street (Rt. 662)
- Water Street (Rt. 698)

The district would include a portion of the following roads:

- Fairfax Street
- Clarke's Gap (Rt. 662)
- John Brown's Roadway
- Loyalty Road (Rt. 665)
- Old Waterford Road (Rt. 698)

Applicability

These guidelines would apply to properties, and uses and structures on those properties within 20 feet of the centerline of each designated roadway within the proposed Waterford Historic Roadways District. This distance was chosen based on its historic significance. It was ordained by the Council of Waterford, in 1875, that "in laying out streets, 20 feet shall be laid out on each side of the centre, of which five feet on each edge shall be for sidewalks, provided that this Ordinance shall not be construed so

as to interfere with houses, shops or porches already constructed that may infringe upon the limits herein prescribed.”⁷

Should the County approve the District, no application shall be approved or certificate of appropriateness issued for the demolition, razing or removing of any structure (to include fences and stone walls) or altering of any roadway unless the Historic District Review Committee determines that the guidelines herein have been met.

Development Guidelines/Standards

A. Walls and Fences

The following guidelines apply to walls and fences that fall within the Historic Roads District and should serve to supplement the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic District, Chapter Three: Guidelines for Site Elements.

1. Acceptable Fencing Types: fieldstone, brick, board, picket, post and rail and post and wire where needed for livestock containment. Existing and historic fieldstone, board and picket fencing along roadways contributes to the historic ambience of the village and should be preserved.
2. Discouraged Fencing Types: solid fencing (of any kind other than stone or brick or wood picket) in front yards, plastic, vinyl, chain link or concrete block fencing in any location
3. Fencing should not be so tall as to obscure the elevation of the primary structure on a property. The height of fencing in front yards should not exceed 36 inches above grade. No privacy fencing is permitted in front yards. No fencing within the Roads District may be over six feet in height, as measured from the outside at grade.
4. Structural supports of fences and walls should face inward to the property being fenced, unless the supports are an integral part of the overall design and both sides of the proposed fence are identical.
5. On corner lots where the fencing falls within the Roads District, privacy fences in rear yards must be screened or beautified with appropriate landscaping materials.

B. Signs

Large or unsightly signs detract from the village’s historic ambience and its beauty. Limited, tasteful signage should be used where appropriate to identify locations or direct visitors while maintaining Waterford’s historic integrity.

⁷ Joseph C. James, F.J. Beans, “Town Ordinances of Waterford, Loudoun County, Va,” No. 11, Sec. 1, <http://www.waterfordhistory.org/history/waterford-town-ordinances-1875.html>. (1875.)

Signs, cont'd.

1. Permitted and Prohibited Signs

All signs in the Historic Roads District should adhere to the parameters established in Chapter 8 of the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic District, which specifically addresses signs.

C. Structures

Every effort should be made to preserve historic structures within the district. All structures within the district should adhere to relevant chapters in the Loudoun County Historic Guidelines for the Waterford Historic District.

D. Roadways

1. Width

The existing roads must not be widened. Waterford's narrow roadways were designed centuries ago to accommodate horse and carriage traffic. Today they are an integral part of its landmark status. Many of the historic buildings sit just a few feet from the edge of the existing roadway. The corner of the Old Mill, once the village's center of commerce, is just 23 inches from the edge of First Street.

2. Alignment

There must be no rectification of any roadways' alignment within the district, as such improvements would erase the original, historic footprint of the roads. There should be no smoothing of sharp curves or reducing of inclines. Such changes are sometimes justified for safety reasons, but may be avoided by alternatively reducing traffic volume and speed.

3. Surface

Village roads have been resurfaced repeatedly without being milled, so in some areas they rise more than two feet above adjacent sidewalks and the entryways to nearby historic buildings. The Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) review of the condition of existing pavements within Waterford included core pavement samplings that found up to eight inches of road surface on part of Route 662 and more than seven inches of surface on parts of Route 665.⁸

Elevated roadways have created a safety issue for pedestrians who must jump from the street down to the sidewalk when crossing. They have also caused flooding of some of the historic buildings. These proposed guidelines encourage reducing road elevation where possible to alleviate these problems.

⁸ Carlin H. Hall, David P. Schiells, "Pavement Investigation and Evaluation for Town of Waterford" (Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation: 2016) 3.

Road surface materials should not be upgraded so as to detract as little as possible from the character of the landmark. For example, Waterford's gravel roads (Bond Street, Liggett Street, Church Street and Fairfax Street) should not be upgraded to asphalt or tar and chip. Where roads have already been paved, their surfaces should not be improved, or resurfaced without careful consideration of the impact on the village.

It should be noted that improved road surfaces also contribute to Waterford's water runoff and drainage problems, further addressed in Section E, Ditches. Hard, smooth surfaces cause more water to run more quickly off roads, into residences and conservation land.

E. Drainage

According to VDOT's recent study of Waterford's road surfaces, "the almost complete lack of surface drainage adjacent to the pavement ... has caused town residents to adopt a defensive position toward the roadways as the streets have become the defacto surface drainage system throughout the town."⁹

Drainage failures threaten more than just road surfaces — they also negatively impact structures and the environment. Excess water has caused some historic structures in Waterford to settle, experience structural damage and damage to their historic building materials, and to mold. And Waterford's water runoff has the additional negative effect of carrying pollutants to the Phillips Farm conservation area and into Catoctin Creek, which feeds directly into the Potomac.

These guidelines encourage VDOT to remedy the village's drainage problem by restoring drainage ditches where possible (in consultation with effected residents) and reconsidering impervious road surfaces where necessary.

In a 2003 report prepared on behalf of Loudoun County, consultants recommended the following drainage improvements:

- Repairing curbs and inlets;
- Regrading ditches;
- Replacing and adding pipe culverts;
- Cleaning out pipes and outfalls; and
- Rerouting drainage from historic structures.¹⁰

⁹ Carlin H. Hall, David P. Schiells, "Pavement Investigation and Evaluation for Town of Waterford" (Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation: 2016) 5.

¹⁰ Kimley-Horn and Assoc., "'Bury the Wires and Tame the Traffic,' Waterford Virginia" (Loudoun County, Virginia: 2003) v.

F. Sidewalks

Before Waterford's roads were paved, its sidewalks were the only dry pathways through the village. An 1875 Town Ordinance dictated that five feet on either side of the road be reserved for sidewalks. Sidewalks were to be graded and "paved or planked with such material as the (Town) Council may direct." The Council also reserved the right to require that sidewalks be constructed "In any street or part of a street whether graded or now."¹¹

In keeping with this historic requirement, five feet should be reserved, beyond road edges, for sidewalks. While not all of Waterford's streets have sidewalks now, installation of them in the future would greatly increase the walkability of the village and thus its attractiveness to visitors and the safety of its residents.

G. Driveways and Parking

1. Width and Placement of Driveways

Driveways should be as narrow as possible and should be directed to side and rear yards or, in the absence of an accessible side yard, as far to one side of the structure as possible. Driveways and parking areas should not be positioned directly in front of structures where alternatives are available.

2. Materials

Driveways will consist of twin parallel tire tracks with grass in between or an all-over surface of stone, brick pavers or gravel. If a solid surface must be maintained for drainage purposes, and photo documentation is available, concrete may be considered. Asphalt should be avoided. Existing asphalt parking areas may be maintained, but new asphalt parking should not be created.

3. Location of Non-Residential Parking

Developed parking areas in the front setback of non-residential uses will not be permitted unless all other attempts to meet code-mandated parking requirements are exhausted. When allowed, such parking areas must be buffered from the sidewalk and should be screened with landscaping so that the parking is not a prominent feature of the property.

H. Bridges

1. Maintenance/Replacement of Bridges

The district has one existing, wooden bridge on Main Street that contributes to the village's historic character. Maintenance and preservation of the existing bridge is strongly encouraged. If the bridge were to be replaced, historically-

¹¹ Joseph C. James, F.J. Beans, "Town Ordinances of Waterford, Loudoun County, Va," No. 11, Sec. 1, <http://www.waterfordhistory.org/history/waterford-town-ordinances-1875.html>. (1875.)

accurate materials should be used (wood and stone, rather than shiny steel or concrete) and the bridge should remain a single-lane/single-automobile bridge.

I. Trees

1. Protection of the overall tree canopy, as well as individual trees, is important to the ambience of the district. Residents are encouraged to consult with the district's local Waterford Citizens' Association and its Beautification Committee regarding maintenance of existing trees, planting, trimming and removal.

J. Utility Lines

A 2003 Loudoun County study recommended burying utility lines within the Waterford Historic District in order to enhance the appearance and ambience of the historic village. Burying utilities would also improve safety and quality of life in Waterford. The lower Main Street portion of the village experienced four power outages in the last six months of 2016, at least half of which were caused by large branches or trees falling on above-ground power lines.

The study's recommendations for relocating overhead wires to underground services include:

- Underground electric service generally following the streets in Waterford;
- Underground telephone service following the same general path as the underground electric service;
- Conduits for power and telephone as a duct bank in a single trench;
- Spare conduits in this same duct bank for additional services; and
- Above-ground transformers in appropriate locations, screened or otherwise hidden from view of pedestrians and motorists.¹²

SUMMARY

Waterford Village already contributes to Loudoun County's economic development through tourism revenue. Implementing the Waterford Historic Roadways District and the resulting protections and guidelines for district roads will help ensure that the village continues to be a draw for visitors.

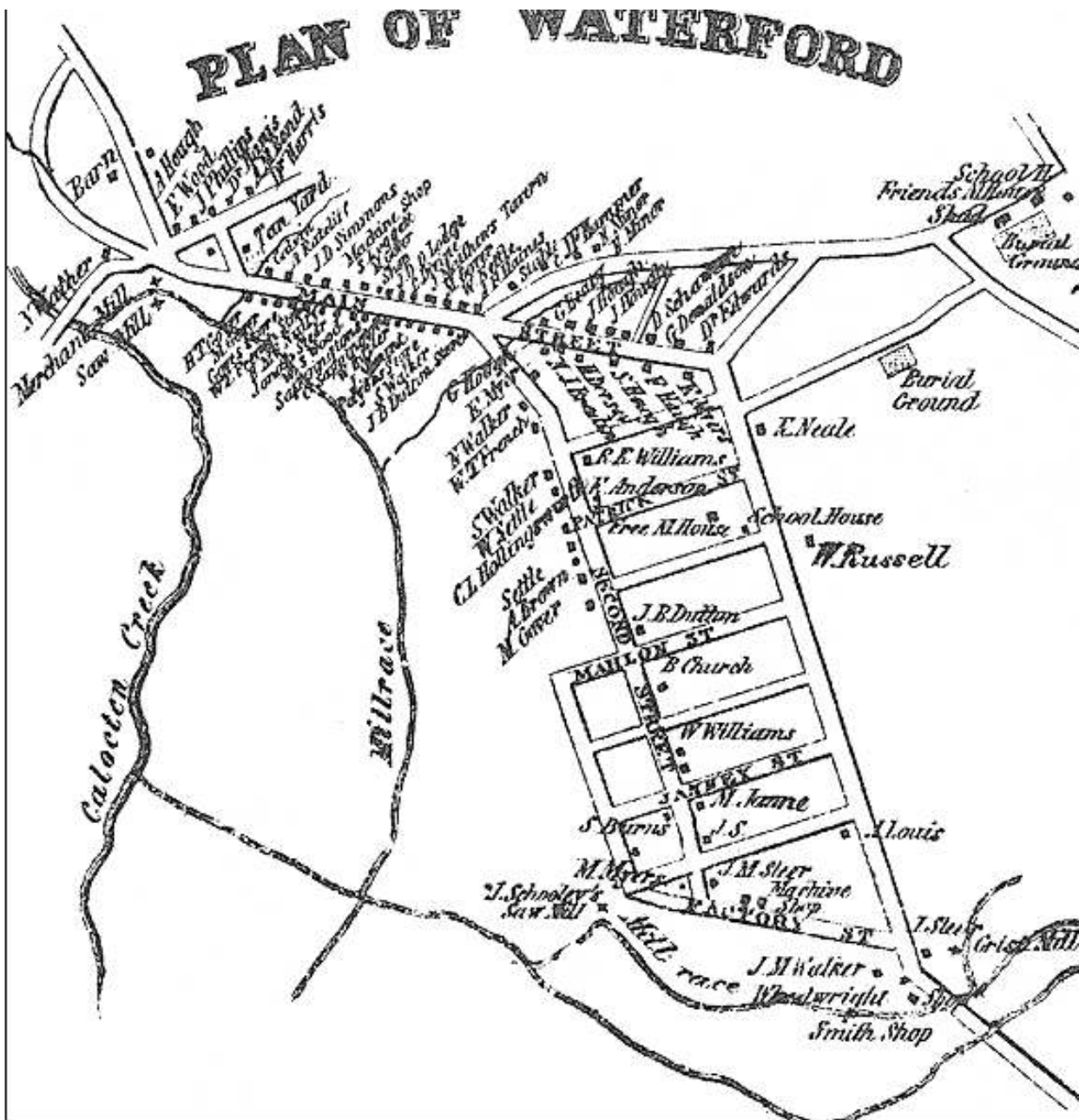
Local organizations like the Waterford Citizens' Association and the Waterford Foundation are exploring ways to attract more pedestrian and bicyclist visitors. The Foundation offers a walking tour of village streets and Waterford already appears on a number of cycling trail routes, including the Taylorstown/Stumptown Loop, the Waterford Cruise and the Waterford Double Cross. In fact, cycling tour companies have started bringing van loads of cyclists to the village on weekends.

¹² Kimley-Horn and Assoc., "Bury the Wires and Tame the Traffic,' Waterford Virginia" (Loudoun County, Virginia: 2003) vi.

A Historic Roadways District designation could attract more of these visitors and help ensure their safety by encouraging drivers to maintain slow speeds. It would also help protect and preserve the scenic beauty and historic character of the landmark, qualities which keep visitors coming back.

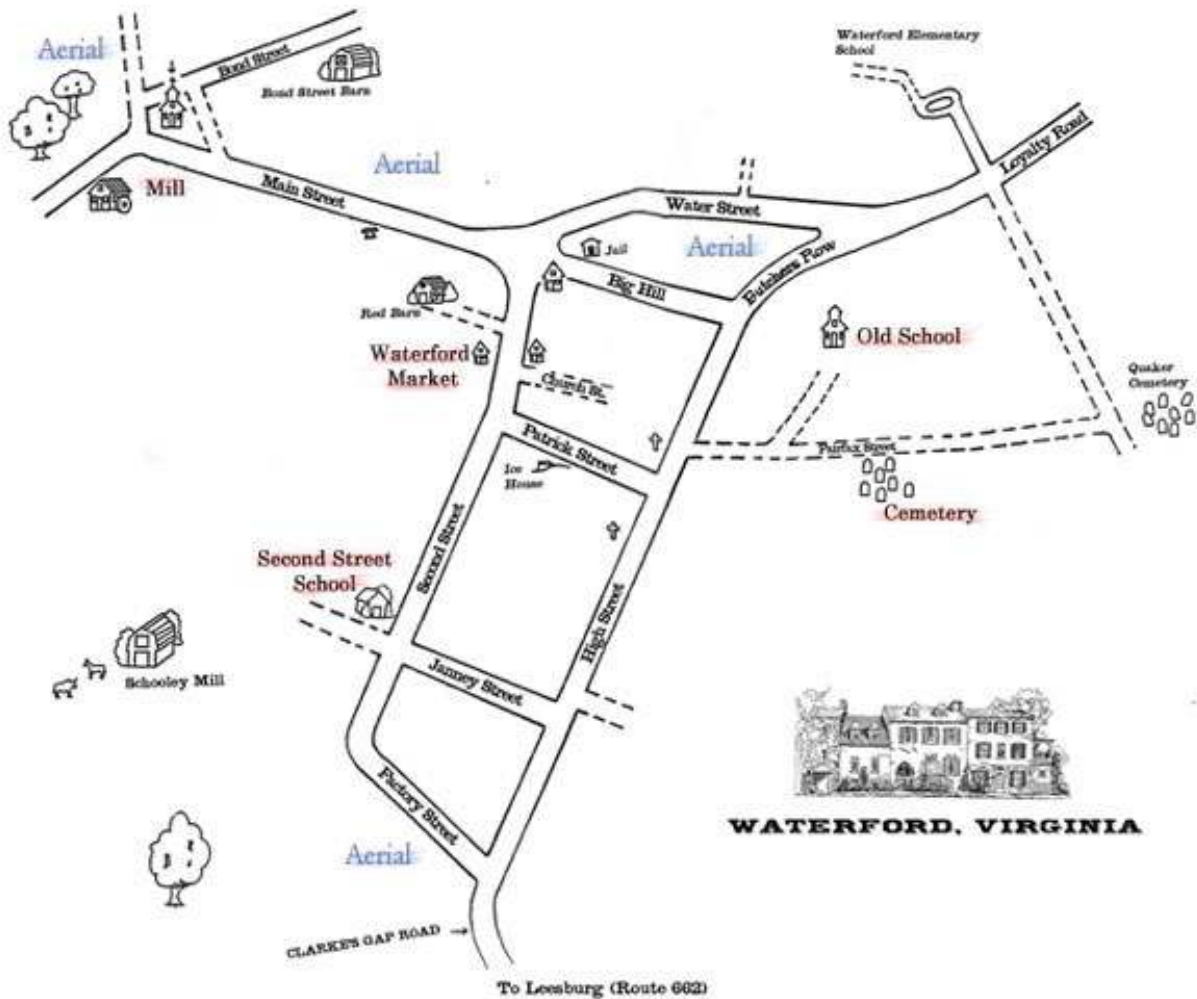
APPENDIX A

Yardley Taylor Map of Waterford, 1854



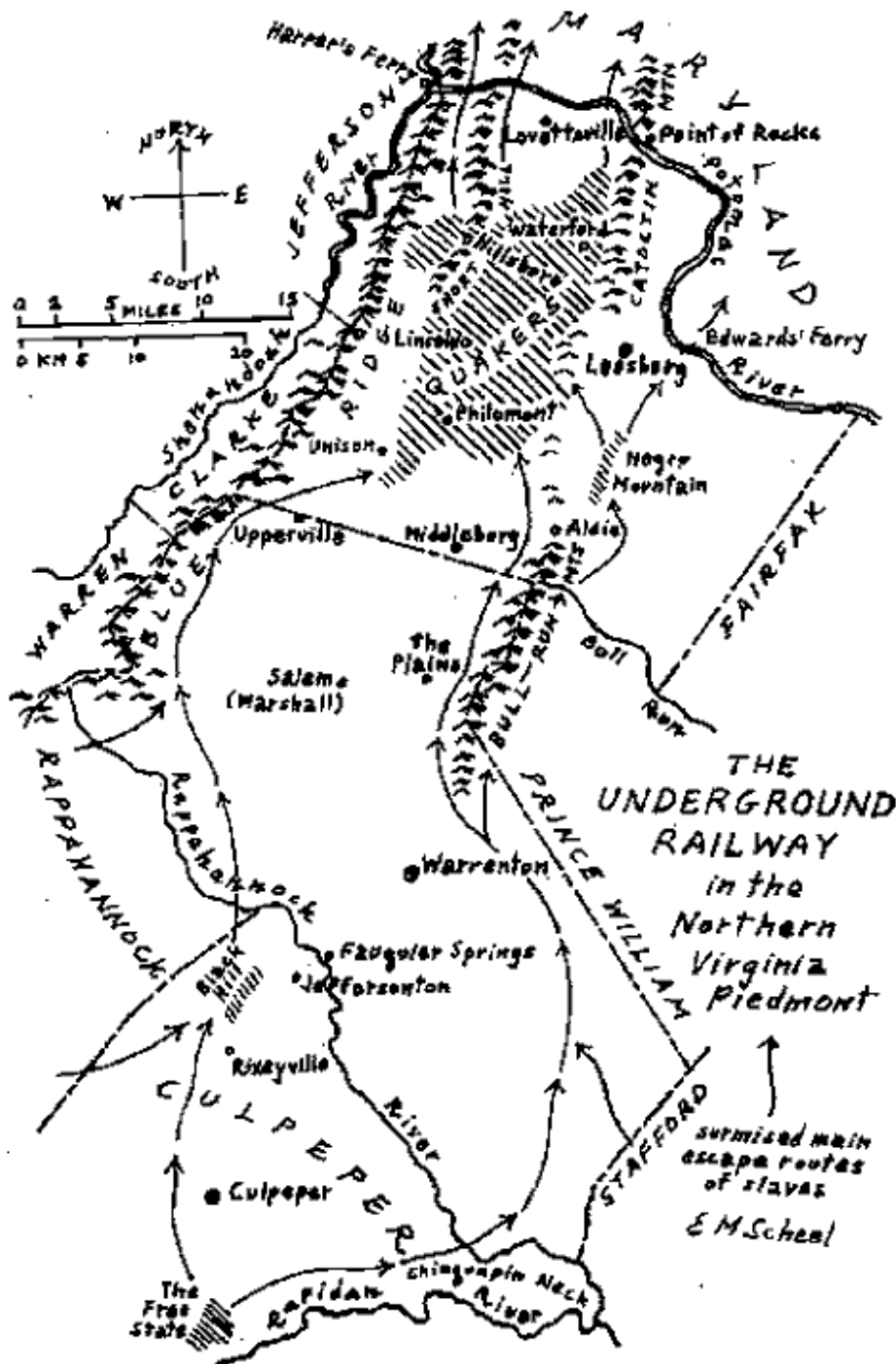
APPENDIX B

Modern-Day Street Map of Waterford, from <http://www.waterfordvillage.org/map-of-waterford.htm> (Note that Main Street becomes First Street at the Old Mill. First Street is not labeled on this map).



APPENDIX C

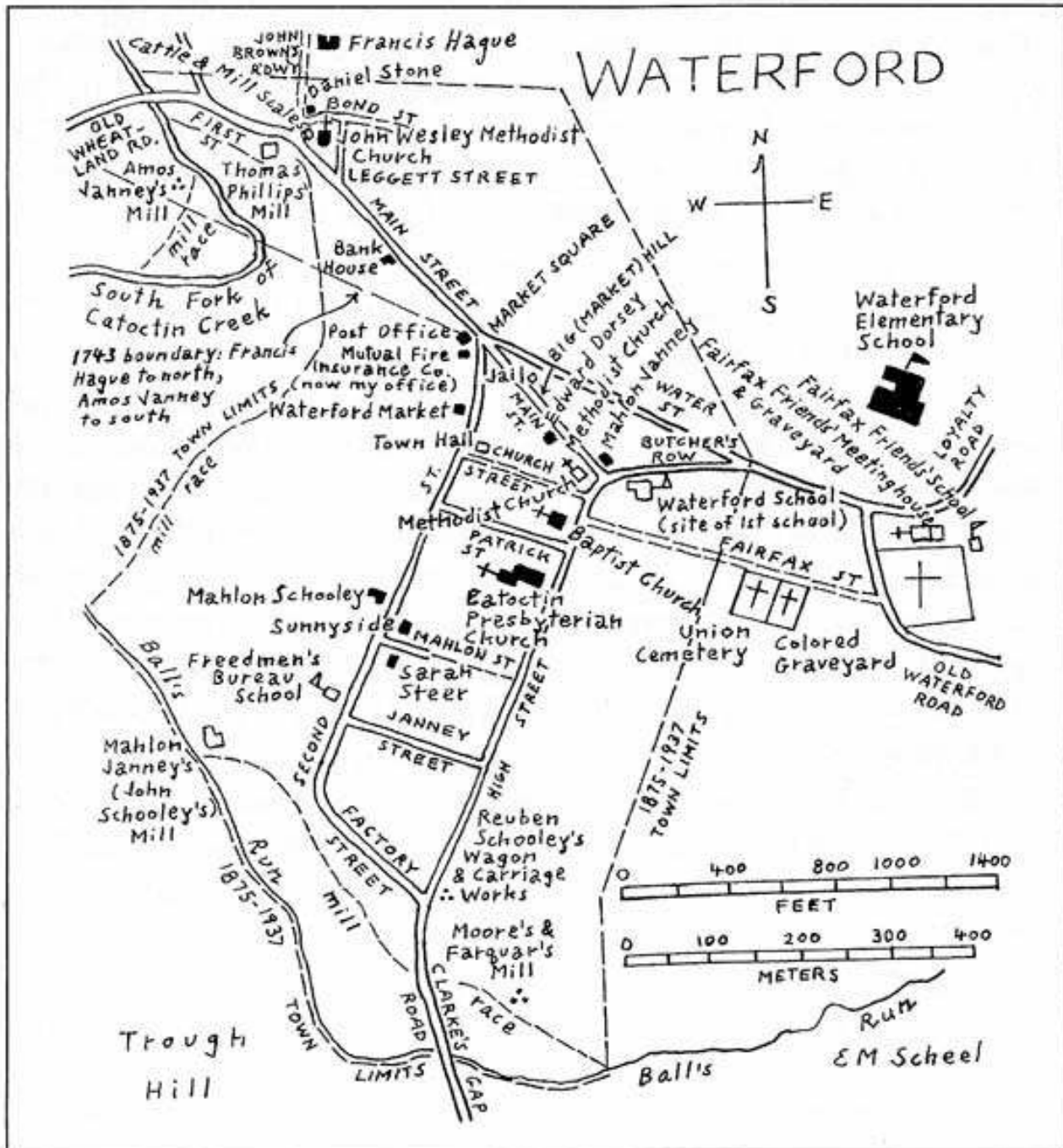
Eugene Scheel's Map of the Northern Virginia Piedmont Underground Railway



MAP BY EUGENE SCHEEL

APPENDIX D

Eugene Scheel's 1875-1937 Waterford Town Limits Map



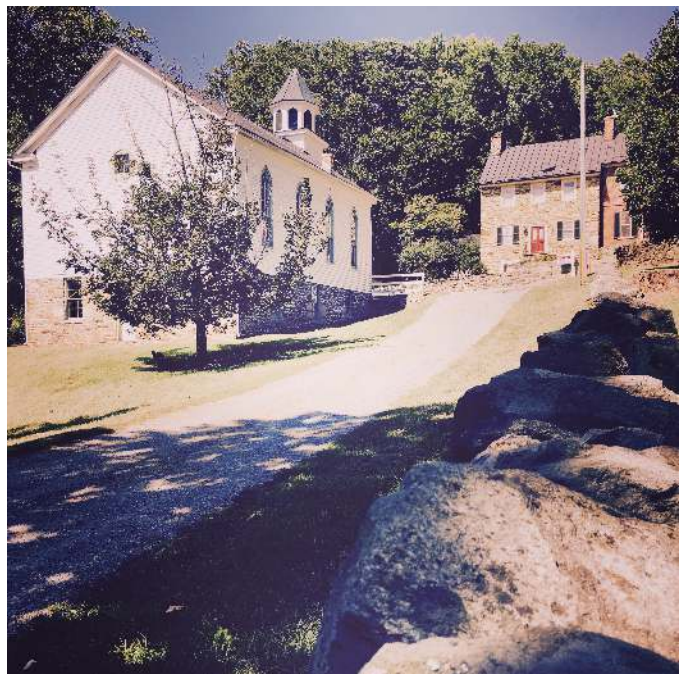
APPENDIX E

Photos of Waterford's Historic Roadways



Waterford's Old Mill, once the center of village commerce, stands just 23 inches from the road. A historic stone wall stands on the other side of First Street.

Looking toward the intersection of Liggett and Bond Streets, two of the village's gravel roads. Note the historic stone wall in the right-hand side of the frame.





Bicyclists frequent Waterford and enjoy its scenic roads. Cycling tour companies, like the one pictured at left, bring van loads of cyclists to the village on weekends.

View of lower Main Street in Waterford (note the above-ground utility wire).

