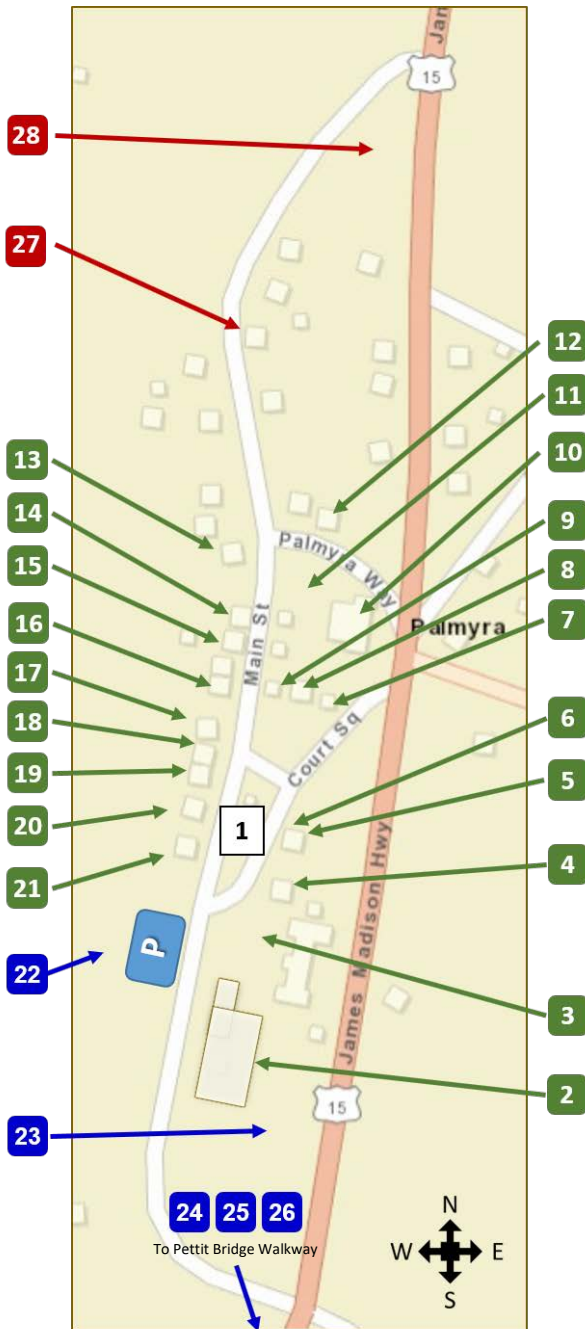


# Village Tour Map



## Beginning Your Tour...

**1** In **Civil War Park** stands a tall granite spire monument dedicated by the Daughters of the Confederacy in 1901. Two bronze Union Civil War cannons added in 1909 flank the monument. A large granite stone and plaque dedicated in 2019 commemorate President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863.

**NOTICE:** Private properties are not open to the public. Interior tours are offered for the Old Stone Jail and the Historic Courthouse.

## VILLAGE CENTER (Green Tour)

**2.** The present-day Fluvanna County Courthouse was at one time the site of **Reverend Walker Timberlake's Palmyra House**. Built as his home in 1825, it once served as a tavern. It burned down in 1941.

**3.** The site of **Reverend Walker Timberlake's 1836 Hotel and Tavern** is on the present lawn of the county government complex. The hotel, which burned in 1908, was rebuilt by Ashby Haden and later became a residence, apartments and government offices. In 1972 the structure was removed for a new county office building.

**4.** The two-story section of **Maggie's House** was built circa 1854 and expanded with subsequent additions. A post office was once located on the north side of the building with a separate entrance. During the 1950's Mrs. William "Maggie" Conrad, the deputy sheriff's wife, cooked for the prisoners next door in the jail. Today this building houses the Fluvanna Historical Society headquarters and archives. Come inside for a visit.

**5.** In 1828, John Hartwell Cocke designed the **Old Stone Jail**, Palmyra's first official county building. John Hughes, the builder, completed it in 1829. The jail was used continuously for 130 years. In 1892 an African American man accused of murder, William Young, was secretly taken from the jail and lynched near the Rivanna River on October 11 of that year. Today the Old Stone Jail houses the Fluvanna Historical Society Museum.

**6.** The cast iron **Paddlewheel Shaft** exhibited here with reproduction paddles powered the only steamboat to ply the Rivanna River in the 1880's.

**7.** This is an **Early Court Office** that was built in 1840.

**8. Fluvanna County Courthouse.** The final design of this important centerpiece of the *Virginia Landmark and National Historic Register District* of Palmyra is credited to John Hartwell Cocke. It was completed in 1831 under the Supervision of Reverend Walker Timberlake, a local businessman and Methodist preacher. Enslaved laborers likely were involved in

the construction of the courthouse, including hauling and installing the huge stone steps. It is one of only a few antebellum courthouses to retain its original form without additions or changes to its interior arrangement. The building served as an operating room during the Civil War.



*The Acropolis of Palmyra*

**9.** In 1835, Abram Shepherd, the Court Clerk, paid to build the **Clerk's Office** when the county was unable to afford building the two wings that Cocke had designed. Shepherd's family owned the building until 1945 when the county purchased the property.

**10.** Today's county treasurer and commissioner of revenue offices are housed in the **Clerk of the Court's** building. It was built in 1913 and expanded in 1951.

**11.** The **Palmyra United Methodist Church** was founded in 1830 on the Court Green. A Confederate field hospital used the church during the Civil War. Removed in 1880, a new church was built in 1890 across the street and a bell tower added after World War I.

**12.** The **Palmyra High School**, built in 1907 for white students, accommodated grades 1-7, a 4-year high school and a Normal School. It stood at the location where the church's education building now stands. William Carter, an African American, sometimes entertained the students with his accordion.

**13.** The **Midland Virginian** newspaper relocated to this building after the devastating June 20, 1930 fire. **(Private)**

**14.** The two-story north section of the **Madison House** was built before 1854. Enterprising "Doc" Madison resided here and rented the upstairs rooms to teachers and salesmen. **(Private)**

15. Flames from the June 20, 1930 fire almost reached the **Bank of Fluvanna** building. It survived and later served as the public library for the county.

16. **Central High School**, believed to be Virginia's first public, rural, accredited and centralized high school for white students, opened on this site in 1886 with 129 students. Later the **Midland Virginian** newspaper used the building until destroyed by the 1930 fire. Newspaper editor, Roy L. Armfield, travelled to Gordonsville to print the newspaper ensuring that Palmyra received its news the day after the fire.

17. After the 1930 fire, W.A.S. Conrad built the **Palmyra General Store** on the site of what had once been W. Henry Haden's store. As proprietor in the 1950's, Maggie Conrad chose to serve the African American community at her store.

18. The fire that destroyed most of the Main Street buildings in 1930 started in the basement of the **L.O. Haden Office Building**. Once the home to doctor and lawyer offices, a restaurant, pharmacy and the Palmyra Playhouse for movies, the site has remained vacant since.

19. This building housed the **United States Post Office** until it moved to the current Route 15 location.

20. This is the site of the **Home of the Haden Family** who played a prominent role in Palmyra's commercial history. The original three-story house was destroyed in the 1930 fire. **(Private)**

21. This is the site of the **L.O. Haden General Store** that promised "Everything for Everybody." The Haden store housed the post office before the 1930 fire. After the fire, Postmaster Paul Haden sorted the mail next door at the Richards Building, a former livery stable, so that mail service was uninterrupted. **(Private)**

### RIVER DISTRICT (Blue Tour)

22. The recreational **Rail Trail** was opened in 2004 on the bed of the Virginia Airline Railroad train track that served Central Virginia from 1908 to 1975. Years ago, a livery stable once stood at the parking lot location. An African American, Horatio "Ralph" Cousins, worked as a hostler at the stables.

23. The site of the **Virginia Air Line Railroad Depot** was located at the parking lot to the rear of the new courthouse. The rail line connected the C&O Railroad at Lindsey, Virginia to Strathmore Yard near Bremono Bluff. The depot, built in 1909, burned in 1974.

**No. 24-26 can be seen from the Pettit Bridge Walkway:**

24. **Reverend Timberlake's Palmyra Mills** was established in 1813. The rock basement of the 5-story grain mill survives. Northern troops burned the mill in 1865. It was rebuilt on the

same stones and remained until the 1930's. The property is now owned by the Fluvanna Historical Society. **(Private)**

25. In 1813, Reverend Walker Timberlake obtained water to operate his mill by damming the Rivanna River. The timbers and rocks of the **1813 Crib Dam** are sometimes visible upstream when the river is running low. Remnants of an 1850's **Stone Lock** used by canal boats is visible along the river and an **1850 Crib Dam** may be seen upstream of the lock.

26. The General Assembly granted Reverend Walker Timberlake the right to build a **Covered Bridge** over the Rivanna in 1824. The bridge was completed in 1828 on stone piers still standing today. Often damaged by floods the last wooden bridge was built in 1884 on the same piers. The Highway Department burned the bridge in 1930 and replaced it with a modern steel truss bridge which has since been replaced.

### NORTH END (Red Tour)

27. Connie Haden Street employed an African American woman, Callie Gallery, to assist her in this **Millinery Shop**. She built the Victorian house next door in 1908. Lifelong companions, Gallery cared for Street in her old age. They attended the Methodist church together. Street left her property to Gallery who remained a parishioner of the church. **(Private)**

28. The **Village Park** on the north end of the village is owned by Fluvanna Historical Society. The National Historic Register District continues a few yards north of this park. The southern end of the Historic District runs to the Rivanna River.



*The Old Stone Jail*

*This brochure was written and produced by:*

**Palmyra Area Revitalization Committee (PARC)**  
with assistance from the **Fluvanna County Historical Society**

# Walking Tour of Historic PALMYRA Virginia



### A Brief History

In 1813, Reverend Walker Timberlake constructed a dam and a commercial mill on the Rivanna River. He named his enterprise Palmyra Mills. In 1828, Palmyra was chosen as the county seat of Fluvanna County. Timberlake deeded four acres of his property to establish the county seat in the village.

General John Hartwell Cocke, a friend of Thomas Jefferson, a founding member of the University of Virginia's governing board, and a large plantation owner in Fluvanna County, is credited with the final design of the Courthouse. The Greek Doric temple-form building was completed in 1831 and became the center of the government district, two years after the county seat's first official building, the Stone Jail.

The village was solely owned by either the Timberlake family or their Shepherd relations until 1854. In that year, the "sale of Palmyra" allowed for non-Timberlake/Shepherd ownership in the village. The village continued to grow as a vibrant center for commerce because of its proximity to the river and the railroad.

On June 20, 1930, a devastating fire consumed a large portion of the village's Main Street. Due to the austerity of the Great Depression only some buildings were replaced, and these at a smaller scale. Most commercial activity moved elsewhere leaving Main Street a sleepy remnant of its historic and vibrant past.

*Fluvanna County Courthouse Historic District  
on the*

*Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places*