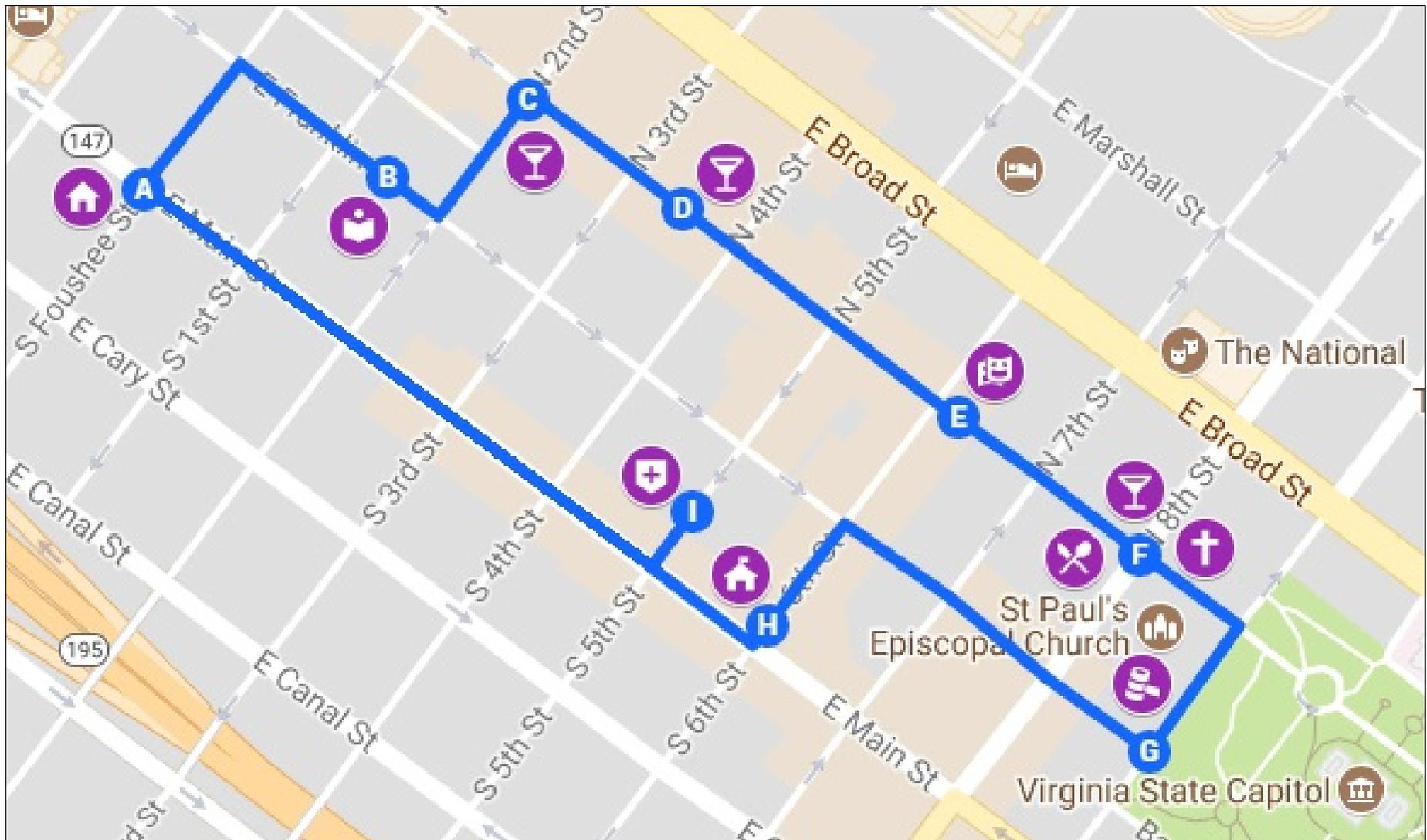


## Richmond LGBTQ History Walking Tour



Sites associated with Virginia's LGBTQ history can be found throughout the City of Richmond. This walking tour introduces eleven unique places in the Center City district associated with LGBTQ social life, activism, and legislation spanning the twentieth century. The route covers 1.4 miles and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete a full circuit.

For more information on these and other topics related to Virginia's LGBTQ history, please visit our website:

<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/survey-planning/lgbtq-heritage-in-virginia/>

- A Ellen Glasgow House, 1 W. Main Street**  
Prolific Author Ellen Glasgow was born in Richmond in 1873 and published acclaimed novels questioning traditional gender roles in southern culture. Glasgow was a founding member of the Richmond SPCA and opened her home for meetings of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia. Glasgow's life was punctuated by long-term, close relationships with women and she also kept the company of Radclyffe Hall, author of one of the earliest lesbian novels.
- B Richmond Public Library, 101 E. Franklin Street**  
In the mid-twentieth century, the Richmond Public Library provided meeting spaces for early LGBTQ rights group the Richmond Gay and Lesbian Pride Coalition. While championing for equality in the 1970s, the Coalition published the "Gayellow Pages" with listings of local LGBTQ-friendly businesses.
- C Taber's, Corner of N. 2<sup>nd</sup> and E. Grace Street**  
Donald Taber ran the LGBTQ-friendly Taber's at this corner for several years in the mid-1970s. At this time, venues that employed or served homosexual men were prohibited by Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control regulations. Police performed targeted raids of places like Taber's until the early 1990s.
- D Godfrey's, 308 E. Grace Street**  
Popular for its drag brunch and evening shows, Godfrey's opened in 1995 and represents one of several LGBTQ businesses begun soon after a federal district court in Alexandria struck down the anti-LGBTQ Alcoholic Beverage Control regulations in 1991.
- E Dominion Arts Center, 600 E. Grace Street**  
Originally known as the Loew's Atmospheric Theater, the Dominion Arts Center opened in April of 1928 with a screening of *West Point*, starring Staunton native Billy Haines. Haines would later become known as the first openly gay actor in Hollywood. With his partner, Jimmie Shields, Haines would eventually leave acting to open a nationally renowned interior design firm.
- F Marroni's, Benny Sepul's, and St. Peter's Catholic Church, Corner of N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Grace Street**  
Two of Richmond's earliest recorded LGBTQ-friendly establishments operated at the corner of N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Grace Street. Marroni's opened in 1947 in the basement of the now-demolished Capitol Hotel and was soon joined by a second gay bar, Renee's, on the hotel's ground floor. Across the street, Benny Sepul's opened as a mom-and-pop cafe in 1951 and provided a back room for queer patrons. Nearby St. Peter's Catholic Church is the site of an early recorded gay marriage ceremony, which occurred in 1978.
- G Supreme Court of Virginia, 100 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street**  
Several significant LGBTQ-focused court cases occurred in the courthouses surrounding Capitol Square. In 1974, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the VCU Gay Alliance of Students, which had been denied recognition by the university's Board of Visitors. In 1995, the Supreme Court of Virginia ruled in favor of Kay Bottoms, who sued her lesbian daughter for custody of her grandson. The Virginia Court of Appeals reversed the decision the next year.
- H Equality Virginia, 530 E. Main Street**  
One of several statewide advocacy groups supporting LGBTQ individuals, Equality Virginia formed in 1989. The onset of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s brought heretofore unseen media attention to the challenges faced by LGBTQ Americans and bolstered the modern queer rights movement.
- I Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), 6 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street**  
In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the YWCA building provided meeting space for feminist groups including The Women's Political Caucus, the Women's Center, and Womensbooks. YWCA leadership eventually asked The Women's Center to vacate the building because it was perceived as a lesbian organization.

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