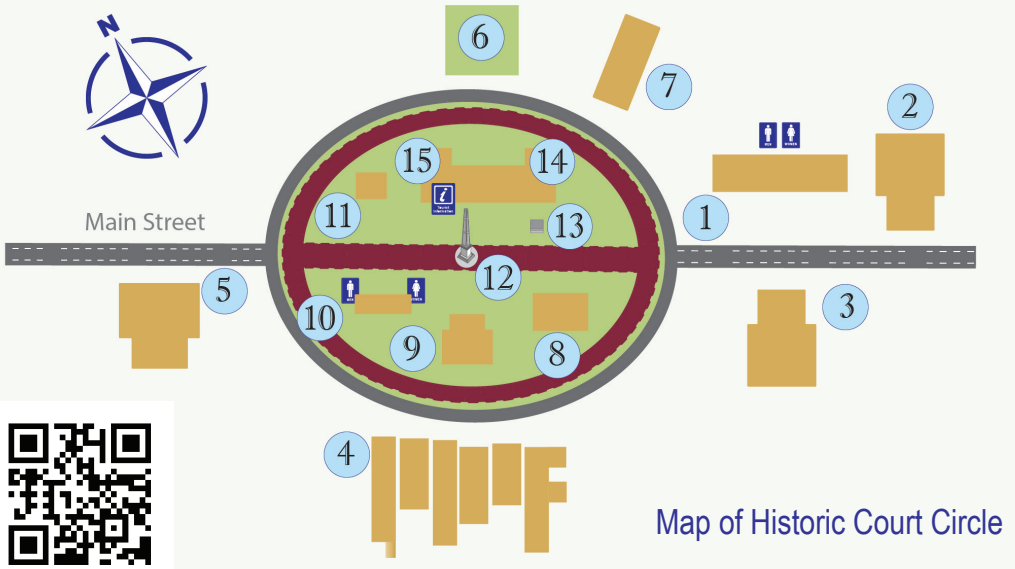


Historic Court Circle Walking Tour



Gloucester County was established in 1651, and there are many historic buildings and landscapes to discover. Explore the Court Circle and its surroundings. You will find the 1766 courthouse, a 1770 tavern, and numerous other buildings from the early-19th and 20th centuries. The sites identified within this walking tour are within easy walking distance of each other. At a relaxed pace, the entire tour takes about 30-minutes.

Known today as the Botetourt Building, this structure provided lodging from the 1770s through the 1950s, first as a tavern and later as a hotel. It is one of the largest, as well as one of the few, brick taverns from the pre-Revolutionary period. The county purchased the property in 1965, and it was used as offices. In 2000, it became home to the Gloucester Museum of History.



1

Botetourt Building
- c. 1770

The First National Bank was designed by Charles T. Holtzclaw of Hampton, VA, and is a masonry building with a stucco exterior. Holtzclaw was active as a contractor and architect from 1898-1920. He worked extensively in the Tidewater region with his brother, William B. Holtzclaw. Today, this structure serves as retail, office, and living space.



2

The First National Bank of Gloucester - 1916

Originally constructed as the Mumford Banking Company, this structure housed the Bank of Gloucester for almost 100 years. During the 2000s, it was acquired and operated by Crestar Bank and, most recently, SunTrust. The building features large Doric columns on a projecting, pedimented façade to emulate the aesthetic of a Greek temple form.



3

Bank of Gloucester Building - 1902

Along the southern side of the Court Circle are six office buildings built in a row. These offices have been collectively known as "Lawyer's Row" since 1941, when Nellie D. Gray painted the area and named it after the lawyers' offices which occupied many of the buildings. Today, several of these historic structures remain offices for local attorneys.



4

Lawyer's Row - 1941

This 1857 building houses one of the oldest Masonic Lodges in the nation. The initial warrant for organization was given by the Fredericksburg Lodge in 1757. In 1773, an English Charter was granted, and the lodge took the name Botetourt Lodge No. 7. The lodge has been in active operation since 1757, with a brief lapse from 1820-1857.



5

Botetourt Masonic Lodge No. 7 – 1857

Built on the site of the former W.C. Tucker Store, this area is a historic respite for visitors to Main Street. Archaeological excavations here have found evidence of the store, blacksmithing and carriage repair activities, and foundations of 18th century buildings. Explore the park to learn more about the history of Gloucester County!



6

Tucker Store Pocket Park

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, numerous African American owned businesses were in this area. They included a medical office, an inn, a cleaners and tailor shop, and stables. The two-story wood frame home located at the corner of Lemon Lane and Main Street was built in 1905 by John C. Lemon, a prominent African American preacher from Gloucester.



7

Lemon Lane and House – 1905

**Private property, please respect resident privacy.*

This Clerk of the Court office was constructed in the late 1700s and remodeled in 1823 after a fire. The exterior walls are masonry with seven course American bond brick, which is now parged, or covered with a thin coat of mortar. John Clayton served as Clerk of the Court in Gloucester from 1720-1773; however, he is best known for his contributions as a botanist. In 1976, the building was named in his honor.



8

Clayton Building – 1823

Designed by B.F. Smith Fireproof Construction Company, this building housed the county's court records for many years. The walls are fireproof, the ceiling is made of cement, and each interior room can be sealed off by an iron door. In theory, if a fire began in any room, it would not spread. The building is named in honor of Basil Bernard Roane, who served Gloucester County for 59 years, first as Deputy Clerk and later Clerk.



9

Roane Building – Clerk of the Courts office – 1896

Constructed in 1873, the jail consisted of four 16-foot by 16-foot rooms. It was built to replace a jail that was burned by Union troops during the American Civil War. Segregated bathrooms were added during the early 1900s. More recently, the building housed the Gloucester County Sheriff's office.



10

County Jail – 1873

Debtors incarcerated here were allowed outside during the day for exercise. In 1849, imprisonment for debt was discontinued in Virginia. During the American Civil War, this building was used as an arsenal and for repairs of weapons. In the 20th century, Gloucester County's Commissioner of the Revenue's Office was located here.



11

Debtors Prison – c. 1820

James Daniel Gardner (sometimes spelled Gardiner) was born in Gloucester in 1839. A local oysterman, he enlisted in the 36th Infantry of US Colored Troops in 1863 and was assigned to the Army of the James near Richmond. On September 29, 1864, a bayonet charge was ordered against Confederate held Fort Harrison. Gardner advanced ahead of his unit into the Confederate fortifications, "shot a rebel officer who was on the parapet rallying his men, and then ran him through with his bayonet." Fort Harrison was taken! Gardner was promoted to sergeant the next day and awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on April 6, 1865. He is the only Gloucester citizen to receive the Medal of Honor.



13

James Gardner Memorial Dedicated in 2005

Located at the center of the Court Circle, the Confederate Memorial was dedicated on September 18, 1889. It lists the names of 134 men from Gloucester County who lost their lives during the American Civil War.



12

Confederate Memorial 1889

With its careful proportioning, fine brickwork, and round arched windows, Gloucester Courthouse is one of the most architecturally sophisticated courthouses of colonial Virginia. While court is no longer held here, it is used regularly by county government and the community, making it one of the oldest courthouses in the nation still used for official functions.



14

Gloucester Courthouse 1766

Built in 1956, this Clerk's office annex was originally a free-standing building. It was later connected to the courthouse via a breezeway, a connecting link between two buildings. In 2017, it became the Gloucester Visitor Center and houses a gift shop, exhibits, and tourism information.



15

Court Annex Building 1956

For more information on Gloucester history visit <https://www.gloucesterva.info/820/Museum-of-History>