



CHARMING COMMUNITIES

History In Every Neighborhood

Downtown Harrisonburg contains an eclectic mix of architecture.

While Harrisonburg serves as the “big city” for the metropolitan area, the surrounding Rockingham County contains several other vibrant municipalities as well. Each has its own distinct story and intriguing characteristics.

BRIDGEWATER

What is now known as the town of Bridgewater was first settled on in the 1740s by individuals of Scotch-Irish and German descent. The area came to have many names, but was originally referred to as Dinkletown by the Dinkle family during the early 1800s. Then on February 7, 1835 the town was officially charted as Bridgewater.

Due to the area’s proximity to popular transportation routes, the Dinkles helped kick-start the community’s economic growth by building mills. In 1850, Bridgewater was home to two gristmills, two cabinet shops, many general stores, a tavern and a hotel.

Today, the town still serves as a major hub for trade and commerce. It is also well known as the home of Bridgewater College.

Visitors and locals alike will enjoy learning more about

this locale’s rich past at The Heritage Museum, Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society.

BROADWAY

Located just 12 miles north of Harrisonburg, the town of Broadway was once named Custer’s Mill. During that time, the community played a pivotal role in the Civil War. After being destroyed by Union Gen. Philip Sheridan and his men, the town went in search of a new name.

While the area was slow to recover after the war, the growth of the railroad helped boost the economy back into action. With track expansion, officials decided on the name Broadway.

Much of the town’s storied past can still be seen today through architecture. Many businesses still operate in their original structures and many residents live in abodes that were constructed more than a half-century ago.

When visitors and residents are looking for a way to spend a relaxing afternoon, Broadway offers several beautiful parks for picnics and walks. One also features a pool.

Broadway was recently named one of the safest towns in Virginia.

DAYTON

Dating back to the 1740s, the town of Dayton is considered to be one of the oldest settlements in Rockingham County. Due to the abundance of spring water and fertile land, its earliest inhabitants made homes along Cook's Creek. By the 1780s, Mennonites began to call the area home as well. Many farms can still be found in the surrounding area.

Dayton would eventually be incorporated in 1852 after the important completion of the Warm Spring-Harrisonburg Turnpike. Almost 30 years later, the town was reincorporated to appoint a mayor, town council, town clerk and sergeant.

Today, Dayton continues to grow, especially as a tourist attraction, according to town councilperson, Shelley Newman.

"Discover Historic Dayton: Small Town, Hometown, Downtown. Our motto says it all," says Newman. "Our downtown shopping area is gaining great momentum."

She adds that the town is excited for the new development coming to fruition with the Northend Greenway that plans to connect Cooks Creek Park to Silver Lake.

"Currently, the only connector from the town to Silver Lake is a narrow one-lane bridge," Newman says. "The Greenway will include a walking bridge over the creek with a winding-path through a farmer's field to the lake."



Photo courtesy of Town of Dayton

Retailers in downtown Dayton offer all types of interesting products.

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ELKTON

The road to Elkton was one of the earliest routes across the Blue Ridge Mountains of British Colonial Virginia when then-Governor Spotswood looked west towards a new frontier in 1716. And much like the other municipalities located in the Shenandoah Valley, Elkton has significant ties to the Civil

War. The Miller-Kite House was Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson's headquarters in April 1862. The historic site can be visited today.

In the late 1970s, executives from Coors Brewing Company in Colorado also discovered the Elkton area, particularly the backdrop of the mountains and abundance

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of clear water.

Elkton is also a great place for those who like to take in the great outdoors. Offering several public parks, picnic shelters, walking trails and ball fields, the town provides a bevy of recreational entertainment. In fact, the local community center doubles as a fitness center and is outfitted with an indoor walking path, exercise equipment and more.

GROTTOES

When the Grottoes Company was looking for land during the 1800s, this community's vast amounts and breathtaking scenery were exceptional selling points. Company president Jed Hotchkiss, who was also Stonewall Jackson's mapmaker during the Civil War, saw the potential in Shendun, as the town was originally called.

By the 1900s, the local economy was bustling with a woodworking plant, stores, real estate offices, a bowling alley, a mill, a blacksmith shop and a bank. In 1912, the name of the town changed to Grottoes.

Today, the town is still small, but it is experiencing growth. In recent years, it has undergone major road construction as well as developed a 54-acre park and shopping center.

MOUNT CRAWFORD

This quaint and cozy community is one of the smallest

in the Shenandoah Valley, with a little more than 400 residents as of 2010.

Despite its size, it is home to Mt. Crawford Creamery—one of the best dairies in the entire region. The owners originally began the site as Will Farm, operating the land to cultivate livestock and crops. In the 1950s, they decided to build a dairy farm, and now the site holds the title as the area's main source of dairy products.

TIMBERVILLE

History is alive and well in the town of Timberville. Well before the area resembled a town, it contained Fort Run and another stronghold located close to the bank of the Shenandoah River. Both were eventually demolished, but in 1750 a log house was built on the property and still stands today.

The town was incorporated in 1884.

The picturesque setting has attracted small businesses and residents over the years, but change is on the horizon. The Sentara Timber Way Health Center, a regional health clinic, broke ground in mid 2015, and now sets the tone for future development. Wal-Mart has selected Timberville for its first store outside of the Harrisonburg city limits. Both projects point to the attraction of small-town living with urban amenities in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley. ▼ *By Mallorie Ann Ingram*

Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center



“WHERE HISTORY & HOSPITALITY MEET”



Rocktown Gift Shoppe



Valley Turnpike Museum



Visitor Center



Civil War Orientation Center

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