

Self-Guided Walking Tour

OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWN HERNDON VIRGINIA



5. The First Baptist Church, on your left, was built in 1900 by J.J. Darlington, a prominent lawyer, on land adjacent to his home. A complete reconstruction in 1986 incorporated the original stone.

6. The Adams-Green Funeral Home sits directly across Monroe Street and the W&OD Trail, on Elden Street. Thomas Edgar Reed established the Town's first funeral home in 1885; his son, Ed, had this structure built in 1920 to house the family business. The current owners have preserved much of the building's heritage and are proud to say that theirs remains one of the few family-owned and operated funeral home businesses in the metropolitan area.



7. Elden and Spring Streets. At the corner of Elden and Spring Streets sits Herndon's own version of television's "Cheers" — Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, home to great food, friendly barkeeps and the best chicken wings this side of Buffalo. Directly above Jimmy's is Roaches in the Attic, offering a collection of antiques and depression glass. Directly across the street is Company 4's Fire Station, organized by volunteers in 1920 after the 1917 fire that destroyed much of the downtown. Stop in for a tour of the state-of-the-art facility, now home to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.



Cross Elden Street and to your right is ...

8. Town Hall Square, offering a pleasant and central vantage point for residents and visitors. Ablaze with flowers in the springtime and home of the official "Town Christmas tree" in December, the Town Square predates the Town Green as "the" gathering place in which to celebrate Town events. The Town Hall, built in 1939 as a WPA project, originally housed all administrative offices for the Town — including jail cells, located in the basement.



Half a block down on Elden Street you'll find...

9. The Ice House Café, featuring elegant dining and live jazz on weekend nights. This structure was built on the site of a mill that operated in Herndon during the Civil War and in which Union soldiers hid during the Herndon Station skirmish. Confederate Colonel John S. Mosby threatened to burn the mill down if Union soldiers did not surrender, which they finally — and reluctantly — did.



Continue on Elden to Center Street and take a right.

10. 725 Center Street. Built in the early 1870s as a public schoolhouse, this private residence sits in the Town's central heritage preservation district and is surrounded by structures that reflect Herndon's history. A short block away, at the corner of Elden and Grace Streets, is the Herndon Masonic Lodge, built in 1880 to house St. Timothy's Episcopal Church. Another former school is located a short walk away at 763 Grace Street; the Herndon Episcopal Seminary for Girls, commonly known as the Castleman School, operated at this location until the mid-1920s. And just up Elden Street are many of Herndon's lovely older homes — turn-of-the-19th-century Victorians, American foursquares and some of the Town's extensive collection of bungalows.



Continue on Center Street to just before the Pedestrian Overpass on the W&OD Trail to reach...

11. ArtSpace Herndon, a community art gallery created and supported by art lovers in the greater Herndon area. A project of the Herndon Foundation for the Cultural Arts, ArtSpace Herndon is a gathering place to celebrate the arts, showcasing artwork and events by locally, regionally, and nationally known artists and performers. On any given day, art enthusiasts may be found quietly reflecting on works on display in the 1,700 square foot gallery, or perhaps participating in workshops or "meet the artist" sessions.



Continue on Center Street to find...

12. The Herndon Fortnightly Library. The name "Fortnightly" recognizes the contributions of the Herndon Fortnightly Club, organized in 1889 to establish the Town's first library. The structure at 660 Spring Street, now the Herndon Friends Meeting House, was built by the Fortnightly Club in 1927 and was the library's permanent home until the current structure, now part of the Fairfax County Public Library system, was completed in 1995.



The circular architectural design of the library's lobby creates an interesting acoustic effect: stand anywhere, speak softly and your voice will carry throughout the lobby.

Go upstairs and exit through the back door of the library onto...

13. The Herndon Town Green, site of summer concerts and annual events including the Herndon Festival and the Labor Day Jazz & Wine Festival. Stop for a moment of quiet reflection at the Veteran's Memorial on the Green, dedicated to Herndon's own servicemen and women whose bravery and valor has helped to ensure our nation's freedoms. Casting its shadow over the Town Green is the Herndon Municipal Center, housing most offices of the Town's government and serving as the cornerstone for the revitalized downtown.



The Herndon Municipal Center fronts onto Lynn Street. Take a right onto Lynn Street, heading back toward the Depot, and you'll pass...

14. The Red Caboose, a reminder of the days when trains delivered milk from the local farms to city markets and brought city vacationers to the country. Climb aboard and step back in time to a bygone era.



Directly adjacent to the caboose is...

15. The Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Regional Park, the route by which hundreds of bikers, hikers, strollers and nature enthusiasts enter and exit the downtown each year. Spanning 45 miles from Alexandria to Purcellville and built on the roadbed of the old W&OD Railroad, the 10-foot-wide trail has been called the "skinniest park in Virginia." Check out the Civil War marker depicting the Raid at Herndon Station.



Cap off the Walking Tour with an ice cream cone from the Dairy Queen across the street from the Caboose. You've earned it!



www.herndon-va.gov

A look back at our history...

Welcome to the Town of Herndon, the third largest Town in the Commonwealth of Virginia and home to 23,000 residents. Amidst a 21st century Northern Virginia landscape of high rise buildings, industrial complexes and transportation hubs, Herndon maintains a small town charm that is most evident in its historic Downtown.

To fully appreciate Herndon's unique charm, it's helpful to look back to our origins. In 1688, King Charles II of England granted five million acres, known as the Northern Neck, to Thomas Culpeper, second Baron Culpeper of Thoresway. A small portion of this immense grant became the land on which Herndon is located.

The first sign of settlement in Herndon was the construction in the early 19th century of a mill in a hollow along a stream near today's intersection of Elden and Locust Streets.

The coming of the railroad in the 1850s spurred Herndon's development. The village needed a name in order to establish a post office at the new railroad depot, built in 1857. Residents met and, according to legend, a survivor of the wreck of the S.S. Central America was present and recounted the heroism of the ship's commander, William Lewis Herndon, who had gone down with the ship. The impressed group decided that the new village would be named for Commander Herndon.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, the Union Army seized the railroad and secured it for their use as far as Vienna. Most of the remaining tracks and bridges were destroyed or damaged, but Herndon was spared. The only known Civil War activity in Herndon was a raid conducted on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1863,



by legendary Confederate Colonel John S. Mosby against a contingent of the First Vermont Cavalry posted at the Herndon Depot.

When the Town of Herndon was incorporated in 1879, it encompassed 4.25 square miles. The railroad defined the Town, with dairy farms located around Herndon shipping their milk daily to Washington for processing and distribution. The railroad also transported city dwellers looking for respite in the countryside, with several spacious summer houses appearing in Herndon.

A devastating fire on March 22, 1917, destroyed much of Herndon's downtown, including 16 businesses and two homes. The downtown was quickly rebuilt with structures made of brick instead of wood.

With the advent of cars, trucks and better roads, the railroad became less of a necessity for Herndon farmers and residents. The last big job for the railway was hauling sand to be used in the concrete mix for the runways at Washington Dulles International Airport. The last train left the Herndon Depot in August 1968.

Traces of Herndon's history are visible throughout its charming historic downtown. We hope you enjoy this Walking Tour and come back often to experience our history and enjoy our hospitality. It's All in the Heart of Herndon!

YOUR TOUR BEGINS AT THE OLD TRAIN DEPOT

1. Herndon Dulles Visitor's Center/Herndon Depot Museum. The Visitor's Center is located in the historic Depot and offers maps and information about Herndon and the surrounding area. The museum, maintained by the Herndon Historical Society, displays items that evoke Herndon's history, from its days as a mill town to its dairy farming heritage and its proud tradition as a stop on the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Railroad. The museum also displays maritime memorabilia in honor of the Town's namesake, Commander William Lewis Herndon. The Herndon Dulles Visitor's Center and Herndon Depot Museum are open daily from 10am until 4pm, except on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Sit on one of the benches outside of the Depot and take a look up at the semaphore, recently restored to indicate the position that directed trains passing through to stop in the Town of Herndon.

2. Lynn Street Shops. Across the street you'll see the Nachman Building, a restored and treasured building that has been part of Herndon's downtown for almost 100 years. Flanking the building are assorted shops – including the Herndon Florist, which features seasonal window floral displays ranging from greens and holly in December to summer's vivid reds, yellows, pinks and golds.



Leaving Lynn Street, proceed to Station Street and take a right.

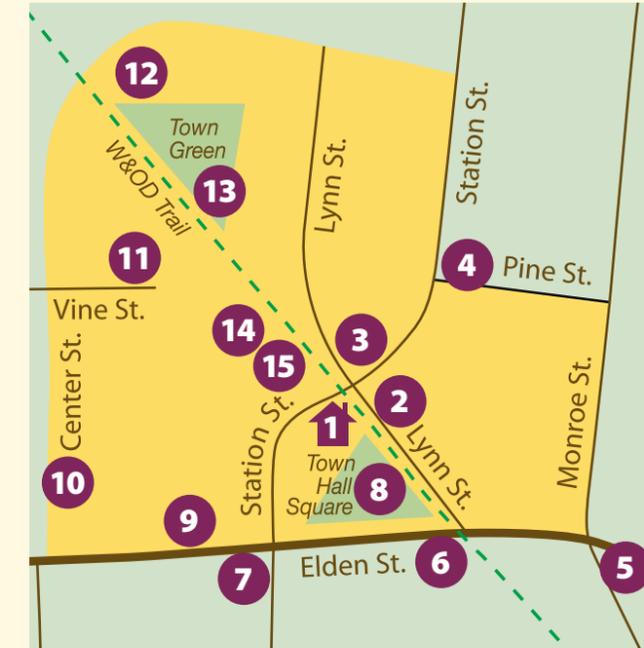
3. Station Street Shops. From hair salons to restaurants, Herndon's eclectic commercial offerings are sampled on this block. The old bank building, circa 1910 and with its signature pink façade, adds a festive atmosphere to Station Street, as does the hand-painted mural gracing the exterior side of the Nachman Building, facing Station Street. Stop in the Great Harvest Bread Company for a free sample of one of their delicious breads — you'll find it hard to leave without buying a loaf or two to take home.



From Station Street, turn right onto Pine Street.

4. Pine Street Shops. Stop in for a bite at the award-winning Zeffirelli Ristorante, once a grocery store and then an old-fashioned five-and-dime. Or sample borscht and beluga caviar at the Russia House, across the street. Clapboard structures that were once residences today house modern-day businesses such as Brush Strokes beauty salon and the Herndon Clock and Watch, specializing in all things timely. The small stone building just up the street from Zeffirelli's was built in 1925 as the first home of St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

From Pine Street, turn right onto Monroe Street and cross Elden Street, the Town of Herndon's main thoroughfare.



1. Old Train Depot
2. Lynn Street Shops
3. Station Street Shops
4. Pine Street Shops
5. The First Baptist Church
6. The Adams-Green Funeral Home
7. Elden and Spring Streets
8. Town Hall Square
9. The Ice House Café
10. 725 Center Street
11. ArtSpace Herndon
12. The Herndon Fortnightly Library
13. Herndon Town Green
14. The Red Caboose
15. The Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Regional Park

Produced by the Town of Herndon and the Herndon Dulles Visitor's Center.

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For additional copies, call 703-HERNDON

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