United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

___X____ New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Western Loudoun County's Rural Road Networks

B. Associated Historic Contexts
(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

1. Settlement and Growth (1735– 1801)
2. Turnpike and associated feeder roads (1802-1860)
3. Civil War, Reconstruction and Growth (1861-1905)
4. Automobile Era and the Re-organization of Road Management (1906-1962)
5. Development Pressure and Coalition for Preservation (1963-1974)

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D. Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

_____ _____ _____
Signature of certifying official Title Date

_____
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

_____ _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

This Multiple Property Document was prepared to document and catalogue western Loudoun County's rural roads, a roughly 700 - mile latticed network of unpaved and paved secondary roads. This MPD provides the historic context for these roads, many of which date to the pre-Colonial era. Located in the most northern part of Virginia, these roads form an overland transportation network of rural Loudoun County, a particularly fertile area of Northern Virginia, which remains predominantly agricultural and is bordered by the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west, the Potomac River to the north, Route 15 to the east, and the Fauquier County line to the south. This area is geographically diverse and includes the interior mountain ranges of the Short Hill and the Catoctin Mountains. It also includes the agriculturally productive valleys of the 'Between the Hills' and Loudoun Valleys as well as the floodplains of the Lost Corner region.

Following the 1722 Treaty of Albany when Native Americans were banished west of the Blue Ridge, white settlers moved to present day Loudoun in three culturally distinct groups – Tidewater colonialists loyal to the British crown; Quakers emigrating from Pennsylvania seeking cheaper land and religious freedom; and northern Europeans, primarily Germans, fleeing wars at home. These culturally distinct and religiously separate groups brought their own religious mores, social customs, languages, and business acumen. Each group related to itself rather than the larger population of their adopted home. Therefore, western Loudoun's rural road network was not constructed as a unified system but rather built as distinct and separate networks. These networks evolved over a century of use and were largely fully developed before the start of the Civil War. Beginning in the early 1900s, the roads were adapted for the automobile and many remain in use today.

The National Task Force for Historic Roads (NTFHR), part of the Rural Heritage Program of the National Trust, has established three classifications of historic roads: cultural routes, engineered routes, and aesthetics routes. Two classifications, Cultural and Engineered, apply to Loudoun's Rural Road Networks. Cultural Routes are legacies handed through necessity or tradition, developed without engineering, such as a path or migration route. Loudoun's cultural routes developed from Native American migratory paths dictated by geography or from early explorers wading across the Potomac and finding a path on shore or from settlers' farm roads who found their way from farm to market. Engineered Routes are roads designed for a specific transportation goal, such as the movement of goods or armies. Engineered routes have a documented authorization and construction date and provide insight into a community's economy. Representative examples of engineered routes are western Loudoun's mill to market roads, created the demand of Loudoun's robust milling industry. Both cultural and engineered routes create the rural road networks that remain in Loudoun today.

Loudoun's Rural Road network was built over a period spanning two centuries and can be divided into five thematic periods: Settlement and Growth (1735-1801); the Turnpike Era and Associated Feeder Roads (1802-1860); the Civil War, Reconstruction and Growth (1861-1905); the Automobile Era and the Re-organization of Road Management (1906-1962) and Development Pressure and Coalition for Preservation (1963-1974).

SETTLEMENT AND GROWTH (1735 – 1801)

Early travel in the Virginia colony was primarily along navigable waterways emanating westward from the Tidewater region along the Chesapeake Bay. The Potomac was one of these waterways and provided access to the Loudoun's Lost Corner region and the northern Loudoun Valley. The establishment of the Virginia colony was a commercial endeavor, and in 17th century Virginia, waterways sufficed for moving agricultural goods to market. It was not until mid -18th century settlement of Virginia's agriculturally rich Piedmont (part of which would later become Loudoun County) that improved overland transportation was needed. Until this point, most 'roads' were well-worn paths following Native American trails.[1] With western expansion, establishing roads became one of the most important functions of the colonial system, not only as a means to establish order in the frontier areas, but also as a means to create a system for political and religious governance, communication, moving armies, and facilitated the growth of what would become a robust agricultural economy.

Laws governing road construction in the Virginia colony appeared as early as 1632.[2] Virginia colonial law followed English precedent, which established that road law would be governed by a central body, in this case the Virginia Governor and General Assembly. The view that 'all roads are local' was also inherited from English precedent, and therefore, road construction and maintenance responsibility was allocated to the local authorities, in this case, the Anglican Church parish and later, the county courts. Local authorities appointed 'surveyors of highwaies,' or gentlemen surveyors, men who lived in the area and whose responsibility it was to survey the best route for a new road and oversee construction and maintenance. Most of these 'surveyors' had no prior knowledge of road construction. Public roads were maintained by compulsory statute labor with each tax-paying citizen was required to give a certain number of hours each year to maintain the road in their locality.[3]

Early road law recognized very few standards and those that did exist were minimal. Road construction included removing trees in the desired pathway. As described in 1729, one of the Carter family members describes opening a road … "I expect my Gang of Sawyers sent for opening the Road will be there…."[4] This system worked moderately well in the Tidewater areas where populations were comparatively densely settled, but not as well in Virginia's frontier, such as Loudoun, where there wasn't the needed population density to provide an adequate labor force. Colonial roads largely dwindled to rudimentary paths upon leaving areas of settlement in the Tidewater region; early 'roads' were well-worn, packed earth, able to accommodate horseback, but

[1] Nathaniel Mason Pawlett, A Brief History of the Roads of Virginia 1607-1840, Virginia Highway & Transportation Research Council, Charlottesville Virginia 1977, revised 2003, page 5.
[2] Ann B Miller, "The Most Convenient Wayes: History of Roads in Virginia," Virginia Transportation Research Council in Cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Charlottesville, Virginia 2003 page 5 Also see Albert C Rose, Historic American Roads: From Frontier Trails to Superhighways; Crown Publishers, 1976. Albert Rose, in his book, Historic American Roads, argues that Virginia established the first highway legislation among the colonies.
[3] It's worth noting that 18th century expectations of civil service were different than today with less emphasis on taxes and more emphasis on civic engagement including jury duty, voting, serving in the militia or local fire brigade, and road duty. Later in the 19th century, there was the additional expectation that those who could afford to would purchase stock in the local Turnpike.
[4] Fairfax Harrison, Volumes I & II. Prince William County Historical Commission, Baltimore, Maryland: Gateway Press, Inc.: reprinted 1987, page 423. This description applies to Prince William County, which was the predecessor to Loudoun. The 'new' road was the predecessor to Old Ox Road, in eastern Loudoun, running to the port of Occoquan. Also see *1705 – maintaining roads for tobacco and other merchandise; https://vagenweb.org/hening/vol03-22.htm* March 2024

not a wagon or ox cart. These routes followed the Native American pathways or natural topography such as a gap in a mountain range, a ridge line, or river crossing.[5] Rural 'paving' was extremely rare and where it did exist was at most hand-crushed rock, but more often roadbeds were dirt. Mucky areas were improved by corduroy, small saplings laid perpendicular to a route to keep the roadbed above soft areas.[6] Fords, improved water crossings with rocks laid perpendicular in the stream bed to widen the flow to create a shallower crossing, were more common than bridges and often had their own name designation. 'Bridges' were rudimentary at best and were more likely on well-travelled routes.'[7] Until the colonies authorized a local road levy and substituted professional standards for amateur labor, roads conditions in Virginia, and especially the northern and western reaches of the colony such as Loudoun, remained abysmal.

The manner for creating a new road was a legally prescribed process. Typically, citizens petitioned the county court for a new road for a specific purpose. 'Road Viewers' were sworn in and were assigned to a particular need. 'Viewers' had the obligation to identify 'the most convenient waye' and identify any geographic obstruction (a hill or water crossing) and identify any inconvenience to a landowner (tearing up an orchard, creating need for new fencing, or crossing through livestock). The Court would evaluate the need for a new road, weighing private concerns against public need for new road. If approved, the court would issue a 'road order.' In her study of early Loudoun Roads, Lori Kimball notes the casual way of assigning road orders, noting they were exceedingly brief and often written on a scrap piece of paper. Standard punctuation, spelling and grammar seemed not to apply.[8]

Roads such as the early 'rolling roads, which connected tobacco fields to a navigable waterway, were developed to transport tobacco by rolling tobacco in large wooden casks.[9] These roads were comparatively well constructed: level to prevent roll-away casks, meandered to avoid creeks to keep the tobacco dry, and relatively smooth to prevent the cask from puncture. Rolling roads connected tobacco fields to warehouse ports on a navigable waterway, a pattern very different from Loudoun's web-like milling road network that would appear later. Virginia's tobacco economy was crumbling as settlement began to take hold Virginia's Piedmont and therefore few rolling roads were built in this area. [10]

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[5] Snowden, W.H. "The Story of the Expedition of the Young Surveyors George Washington and George William Fairfax, to Survey the Virginia Lands of Thomas, Sixth Lord Fairfax, 1747-1748. Ramey and Son, Alexandria, VA 1902. Page 11-13. In this journal, one of Washington describes colonial roads in the wilderness …. "I believe ye worst roads ever travelle'd by man or beast." As well, there are several places where they opt for river travel where overland trails were not passable. Colonial setters followed paths as documented in Elizabeth Morgan's treatise "Three Loudon [sic] Highways – Developments of Ancient Trails of Indian Tribes" Morgan identifies the pre-cursor of the Snickersville Turnpike and the Old Carolina Road.

[6] John T Phillips, The Historian's Guide to Loudoun County, Virginia Volume I: Colonial Laws of Virginia and County Court Orders, 1757-1766 Goose Creek Productions, Leesburg and Middleburg Virginia 1966 pages 124 and 125. For additional insight into corduroy roads, see https://ourstoriesandperspectives.com/2018/10/29/history-found-just-below-the-surface/?fbclid=IwAR1cl6x_Mv2L5Sp4C9TJ7OBgvfwfRQuuXyQOPpK827k7muVJSaQBJl9BQyU_aem_AaHZJtJxTOLBS2bFhP2ClcWVa7LtUjfOQUfTS1krAVi9dPDIp0nlntxLS0VecaeqH4k&mibextid=Zxz2cZ March 2024

[7] Phillips, pages 274 – 276. Also see Nathaniel Mason Pawlett, A Brief History of the Roads of Virginia 1607-1840, Virginia Highway & Transportation Research Council, Charlottesville Virginia 1977, revised 2003 page 4; also see Loudoun County Road Cases, 'B-1764-001 Broad Run Bridge' where the viewers cite the bridge to be "completely finished" These well-traveled routes in the 1700s were likely to be adapted by Turnpike Companies in the 1800s

[8] Lori Kimball, "Early Roads in Loudoun County 1758 – 1800," Research paper for history of Virginia (HIS 281) November 2005 page 7

[9] Tobacco was too heavy to draw in a cart It was more cost efficient to roll in a cask pulled behind oxen or other animal.

[10] Old Ox Road was a rolling road in eastern Loudoun. Noland's Ferry Road, the northern portion of the Carolina Road, Colchester and Alexandria Roads (predecessor for Snickers Gap and Route 7 respectively) were also rolling roads. See Charles Poland page 30.

Loudoun's earliest land patents date to 1724.[11] Settlers would establish places of worship, courthouses, schools, and mills. Road networks were created to answer settlers' needs. Without modern means of communication that we take for granted today, roads carried an additional weight of importance in 18th century including communication, community, commerce, and governance. Engineered roads, designed for a specific transportation goal, such as reaching church, the courthouse, a school or mill, would take a different shape from the early cultural routes that followed Native American Indian pathways.

Detail of Warner's 1735 Map of Fairfax's Northern Neck
This map shows early development of infrastructure crossing Loudoun County. These earliest roads followed Native American trails

Loudoun was established in four distinct geographic areas beginning roughly in the 1730s. Pennsylvania Quakers settled the rolling hills of the central Loudoun Valley with plentiful water to power a future milling industry. Europeans settled the northern portions of the Loudoun Valley, along the south shore of the Potomac. Tidewater settlers moved west, establishing large farms in the fertile southern Loudoun Valley and moved the area north of Leesburg bordered by the Potomac, characterized by larger fertile river floodplains.[12] More than geography separated these

There was a 'William's Rolling Road,' Loudoun Circuit Court Road Cases, 'RR-1764-005' Ashby Gap Road to the road from Williams Gap to Alexandria

[11] Original Land Grants of Loudoun County as seen:
https://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTools/index.html?appid=d3c4ba1031564f919ca28c9bb5a48350

[12] This area would become locally known as the 'Lost Corner'

settlement areas; language, societal norms, and religion kept these cultures separate. Even a century later in 1830, Joseph Martin describes "A very considerable contrast is observable in the manners of the inhabitants in different sections of the county."[13] Road patterns reflected this cultural pattern of settlement. Each of the distinct cultural areas was internally connected, but there were few links connecting the distinct areas to one another.

Emigrating from Pennsylvania in search of land and religious freedom, Quakers came to Loudoun, purchasing land in the central Loudoun Valley. Yardley Taylor, a surveyor who described Loudoun in his written compendium to his 1853 map of the county, wrote of those who settled central Loudoun; "[Pennsylvania Quaker] farms were modest size, farmed by free labor and maintained the highest land values in the county." Quakers imported their faith, value of education, knowledge of stone construction, and most importantly, their knowledge of water-powered milling and grain crops. Some of Loudoun's earliest settlements (Waterford, formerly Janney's Mill in 1733; Taylorstown, formerly Kirk's Mill in 1743; and Hillsboro, formerly Hillsborough in 1746) centered on mills, which catered to production for local consumption, and necessitated local road construction to connect local farms to mills. As commercial markets for flour developed, the road network evolved to connect mills to markets. The engineered road network required for transporting wheat to mills and flour to markets would take a different shape than their predecessor, the tobacco rolling road and a different shape than the cultural routes. Rather than a direct connection from field to river-side warehouse, the milling roads formed an intricate, radiating network connecting fields to mills and mills to markets. Several mill networks evolved throughout central Loudoun.

European settlers came to northern Loudoun, initially squatting in the area around today's Lovettsville, initially known as the 'German settlement' because of the preponderance of those of German nationality. With overland transportation still underdeveloped at best, this road network reflected these settlers need to connect to family and business connections north across the Potomac. A road network dictated by river access evolved in northern Loudoun.

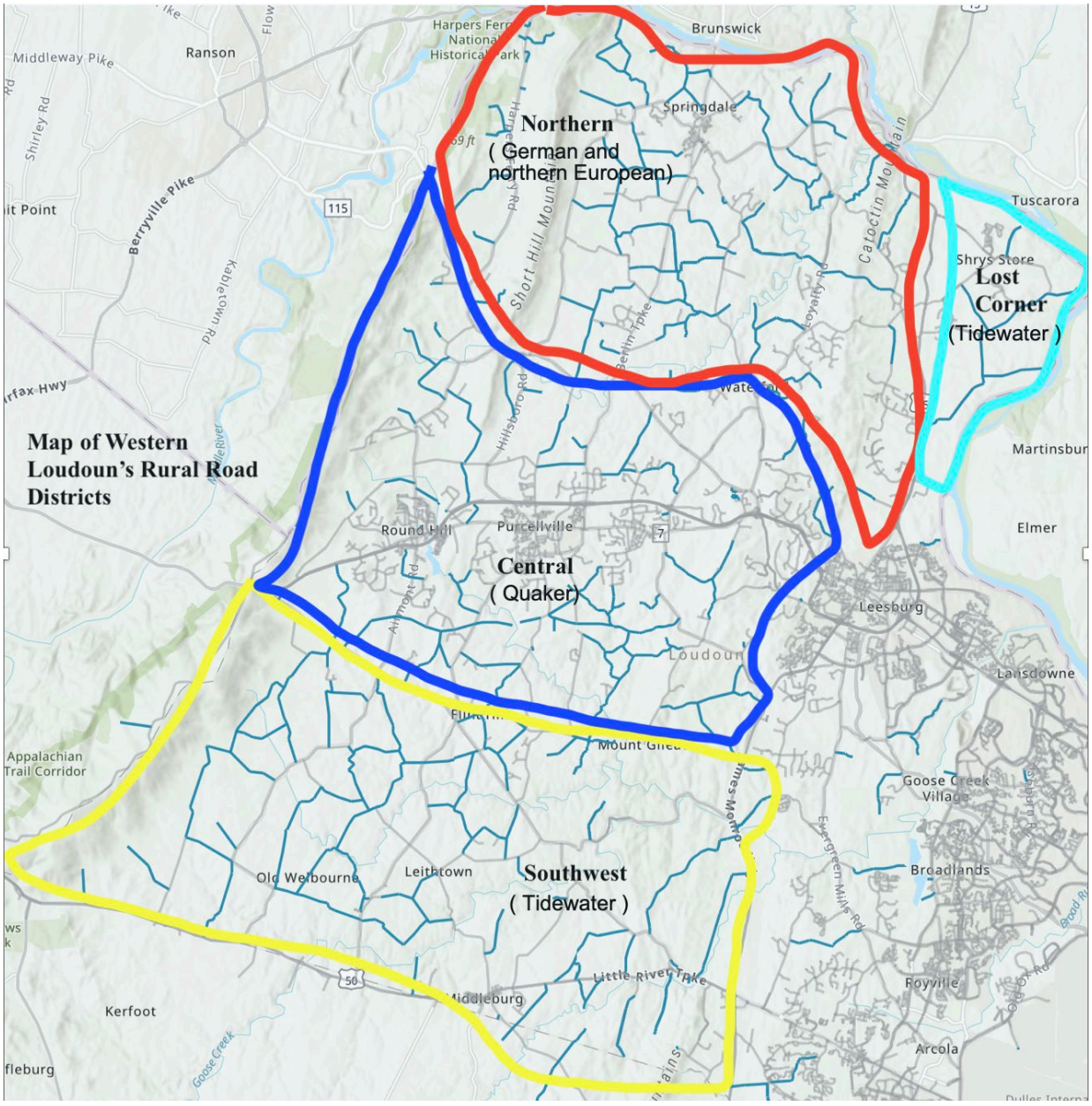
Tidewater colonialists who settled southwest Loudoun both inherited or invested in large farming tracts in what was then Virginia's frontier. These colonialists followed Native American east-west migratory paths, traveling from Virginia's tidewater and settling the piedmont area of the Blue Ridge. They imported their own distinct customs, bringing with them enslaved labor so to be able to cultivate large tracts of land. A road network evolved along18th century Fairfax patent lines, sometimes boundary lines between farms. The local road network likely started as private bridle paths following boundary lines between farms and which connected to larger overland routes back to the seat of power and commerce, originally London and later Williamsburg

Other tidewater colonialists followed the Potomac River, settling northeast Loudoun along the river's edge, today's 'Lost Corner' region. Taking advantage of the rich flood plains, settlers created large farming operations. The Lost Corner region derived its importance from the highly productive soils and access to Potomac waterway for economical shipping. Before 1765, there were at least eight Potomac ferry crossings.[14] Roads radiated south and west from the Potomac,

[13] Joseph Martin, A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia, Clerks Office of the District of Columbia of the Eastern District of Virginia, 1835, page 210

[14] Phillips, page 264, 265; also see Scheel, Loudoun Discovered Volume 2, page 2 and 7: **Potomac Ferries - Northern Loudoun Region:** 1) Harpers, 2) Paynes (at end of George's Mill Road); 3) Tankersville, (Jacob Waltman's Ferry also called Smith's ferry

taking the name of the ferry or ford[15] which they served, such as Noland's Ferry Road, Edwards Ferry Road, and Spinks Ferry Road. A road network dictated by river access evolved. Loudoun's earliest known road case dates to this river crossing and 1735 when Noland's Ferry was known to be in operation.

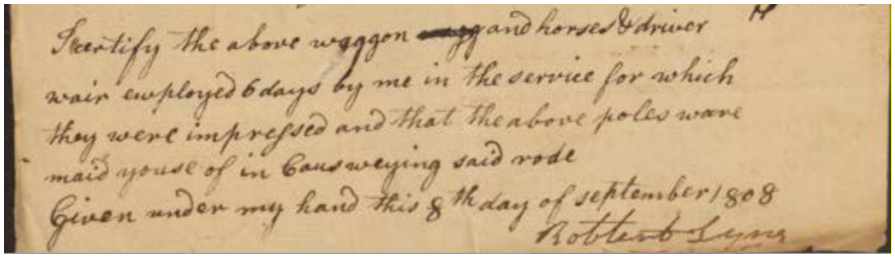


Loudoun's four quadrants of settlement

opposite Brunswick (Berlin) and Lovettsville; 4) Lucketts (later Heaters) at end of Ropp Lane; **Lost Corner Region:** 5) Awbrey's Ferry 1735 - 1847, (later Point of Rocks Bridge built 1847 at mouth of Catoctin Creek); 6) Noland's Ferry 1735 (three miles to the east of Awbrey's Ferry); 7) Clapman's Ferry 1757 – 1816 (later Hawlings Ferry 1816-1830; then Spink's Ferry 1830-1850); **South of Leesburg:** 8) Conrad's Ferry (1782, at the mouth of Monocacy River, and later Whites Ferry); 9) Edwards Ferry at Goose Creek

[15] For example, before there was White's Ferry, there was White's Ford Loudoun County Road Cases, 1873-002 Leesburg to Spinks Ferry Road to White's Ford on the Potomac

Heather Crowl, in her "History of Roads in Fairfax County," speculates that early road laws were largely ignored in the sparsely populated area of northern Virginia.[16] Under the courveee system (i.e. mandated citizen labor), road repair remained inconsistent, especially in rural areas. By the mid-eighteenth century, Virginia road law evolved to address the growing need for consistent infrastructure maintenance and stricter supervision. In November 1762, the legislature passed "*An Act for the more effectually keeping the publick roads and bridges in repair."* Under this legislation, county court justices were granted the authority to "*issue warrant against* [the] *surveyor of such road*" if a route fell into poor condition. Furthermore, the justices were empowered to exact surety bonds from contractors to guarantee that bridges were built "*in a strong substantial manner*." Because infrastructure design was still a strictly vernacular practice executed by uncredentialed laymen, these financial bonds served as a crucial legal mechanism to enforce consistency and baseline durability. The law also provided for additional measures for bridge construction, authorizing Surveyors to purchase "*earth or timber*" or "*a wheel-carriage, draught-horse or ox*," from an adjacent landowner and that the landowner would be reimbursed at the next meeting of the County court. [17] Reimbursement was documented in a 'Road Bill,' a scrap of paper to certify the task was complete and to appraise the value of labor and material. For example, this 1809 Road Bill was issued to "*Certify the above waggon* [sic] *and horses & driver wair* [sic] *employed 6 days by me* [the overseer, Robert Lynes] *in the service for which they were impressed …"*[18]


I Certify the above waggon ~~agg~~ and horses & driver
wair employed 6 days by me in the service for which
they were impressed and that the above poles ware
maid youse of in Causweying said rode
Given under my hand this 8th day of september 1808
Robt Lynes

As settlement and agricultural commercial activity increased, colonial law recognizing all roads as 'local' was becoming obsolete. Residents begrudged 'foreigners,' local residents' name for commercial waggoners traveling from outside of the immediate neighborhood. Typically, 'foreigners' were transporting agricultural produce with heavy-laden wagon and sharp wheels that cut into the roadbed causing damage. Flour was transported in barrels, sometimes stacked high on top of one another on wagons, pulled over long distances by teams of either four or six horses. In his book describing early 19th century life in Loudoun, John Jay Janney's Virginia, Janney describes the damage to the road, with gullies "nearly deep enough to hide a wagon."[19]

Port cities such as Alexandria, acknowledging the need to keep overland transportation in good repair so that agricultural produce could be affordably transported to her ports, sided with the local

[16] Heather Crowl, "A History of Roads in Fairfax County, Virginia 1608-1840," Thesis, Master of Arts in Anthropology, American University Page 15 and 16

[17] William Waller Henning, Henning's Statutes of Virginia at Large Volumes 1-12. Reprinted for the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1969; Volume 7, page 577, 1762. Also as seen: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hxh5u8&seq=579 June 2026

[18] Loudoun County Road Cases, Road Bills, RB 1809-001, page 87

[19] Werner L Janney and Asa Moore Janney, Editors, John Jay Janney's Virginia: An American Farm Lad's Life in the Early 19th Century, EPM Publications, Delaplane VA 1978, pgs 30-33 Janney was born in 1812 and wrote of his memories as a child.

farmers and lobbied for a change in the statute governing road repair.[20] As well, Tidewater gentlemen farming Virginia's Piedmont realized that the conventional wisdom of 'all roads are local' was adversely affecting their real estate investments. In 1772, laws were amended, recognizing that thoroughfares crossing the Virginia Colony needed more organized attention and additional resources. Counties were authorized to levy additional taxes to pay for needed repairs on these historic turnpikes:

> *And whereas the public roads leading from the northwestern parts of this colony* [including Loudoun County] *to the towns of Alexandria and Colchester … by means of the great number of waggons [sic]which use the same, are rendered almost impassable and the ordinary methods of keeping them in repair at present is not only insufficient but exceedingly burthensome to those who are employed therein …. Be it enacted … the county courts are … hereby authorized to levy and assess …* [21]

This Act of the Assembly percolated down to the local level. In one example, a levy was enacted in Loudoun for "*repairing the Great Roads leading from Vestals and Williams Gaps* [Loudoun County] *to Alexandria and Colchester* [in the Tidewater region]…"[22] Despite improvements in laws governing roads, travel remained difficult, as the condition of the roads was a perennial problem. Nicholas Cresswell, British diarist who visited Virginia in 1774, noted in his journals: *"but the roads are very bad, cut to pieces with the waggons [sic]."*[23]

These revised road laws pertained to the few historic turnpikes that transversed Loudoun. The local, rural roads, which made up the bulk of Loudoun's network, remained the responsibility of residents, as per the old colonial system of tithable labor. For example, in 1774 when Gibson's Mill on the banks of Panther Skin Creek near Upperville needed to be more efficiently connected to overland transportation to reach larger commercial markets in the east, the County Courts issued the following:

> *"Thomas West, Thomas Owley, James Lewis, and William Robinson* [the appointed Gentlemen engineers] *or any three who being first duly Qualified before some Magistrate for the said County, do Drew [*sic*] the most Convenient Way for a Road to be cleared from or near Ashby Gap to John Gibson Mill* [near Upperville] *and from thence unto the Road leading to Alexandria* [Route 50] *and that they Report to the Court the Convenientcies [*sic*] and inconveniences that may attend to the same."*[24]

Roads were difficult to build and maintain, and bridges presented an additional level of complexity and regulatory oversight. Even with allowed reimbursables for locals' expenses and the levy for statewide roads, funding was limited making bridges a rarity. Small crossings were typically left as a ford. More heavily travelled crossings were typically improved, but were constructed with amateur labor, typically creating a 'causey' [causeway.] Again, Nicholas Cresswell lends insight

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[20] Harrison, page 561
[21] Ibid., p. 562. Also seen in Hennig's Statutes, 1772, Chapter XXIV, paragraph VII: page 549 As seen June 2026: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hw2scw&seq=555
[22] Ann Miller, 1757 – 1783, page 114, and 9 November 1773, Loudoun Order Book F. Page 249
[23] Cresswell, Nicholas, Journal of Nicholas Creswell: 1774-1777 (Travel in America)pg 47
[24] Loudoun County Road Cases; Petitions, Reports and Road Viewers: RR 1774-003 "Ashby's Gap to Gibson's Mill to the road to Alexandria," This road is known as Green Garden Road today

describing "*Their method of mending the roads is with poles about 10 foot long laid across the road close together. They stick fast in the mud and make an excellent causeway."*[25] A larger crossing created the need for professional skills and additional bureaucracy. Thomas Jefferson, in his 1781 "Notes on the State of Virginia," outlines the prescribed methods to move the request from the local, to regional, to state authorities for permission to construct a bridge:

> *"…bridges as may be built without the assistance of artificers,* [engineers] *they are to be built. If the stream be such as to require a bridge of regular workmanship, the court employs workmen to build it, at the expense of the whole county. If it be too great for the county, application is made to the general assembly, who authorize individuals to build it….*[26]

This imperfect system of amateur engineers, compulsory labor, increasing levys and evolving system of road law, led to complete frustration. Farmers, millers, and Alexandria merchants lost profitability as transporting produce overland to markets was unreliable. This frustration would lead to the next era of Loudoun's road development.

TURNPIKE ERA (1802-1860)

Independence offered relative calm and stability providing the opportunity for investment into infrastructure. Leaders of the new Republic recognized the need for reliable transportation to govern the western reaches and to monetize the fertile valleys of Loudoun and west of the Blue Ridge. The newly minted, financially strapped federal and state governments turned from local levys to private sources to fund public works, authorizing a system of road construction, launching America's 'Turnpike Era.'

America's early turnpikes , or toll roads, consisted of a fragmented system of private, speculative ventures dictated entirely by local economic and geographic realities of individual regions. Because these early corporations relied exclusively on private stock subscriptions, turnpike density clustered heavily within wealthy, export-driven agricultural economies. Conversely, routes traversing less prosperous or subsistence-farming regions frequently suffered from under-capitalization, resulting in turnpikes that offered minimal physical improvements over existing public dirt roads. Lacking mandated oversight, construction methods were strictly vernacular and geographically dependent, ranging from earth-crowned and timber-corduroy roads in the coastal wetlands to ad hoc fieldstone and river cobble paving. The labor executing these layman engineering designs varied just as widely, shifting from a heavy reliance on leased enslaved labor in plantation-dominant counties to "sweat equity" arrangements where local farmers provided manual labor and draft animals in exchange for company stock. Ultimately, without centralized funding or formal engineering standards, physical durability, and operational structure were entirely at the mercy of the local landscapes it crossed.

These toll roads were expected to be 'paved,' or covered with a layer of crushed stone. Sometimes 'paved' meant only 'stone covered' but more often, according to Robert Hunter, "most

[25] Cresswell, Nicholas, Journal of Nicholas Creswell: 1774-1777 (Travel in America)pg 47
[26] Robert Pierce Forbes, editor, Notes on the State of Virginia: an Annotated Edition; Yale University Press 2022

of the toll-charging Virginia turnpikes were nothing more than earth roads."[27] Sometimes, 'planking,' a method of laying wooden planks together, was offered as an alternative to paving.[28] According to Ann Miller, "road paving was rare in rural sections of the state well into the 20th century and was not common except in the wealthier sections of cities."[29] In addition to hopes of some type of 'paving,' turnpikes were also expected to have reasonable bridges across streams, allowing for more direct routes rather than meandering to cross at a negotiable ford. In return for paving and bridge improvements, these private companies were given legislated permission to collect tolls. Tolls were carefully specified, similar to today, according to number of wheels and load weight. Tolls were collected every five miles without regard to distance travelled. This system encouraged local traffic to choose a route to avoid the toll, reducing toll revenues. Tolls gates provided some revenue but rarely as much as forecast.

Improved transportation was imperative to efficiently connect the Loudoun Valley to the metropolitan markets of Washington D. C. and the ports cities of Alexandria and Baltimore. According to Ann Miller, historian with Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC), "by the last half of the 18th century, Loudoun County was already one of the most populous and economically important counties in northern Virginia and contained major east-west and north-south transportation routes."[30] However, travel remained slow, difficult, and expensive; improved overland transportation was critical to Loudoun's economic success.[31]

One of Virginia's earliest toll roads extended from Alexandria to Loudoun, improving the desirable fertile valley-to-port city connection. The 1796 Fairfax and Loudoun Turnpike Road Company built an improved road as far as the ford in the Little River at the village of Aldie. The company faltered and re-emerged in 1802 as the Little River Turnpike Company, eventually becoming one of the few financial successes of the Virginia turnpikes.[32] Charles Fenton Mercer, of Aldie and one of Loudoun's representatives to Virginia's General Assembly, had a vested interest in making sure the Little River Turnpike became reality and financial success. Mercer had recently rebuilt the Aldie Mill and critical to its success was a cost-efficient means of reaching commercial markets. Typical of many turnpike companies, founding subscribers were the millers and landowners, like Mercer, who benefitted financially from improved travel.

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[27] Robert Hunter "The Turnpike Movement in Virginia, 1816-1860," as seen in the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol 69, No 3 (jul 1961) pp 278-289, published by Virginia Historical Society. Also seen: https://www.jstor.org/stable/4246760, November 2023. Page 283; June 2026

[28] Virginia Chronicle, Winchester Virginia, Volume 23, Number 41 April 11, 1849 As seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=WVI18490411.1.2&srpos=2&e=------184-en-20--1--txt-txIN-macadamize+loudoun------- June 2026

[29] Ann Miller, "Identification and Application of Criteria for Determining National Register Eligibility of Roads in Virginia " VTCR Charlottesville VA March 2003, Appendix D, 'Paving' page 43

[30] Patricia B Duncan and Ann Brush Miller, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Road Orders … 1783 – 1800, Virginia Transportation Research Council, Page 2. As seen https://vtrc.virginia.gov/media/vtrc/vtrc-pdf/vtrc-pdf/15-R18.pdf, June 2026

[31] William James Head History and Comprehensive Description of Loudoun County, Leesburg, reprint 2011, p. 115

[32] Newlon p 3-11 According to Newlon, in 1785 the General Assembly enacted legislation enabling creation of the Little River Turnpike Company as a private venture on the assumption that the receipts from tolls would provide an attractive opportunity for private investment. This apparently was the first private toll road authorized in the United States, and apparently its attractiveness to private investors was not as great as had been thought because funding was not forthcoming. The Little River Company was rechartered in 1795 but again was not successful in attracting funds. Finally, in 1802, chartered for the third time, the company was successful in attracting investment and successfully completed 33 3 /4 mi of road from the port of Alexandria westward toward the Blue Ridge (currently US-50). This road operated as a toll road into the early years of the 20th century and is still in use today as a state road.

It is widely assumed enslaved labor was used for some turnpike construction prior to the Civil War. An example is the construction of the Little River Turnpike, which ran ads such as this one published in December of 1803. Since the enslaved were largely forbidden from literacy, it's assumed this advertisement was targeted to white enslavers.

> *"WANTED TO HIRE 'For one year, twenty able bodied NEGRO MEN, to be employed on the Little Rive Turnpike Road … punctual payment for their services, may be relied on."*[33]

Competition from out-of-state port cities, such as Baltimore, fueled better overland transportation in Virginia. In 1803, Level Powell, who owned warehouses in Alexandria and agricultural land and mills in western Loudoun County wrote an opinion piece published in a local paper describing the critical need of reliable overland transportation connecting fertile portions of the state to port cities:

> *The counties of Shenandoah, Frederick, Berkley and Jefferson* [now in West Virginia] *are … the most productive of any part of Virginia .. I thought it of some consequence to connect this country by the shortest route possible with Alexandria. … I did believe besides Baltimore that the city of Washington and Georgetown will be a rival in commerce which Alexandria will have … I have given my candid opinion …"*[34]

Charles Fenton Mercer remained committed to improved overland transportation and lobbied for centralized funding, which provided fuel for Virginia's turnpike construction. Mercer's 1816 legislation would evolve into the Board of Public Works and the Fund for Internal Improvement, both which supported technological innovation and provided (some) financing for (relatively) large-scale, overland transportation projects, such as the Turnpikes. Thanks to Mercer, Virginia was one of the first states to enact major legislation to overhaul how roads were constructed and funded.[35]

Turnpike companies were public-private partnerships, raising funds privately by selling shares to stockholders, which was leveraged with public funding. Typically, the public/private split was 3/5 private funds and 2/5 public funds sourced from the 'Fund for Internal Improvement.' Another requirement of the partnership was the annual report from the local Turnpike Company to the Board of Public Works in Richmond. The Board of Public Works retained the right of project oversight providing consistency of engineering and quality control that had been previously lacking. Claudius Crozet, the French trained civil engineer, served as principal Engineer and Surveyor for the Virginia Board of Public Works from 1823-1832 and again from 1837-1843, so would have certainly had oversight of the inception, construction, and operation of Loudoun's Turnpikes.

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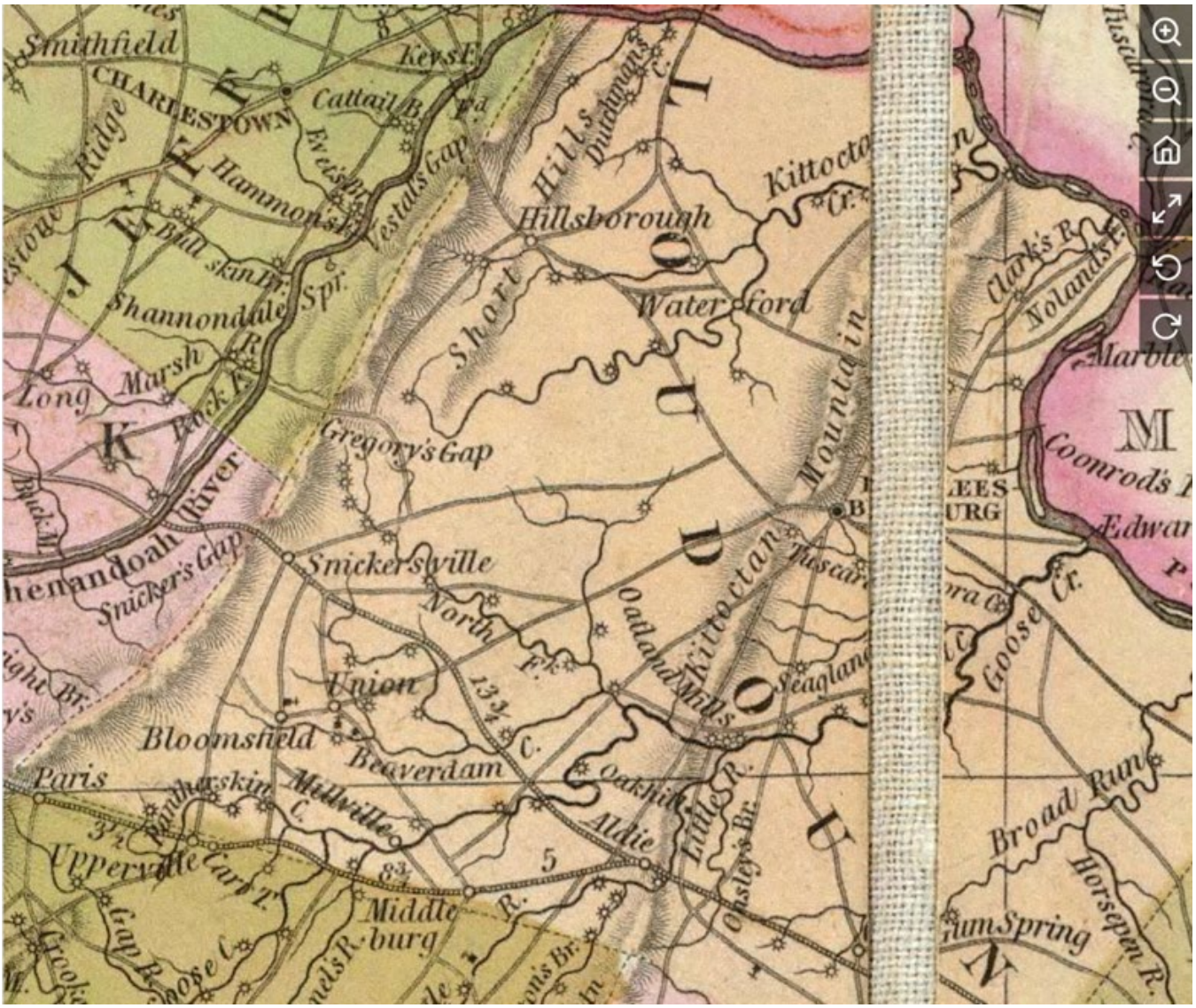
[33] Virginia Chronicle, Alexandria Daily Advertiser, volume 4, Number 947, 29, December 1803 As seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=ADA18031229.1.2&srpos=4&e=-12-1803--12-1803--en-20--1--txt-txIN-%27little+river%27------ June 2026

[34] Virginia Chronicle, Alexandria Daily Advertiser Nov 30 1803 https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=ADA18031130.1.2&srpos=7&e=------180-en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads------- June 2026
Shenandoah, Frederick, Berkley and Jefferson, now counties in West Virginia, were at that time the western reaches of Virginia.

[35] Tim McGuin, "How the Evolution of Paved Road Systems Impacted Rural Historic Districts Waterford Virginia: Case study;" Welch Center for Graduate and Continuing Studies, Goucher College, 2004, foot note 34



Detail of map attributed to Herman Boye, 1827
showing Loudoun's emerging milling industry and associated road network. Over 60 mills are represented, predominately located in western Loudoun. The Little River, Ashby Gap and Snickers Gap Turnpikes are represented Other local roads represented on this map are 'stage' roads; good enough to carry a stagecoach in good weather but not as sophisticated as the Turnpikes

Turnpike construction was fueled by ebullient speculation; stocks were sold locally with abandon and without demonstrated returns. Although the Little River Turnpike was a documented financial success and its dividend yielded a return of 2%, the Ashby's Gap Turnpike yielded a return of half that, and Snicker's Gap Turnpike did not return a dividend at all. It's not clear if any other turnpikes in Virginia were profitable.[36] As Yardley Taylor noted "… *the citizens of this county have not been unmindful of the value of Internal Improvements; and they early commenced the making of Turnpike roads. These roads* [turnpikes] *generally benefitted the farming interest, though, they seldom yielded dividend on the stock, except, when first made; and none of late years since the canal*[37] *bordering the county, has been finished*." Yardley Taylor continued describing the conditions contributing to poor returns on turnpike stocks including declining prices of transporting a barrel of flour from Loudoun to Alexandria.[38] Despite these construction achievements, overland transportation in Loudoun remained difficult. 'Improved' roads remained primitive, most were packed earth. Mud was the nemesis of turning a profit. Between 1802 and 1840, approximately 200 turnpike companies were chartered in VA although most faced financial failure before construction.[39]

According to Ann Miller, there were more Turnpikes in Loudoun than any other county before the Civil War. Turnpikes likely flourished in Loudoun because of lack of competition from the more efficient modes of travel such as canal, [40] navigable waterway, or railroad. Overland transportation was needed to support the prolific mill-centered economy. According to Yardley Taylor's map, there were 77 water-powered mills, predominantly located in western Loudoun.[41] Because of the concentration of industry in the west, Loudoun's road network was more intricately developed in the west, and specifically in the central area settled by Quakers.

[36] Howard Newlon Jr, "Private-Sector Involvement in Virginia's Nineteenth-Century Transportation Improvement Program," Transportation Research Record 1107, as seen in June 2026: https://onlinepubs.trb.org/Onlinepubs/trr/1987/1107/1107-001a.pdf page 5

[37] Its assumed this is the Patowamack Canal, or Potomac Canal, a series of canals, which bypassed the falls along the Potomac River and bordered Loudoun County, Virginia and Maryland.

[38] Yardley Taylor, Memoir of Loudoun County Virginia to Accompany the Map of Loudoun County, Thomas Reynolds Publisher, Leesburg 1853 p 25

[39] Edward Graham Roberts, "The Roads of Virginia, 1607 – 1840,' A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Virginia," Charlottesville 1950, page 169

[40] Although the Goose Creek lock/dam/canal system was underway at this time, it's duration and usefulness were limited

[41] Eastern Loudoun, east of Route 15 and east of the Catoctin and Bull Run Mountains, was predominantly flat and did not have the fall necessary for water powered mills

Yardley Taylor's Map of Loudoun, 1853
The map is renowned for its incredible level of detail, as Taylor surveyed the county on foot and horseback. Seven turnpikes are represented, primarily crossing western Loudoun.[42]

Loss of toll revenue was a major factor which contributed to the eventual decline of the turnpikes. As turnpikes were public-private partnerships, state law governed operation allowing the county court to require a toll company to keep gates open if the road was not maintained in proper repair. Often citizens knew a local justice well enough to impress upon him to keep toll gates open, no matter what the road condition. As well local roads, colloquially known as 'shunpikes,' allowed circuitous routes around toll houses and therefore enabling further toll evasion.[43] The Civil War would finalize the end of the Turnpike Era.

[42] The seven turnpikes rendered on the 1853 Yardley Taylor Map are: 1) Little River Turnpike Road, 1801; 2) Ashby's Gap Turnpike, 1810; 3) Leesburg [Georgetown] Turnpike 1832; 4) Leesburg-Snickers Gap Turnpike Road; 5) Snicker's Gap Turnpike Road, 1810; 6) the Hillsborough and Harpers Ferry Turnpike Road, 1858; 7) the Berlin Turnpike Road, 1859. Two more turnpikes would be constructed after the map was published including the Leesburg Point of Rocks Turnpike (Route 15 north of Leesburg) and the Leesburg Aldie Turnpike (Route 15 south of Leesburg to Gilbert's corner), both follow near the north-south route of the early "Carolina Road" depicted on his map.
[43] Robert Hunter, p, 286

Management of Local Roads prior to the Civil War

At the local level, for better management of new roads and repairs, the County organized the roads into 'districts.'[44] Ten districts are illustrated on the Yardley Taylor Map[45]and these districts were later divided into precincts.[46] Without a centralized system, citizen labor continued to be standard practice for road maintenance and repair. Therefore, each road within a precinct had a dedicated 'Surveyor' or 'Overseer,' a citizen layman responsible for assessing the condition of the roads; coordinating labor, material, and equipment; and cost certifying the work. Precincts were allotted a certain amount of funding each year through a 'Road Levy.' Surveyors could petition for funds for additional road work. One example is "*Alfred Bell be permitted to expend the sum of Ten Dollar in blowing rock* [blasting?] *in the road on which he is overseer and the County pledges themselves to have the sums levied at the meet next*…"[47] Or, Surveyors could just refuse to complete the work and complain to the Courts; "*The appropriate* [appropriation?] *of $137 is inadequate to do justice to the roads … much could not be worked for want of funds*."[48]

Surveyors were also authorized by the Courts to "impress" labor, meaning to recruit and notify citizens of their required duty to work on the roads. As might be expected, finding citizens willing to work on the roads was not an easy task. Sometimes Surveyors came up shorthanded as was the case with Thomas Ayres in 1867, who reported to the Courts in his "… Remarks Owing to the scarcity of hands in my Precinct, I was compelled to work the four I could get."[49]

Surveyors were also responsible for making the determination when materials or equipment beyond raw labor or 'hands' were needed for a particular task "… *whereas Surveyor of the road ... had given information that the assistance of wheel carriages is necessary for repairing the same*…." [50] 'Teams' of horses or oxen were conscripted from any willing neighbor; "*a Waggon* [sic] *and four horses with their driver belonging to John Everhart to assist in making the road…"*[51] Like today, funds for road repairs were scarce - surveyors were limited in compensation for stone, being required to first use loose stone along the road and "*allowed nothing for any stone used in mending their roads until all the stone now lying loose shall be first used*."[52]

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[44] Loudoun County: RM-004 1809, "Lay Off County Roads into Districts;" Also See RM 1855 "Lay Each District into Four Road Precincts

[45] District were as follows 1) Gum spring 2) Middleburg 3) Bloomfield 4) Snickersville 5) Hillsborough 6) Lovettsville) 7) Waterford 8) Leesburg 9) Circleville Hughsville 10) Franksville [today's Algonquian district and Route 7.] Districts were dividend into Precincts. For example, the area immediately around Taylorstown was the 4th precinct in the 6th district. See: Loudoun County: Road and Bridge Records: Road Bills and Accounts, RB 1868-001, p. 188

[46] Loudoun County: 1836 p. 24; "Summon Justices to Consider Repeal of the March 3, 1835 'Law Appointing Road Commissioners'" June 15th, 1836: "Loudoun County to wit Ordered that present division of roads into precincts be adopted and the present allotment of tithables to work thereon and that the several surveyors return tests [testimony] of the same to the August Term" Late in 1855, Districts were divided into four precincts "…Commissions to lay of their respective districts each into four road precincts and to report to the next June term" See: Loudoun County Road Cases, RM 1855, "Lay Each District into Four Precincts"

[47] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road and Bridge Records, RB 1835-001, pg. 4

[48] ibid: Road Bills and Accounts, RB 1867-001,pg. 86

[49] Ibid

[50] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road and Bridge Records: Road Bills, RB1837-001, pg.38

[51] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road and Bridge Records: Road Bills, RB 1837-001 pg. 32

[52] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: RM 1844 "Surveyors Allowed Nothing for Hauling and Laying Stone Lying Loose is First…"

Surveyor would employ the work of 'Subscribers,' qualified individuals who were recruited with a warrant and sworn in by the Justice of the Peace whose duty was to assign value for reimbursement for labor and materials; "*We subscribers viewed a parcel of stone furnished ... to repair the road and do value the said stone to be $3 per pile*." Typically, a Surveyor would recruit two Subscribers to evaluate the same road case. Since Subscribers' skills were widely in demand, Subscribers could be used on multiple road cases throughout the year.

Road bills lent insight into materials used for road repair. Stone, as in this case, would have been field stones, taken from an adjacent farmer's field, rather than a quarry; "*We the Subscribers being first Sworn pursuant to a warrant from Levin Luckett have this day view'd* [sic] *the Stone taken off of the Land of John Sinclair for the purpose of repairing the Road whereof he is Surveyor and do value the same at 16 /12 cents by the load from the four horses Certified this 31st day of March 1809."*[53] Typically paving consisted of broken stone to prevent carriages from being bogged in mud, but larger and as not uniformly crushed as today's gravel. Raw timber was used for corduroy to cross small streams and so was sawn plank; "*to sawing 325 ft of Bridge Plank at $1 To Slabing & Sills The plank is worth at My Mill $2.50 for hundred ft*."[54] Bed rock was also encountered and in 1849, a Surveyor paid for "*making a drill hammer"* and *"sharpening and auger."*[55]

When the work was completed, Surveyors would certify that the labor, materials and equipment were used as specified "*I do certify that the wagon and team above mentioned were employed one Day in the service for which they were impressed*."[56] Ideally, Surveyors and Subscribers would appear in person before the Justice of the Peace for sworn testimony but in all cases, the findings for a particular road case - the need for materials and equipment, the value thereof – was recorded in a 'Road Bill' that was presented by the Surveyor to the Justice of the Peace at the end of the fiscal year for reimbursement. Road Bills were recorded on pieces of scrap paper, and ideally signed by the Surveyor, Subscribers, and Justice of the Peace on the same scrap, but not always. After the Civil War, Road Bills were formalized into pre-printed forms that detailed needed equipment such as "*ploughs, waggons, Teams & etc*," labor "*Hands*," and Materials "*Timber, tools Powder, etc*." Road bills were all encompassing, including reimbursement for care of equipment including "*sharpening picks"* or "*repairing scoop*." [57]

[53] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road Cases, Road and Bridge Records, RB 1809-001, page 34
[54] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road Cases, Road and Bridge Records, RB 1867-001 p 120
[55] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road Cases, Road and Bridge Records, RB 1849-002 p 189
[56] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road Cases, Road and Bridge Records, RB 1809-001
[57] Loudoun County Clerk of Circuit Court Records: Road Cases, Road and Bridge Records, RB 1867-001

Diagram of Loudoun's Rural Road Network

Loudoun's rural road network was built largely out of necessity, connecting mills to markets. The result is a winding web of narrow paved and unpaved lanes that remains largely intact. Because the network was dictated by farm to market routes than the logic of point to point transit, the network's conventional layout retains its labyrinth -like qualities today

Loudoun's Archival Road Cases and Insights into 18th and 19th Century Road Construction

Loudoun County's rural road network is significant not only because a substantial portion of its 18th- and 19th-century footprint survives intact and remains in use, but also due to the voluminous archival road cases that document its construction and maintenance. These original court orders provide invaluable insight into the petitioning processes for building and repairing routes, the evolution of historical travel methods, and the fundamental role these arteries played in the regional agricultural economy. Furthermore, the archives reveal distinct infrastructure trends. For instance, the dominance of western Loudoun's 19th-century milling industry is highly visible; a significant proportion of road petitions specifically requested new alignments to link farms to mills, and subsequently to connect those mills to major transportation corridors like turnpikes. Many of these cases mandate the improvement of existing routes, suggesting that private farm lanes were

frequently formalized and expanded into public roads once a mill began serving broader commercial needs

Archival road cases provide insight into the coarse nature of 18th century overland transportation. For example, not all 'roads' were roads, but merely paths such as the road "*near Cumption's path ...*"[58] or William Douglass's petition "*to clear a Bridle way* [a path to accommodate a horse] *from his House to strike the main road*."[59] Signposts were a critical part of navigating overland travel and proper display was a requirement of road work. Signs were crude during a time when the population was largely illiterate; typically, surveyors were required to "*erect Stones or Posts where necessary*."[60] If a sign was damaged or missing, road surveyors could be found guilty, as in the case of the case when the Grand Jury censured the "… *The Surveyor of the Road from little* [sic] *River to Goose Creek for not having a sign post up at the fork of the Road*.[61]

Archival road cases also provide insight into how roads could be closed or moved if the road proved to be an inconvenience to property owners. Citizens could petition as in the example of "*the Petition of Richard Ternary setting forth that he suffers greatly by reason of the Road's running through a good piece of meadow Ground and spoiling his Plantation and praying that the said Road may be turned...*"[62] Sometimes it took several requests to have the Court respond, such as in the case of John Berryman who had to request twice to ask: " … *suffer great Inconveniency by reason of the main Road's running thro' a piece of tended Ground which renders it almost useless and praying that the road may be turned the most convenient way*."[63] Not everything was attended to in a timely manner, such as in the case of the "*... Report formerly made for Clearing of a Road from Potowmack* [sic] *River between the Blue ridge and Short Hills*" which was "*Ordered be set aside*."[64]

Archival records vividly illustrate how local infrastructure was forced to evolve to accommodate the growing milling industry. The 1859 case, "Road from Pursell's Gates to the North Fork Road," exemplifies the sequential process of road development, from a citizen's initial petition to the formal alteration of a route. These petitions were typically initiated by farmers or millers with a vested commercial interest in improving market access. In June 1859, landowner Samuel Roszel petitioned the County Court to improve an existing, inadequate route:

> "*On the motion of Samuel Roszel ordering that George Gregg, John Nichols, Yardley Taylor and Thomas Brown, or any three of them, do view the road from Pursell's second*

[58] Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," 14 August 1759, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 264
[59] Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," 11 June 1760, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 366
[60] Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," Loudoun Order Book D, page 206, May 8, 1769
[61] Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," 9 May 1758, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 98 [Grand Jury Presentments]
[62] Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," 11 March 1760, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 326
[63] 1 Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," 0 February 1761, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 409
[64] Anne Miller and Patricia B Duncan, Historic Roads of Virginia: Loudoun County Rod Orders 1757 – 1783," 8 September 1761, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 493

gate and consider the expediency of widening said road…. And report the conveniences and inconveniences ...."[65]

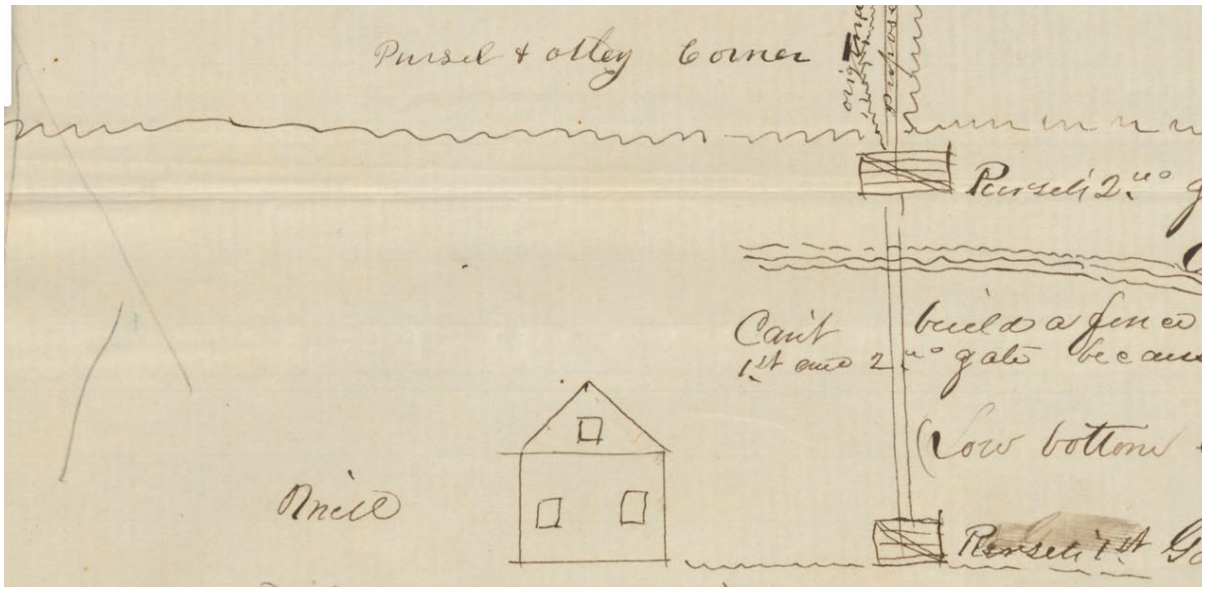
Upon receiving such an order, the court issued a summons to four appointed "road viewers" (in this instance: Gregg, Nichols, Taylor, and Brown). Their role was to establish the "most convenient waye" and weigh the public benefit of the proposed alteration against the cost of appropriating or damaging private property. By law, at least three of the four viewers had to appear at the next quarterly meeting of the court to present their findings. In October 1859, the viewers submitted their report, detailing the logistical failures of the existing road and proposing a specific, widened solution:

"… the road at present is too narrow for teams to pass each other and be properly worked [maintained] being only 10 ft wide. We are decidedly of the opinion that the road should be opened 20 ft, which will make it sufficient wide for teams to pass each other and give superior room enough to work the road to advantage … We are of the opinion that Pursell's … gate should be discontinued and that a fence should be built on the east side of the road up Pursell's land there being now one on the west side thereby making a lane. In making this change, the public will suffer no inconveniences, but in the contrary will be greatly benefited. This is the only road from the North Fork neighborhood to Purcell's Saw Mill and Factory and is considerably used. At present if teams meet on this road, one of them is compelled to drive into the fence corner on the one side or open field on the other side. This is regarded as a considerable inconvenience as its much travelled by the public. Beside is going to and return from mill on horseback with a bag, a great inconvenience results from having to open and shut the gate, which the proposed change dispenses with."[66]

19th century 'teams,' as cited in this road case and as described in John Jay Janney's Virginia, were four or six horse teams, pulling a wagon. Wagons, such as those which carried flour, required additional road width to pass one another, as described in this road order. The road order also describes a single individual, carrying a family's needs in a single sack, who might be inconvenienced by having to dismount and remount to open and close Mr. Pursell's farm gates. This case also illustrates the evolutionary nature of roads, where this road might have started as a private path to a mill and then be evolving to a wider, public road, smoothed and wide enough for two wagons to pass.

Sometimes a plat accompanies the petition which can be drawn by a surveyor, but more often a layman as in this case:

[65] Loudoun County Road Cases, RR 1859-007, "Road from Pursell's Gates to the North Fork Road"
[66] Loudoun County Road Cases, RR 1859-007, "Road from Pursell's Gates to the North Fork Road"



Detail of "Road from Pursell's Gates to the North Fork Road, RR 1859-007" showing the fulling mill and two gates to close out livestock

The petition is followed by a financial assessment of the imposition on adjacent landowners "…*No yard orchard garden at any fruit trees will be taken…"* In addition, the exact financial toll on each landowner is tallied: "*S Pursell {$18.75 Land $32.40 Fence} J. G. Otley $21.00 Land}"* and finally:

> *"Application granted"*[67]

Not every route was approved. Some road orders, upon the Court receiving Road Viewer's recommendations, were rejected; *"… A Report of the Persons appointed to view the most convenient way for a Road from John Hough's Mill to the mouth of Dutchman's Run was returned find that it will not Answer for a Road …"* Whereupon "*It is Considered by the Court that …. the same be Quashed.*"[68]

Few bridges are mentioned in road orders as not only were bridges relatively rare, but also bridges were typically constructed and paid for out of separate funding. [69] Bridges were expensive and typically used only on well-travelled thoroughfares. In the rural areas, other less desirable options were sufficient. For example, sometimes 'corduroy' would be used to cross a low area. For example, in 1815, Dr. Seldon asks for repayment for "log for causey [causeway] over Tuscarora [creek]."[70] Things hadn't changed much 30 years later when William Dove requests "66 poles for a causeway."[71]

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[67] ibid
[68] 12 March 1760, Loudoun Order Book A, p. 329

[69] Loudoun County Clerk's Office, archives, https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalInternet/0/edoc/326291/Road Case Bridges.pdf
[70] RB 1815-001
[71] RB 1846-004

Diagram of Loudoun's Antebellum Turnpikes

Prior to the Civil War, Loudoun boasted six completed chartered turnpikes. Almost without exception, these commercial toll roads overlaid earlier colonial routes, which themselves followed Native American paths, which were dictated by Potomac River crossings and mountain passes.

Comparison to other Counties in Virginia

By the 1850s, Loudoun produced over a million bushels of wheat annually, frequently ranking as a top wheat-producing county in Virginia and occasionally rivaling national leaders. This dominance stemmed from a perfect geographical balance of soil fertility, plentiful waterpower, and proximity to major commercial markets.

While the fertile counties of the Shenandoah Valley, specifically Augusta, Rockingham, and Frederick, produced comparable yields and possessed robust milling industries, their geographic isolation behind the Blue Ridge Mountains made transporting milled flour to regional markets slow and expensive, suppressing demand. Conversely, neighboring counties like Fauquier and Prince William enjoyed preferable locations near larger markets, but lacked Loudoun's superior combination of rich soils and the reliable waterpower of Goose Creek, Catoctin Creek, and their powerful tributaries.

To capitalize on this geographic advantage and massive agricultural yield, Loudoun developed an equally impressive processing infrastructure. While most of Virginia's rural milling relied on traditional "custom mills" that were heavily labor intensive to operate and therefore were limited to griding small, custom batches of grain for local farmers, Loudoun transitioned heavily into merchant mills. Utilizing the superior technology of Oliver Evans, these mills became more automated and therefore were able to substantially increase their milling capacity. Facilities like the Aldie Mill (rebuilt 1809), the Waterford Mill (rebuilt 1818), and the Peacher's/Weverton Mill (constructed 1826) operated essentially as rural factories, purchasing wheat in bulk, and processing it into high-grade flour on a massive scale, and exporting for cash

Beyond these three prominent examples, the 1853 Yardley Taylor Map identifies 18 additional merchant mills operating in the county. While their individual outputs were smaller, collectively they formed an industrial powerhouse network. Loudoun's milling density and topography completely set it apart from the surrounding region. Although neighboring counties did possess automated Oliver Evans mills, such as Beverly Mill in Prince William and Colvin Run Mill in Fairfax, they lacked Loudoun's sheer volume of mills and the steep topography necessary to generate reliable waterpower. Furthermore, while metropolitan cities like Richmond housed massive, centralized complexes (like the famous Gallego Mills) that processed grain shipped in from elsewhere, Loudoun remained unmatched at for its dense, decentralized network of high-capacity rural mills

Ultimately, this booming, decentralized milling economy served as the catalyst for the county's overland transportation infrastructure. Driven by the need to move massive agricultural yields and finished flour from agricultural fields to rural mills and rural mills to market, Loudoun created one of the most sophisticated rural road networks in antebellum Virginia

CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUCTION AND GROWTH (1861-1880)

Much of the Civil War played out in Northern Virginia not only because it was a border state, but also because of its highly developed overland transportation network. At the time, Loudoun County boasted one of the state's largest road and turnpike systems. Because massive 19th-century armies were cumbersome to move, they were heavily dependent on established roads to maneuver efficiently. Civil War diaries frequently highlight how these routes dictated tactical decisions, a reality clearly reflected today in the boundaries of the Unison Battlefield National Historic District.

The infrastructure of the roadway and stonewalls that lined them often became central to combat. In some instances, troops dismantled the walls to create an escape route, while in others, they served as vital fortifications. This defensive advantage was famously demonstrated during the battle at Furr Farm. There, Confederate sharpshooters used the stone walls lining the Snickers Gap Turnpike as a ready-made breastwork, effectively turning a major transportation route into a deadly gauntlet to stall the advancing Union army.[72]

A surveyor's observation of 1863 captures the condition of Loudoun's roads during the War; "*It is impossible to designate definitely the exact character of the roads in this county, especially in the*

[72] https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/053-5056-0001_Furr_Farm_2012_NRHP_FINAL.pdf; https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/053-6087_Unison_Battlefield_HD_2011_NRHP_FINAL_REDACTED.pdf

lower part. Some public roads seem to be altogether disused, and almost [illegible], and many farm & private roads have become thoroughfares.[73] A local paper accurately describes the condition of Loudoun's roads after the War … "*there is no public want under which the people of Loudoun ... are suffering which so grievously* [that] *effect their comfort and prosperity as good roads and better interior communication*"[74] An article in the Alexandria Gazette also beoans the poor condition of Loudoun's roads after the war: " *Loudoun is the heaviest tax paying county in Virginia except Henrico… and yet the roads here are almost as bead as they are in Fauquier. [possibly] the worst roads they ever saw."*[75] Not only had road repairs ceased during the War, but the few bridges that existed were purposely destroyed to prevent movement of opposing armies. During Reconstruction, only limited funds were available for roads. With the local economy destroyed, both public and private coffers were drained. The limited available public funding was reserved for building the new public school system and support for indigent. The County was financially strapped and public services were minimal.[76]

Loudoun's road network was so extensive before the War, the County could not afford to maintain all roads at the War's conclusion. In some cases, mills were destroyed, rendering a once valuable 'mill to market' road no longer necessary. In some cases, these abandoned roadbeds remain visible. Along abandoned or sparsely used roads, citizens were allowed to petition the court to 'erect gates.' One example is the request to "Erect gates on the road from Bellefield [today's Corotoman Farm] to the crossroads near the Trappe," enabling the property owner to "… *enclose a large body of Woodland now open*" for livestock. The petition was signed by neighbors, agreeing this would not be an imposition. The petition was posted visibly on the Courthouse door and also locally in the neighborhood at the Trappe post office and at the nearby Powel's Shop.[77]

Despite the decimation of Loudoun's rural economy, the perennial pursuit of 'mill-to-market' resumed at the War's end. Citizens continued to petition the court for the most cost-efficient way to deliver farm produce to markets. For two years, in 1867 and 1868, petitioners begged the courts to create a road from Unison to Rector's Town (Rectortown) to reach the railway depot.

> "*We the undersigned citizens in the neighborhood of Unison beg leave to set for the to your Honors our distressed situation as it regards any outlet to the Manassas Gap Railroad at Rector's Town Depot which is our nearest way to market …"*[78]

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[73] B. Lewis Blackford, Asst. Engr."--handwritten note on map, 1863

[74] Alexandria gazette Oct 9 1869 As seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG18691009.1.2&srpos=3&e=------186-en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads-------

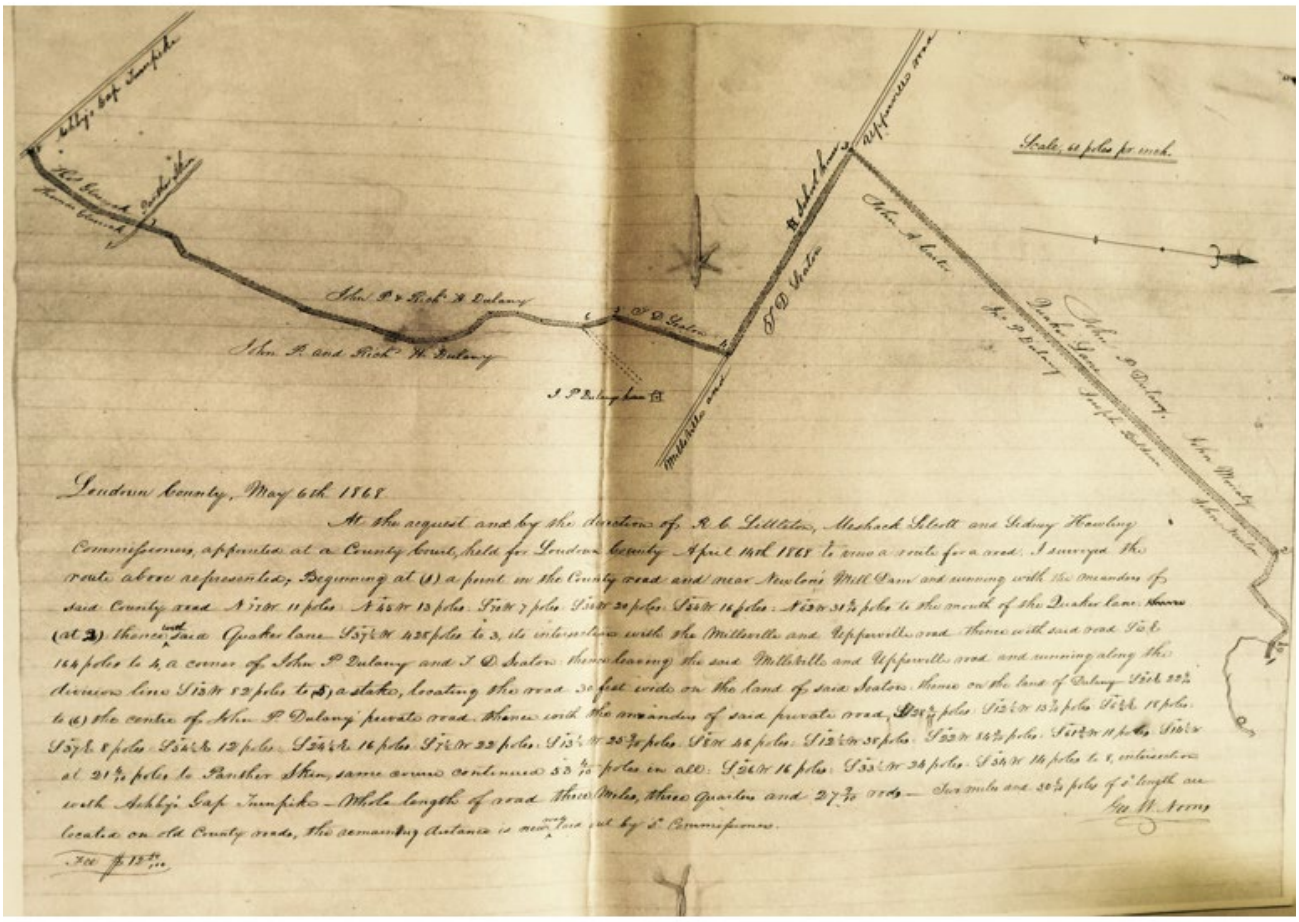
[75] Alexandria Gazette, Volume 70, Number 241, 9 October 1869 published in the Virginia Chronicle and seen: *https://www.virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG18691009.1.2&srpos=3&e=------186-en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads--------* June 2026

[76] "Overseer for the Poor' was established in 1871 and the public school system was established in 1872

[77] RM 1892 "Erect Gates on the road from Bellefield [today's Coratoman Farm] to the crossroads near the Trappe at Piney swamp." The public was still allowed to travel along Piney Swamp Road until the mid-20th century, just had to remember to close the gate behind them. Powell's Shop was formerly located at the northeast corner of Trappe and Millville Roads. This same petition had been filed earlier in 1882; it's assumed the first petition went unanswered. There are multiple cases of private citizens 'erecting gates,' such as **RM 1882** Erect gates on the road from Edwards Ferry Road to Cattail Run; "Petitioner Charles Paxton desire permission to erect a date at each end of an old and infrequented piece of road running from the Edwards Ferry Road to Cat Tail Run along the line dividing the lands of our petitioner." Also see RP 1886-001, Dodd's petition to close road [SGT]

[78] Loudoun County Road Cases, RR 1868-003, "Road from Union to Goose Greek Bridge to Rector's Crossroads"

In 1868, petitioners requested to connect Mr. Newlin's mill (Unison) to the Ashby Gap Turnpike. A plat describes the preferred route, crossing Mr. Dulany's property along his private road. However, Mr. Dulany never allowed access. Eventually, an alternative route road was created but proved to be too steep and was later abandoned.



1868 survey charting the best path from Quaker Lane (and Newlon's Mill) to the Ashby Gap Turnpike (today's Route 50) responding to request from local millers, farmers and road petitioners

Even after the Civil War, the system of local road repair remained decentralized and was dependant on amateur road viewers to enforce standards and unskilled citizens to execute the repair. Local management by district and precinct had given way to management by Township – Leesburg, Lovettesville, Jefferson, Broad Run, Mt Gilead, and Mercer. Each summer (the end of Loudoun's fiscal year), individuals would receive reimbursement from the county for their contributions to road repair. Larger projects, such as building a bridge, were sometimes identified as a public necessity and a tax would be levied for a specific purpose. For example, when the County repaired the stone bridge over Goose Creek, [along Route 50] the County paid for half and private subscription paid for other half. The same was true for the Goose Creek Bridge along Snickersville Turnpike. [79]

[79] Loudoun County Road Cases, B1869-005, "Goose Creek Bridge on the Turnpike from Alexandria via Aldie to Snickers Gap"

The county's budget operated on a shoestring. In 1870, there is the first mention of a chain gang assigned to roadwork and by 1876; "*Order that the Sheriff be directed to procure six balls and chains with the for the use of the Chain Gang established in this County … charge for each person working on the chain gang shall be 50 cents per day for all from the Jail for work*."[80]

The Civil War effectively catalyzed the demise of many private turnpike companies. The conflict wrought widespread devastation on regional infrastructure, as warring armies systematically dismantled roads, turnpikes, and vital river crossings, including the few established bridges over the Potomac River. In the war's aftermath, the emancipation of enslaved laborers and the total collapse of the agrarian economy decimated local fortunes, completely evaporating private investment in turnpike enterprises.

Consequently, road conditions deteriorated rapidly, prompting widespread toll evasion by a disgruntled public. Unable to fund maintenance, many companies lost the justification to collect tolls at all. While a handful of turnpike companies managed to survive the war, they faced severe operational challenges amidst the chaos. The resulting lack of oversight gave rise to opportunistic exploitation; in one notable instance at the Hamilton toll gate, a private individual occupied the toll house and illegally collected tolls for personal profit, refusing to vacate or remit the funds to the turnpike company. [81]

With turnpike companies were no longer financially viable, the General Assembly passed legislation allowing these public -private entities to cede authority of toll collection to the county courts; reducing Turnpikes to lowly County roads.

> "*Whereupon it was ordered that under the Act passed Feb 1866 in regard to transferring turnpikes to the Counties in which they lie, this Court proceed to take possession of all the turnpikes appoint Surveyors, assign hands and treat the same in all respects as any other County road – the Court being of opinion that the said Turnpikes are abandoned. Court is ordered to give notice*." [82]

Once incorporated into the county road system, the former turnpikes were managed like any other public thoroughfare. Because maintenance was now funded entirely by local levies rather than toll revenues, the county faced a vastly expanded road network without a corresponding increase in its road repair budget. County courts bore the responsibility of prioritizing these constrained resources, frequently selecting critical bridge repairs over routine road maintenance. Redundant tollhouses were either rented or sold off to salvage their remaining asset value. Consequently, very few of these structures survive within the district today. Notable extant examples include the brick tollhouse at Bollington and a stone tollhouse situated just south of the Potomac River, both originally part of the Berlin Turnpike.[83]

Even with clear legislation, the process of ceding authority wasn't always clear. In one case that

[80] Board of Supervisor Minutes, 1870, page 21
[81] Loudoun County Road Cases, RM 1871 **"**Ordering the collection of tolls on the Leesburg & Snickers Gap Turnpike"
[82] Loudoun County Road Cases, RM- 020-1904 Commonwealth of VA vs Snickersville Turnpike Unlawfully Collecting Tolls Feb 28th 1866," page 86
[83] There are two known tollhouses outside of the district and include the Broad Run Toll House [DHR 053-0110; NRHP 70000808] and the relocated toll house in Middleburg on Pendleton Street.

spanned several decades, the Commonwealth of Virginia sued the Snickersville Gap Turnpike Company for unlawfully collecting tolls. The suit alleges that five men were collecting tolls along the turnpike and pocketing the proceeds rather than reinvesting into road maintenance. The suit also noted that the Little River Turnpike was still operational, further indicating the process of ceding authority was not consistent. It is assumed that the Snickers Gap Turnpike Company won the case, as they continued to collect tolls until 1915. [84] Ironically, as described in Elizabeth Morgan's 1940 WPA survey of Snickers Gap Turnpike, the only functional part of the road was the northern portion, the portion run by the alleged rogue company.[85]

The 1880s brought national attention to the poor quality of the rural roads. America remained largely agricultural and most roads outside metropolitan areas remained dirt. 'The Good Roads Movement,' a loose coalition of bicyclists, farmers, and others was organized to improve roads outside of population centers. In 1891, Isaac Potter published a treatise titled "The Gospel of Good Roads: A Letter to the American Farmer" and made the case to farmers that improved roads would reduce the costs of their horse-drawn transport and would cause less damage to both the vehicles and the animals. In his treatise, Potter renders the poor condition of the dirt road abundantly clear:

> *The dirt road absorbs water, freezes and thaws, dries, pulverize changes from paste to powder and back again from powder to paste and for weeks at a time is practically impassable. Farm traffic is tied up. You have produce to sell, purchases to make, grain to grind, timber to haul, bills to collect and obligations to meet, but all these must wait because our only avenue of travel is taking is annual soak."*[86]

Potter bemoans the condition of the national road system and the inordinate strain placed on farmers through wear on livestock, farm machinery, loss of opportunity, and decline in real estate values in rural areas. Potter places blame directly on laws governing road construction; "*The inefficient, haphazard and ridiculously expensive methods which we have followed for the last hundred years should have convinced us by this time of the necessity of change."*[87] Potter continues; "*These deficiencies have resulted not only from ... ignorance of true road making but also from the varied systems of road building… By the improvement of these common roads ... agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing industries would be materially benefitted."*[88] Finally, in 1893 the Department of Agriculture connected the poor condition of roads to profitability and supported federal legislation to develop a centralized road policy.[89]

In Virginia, the condition of rural roads remained poor and desire for 'paved' roads was growing. An 1886 news article in the Alexandria Gazette reported that "*the bad condition of the roads is causing considerable unfavorable comment … An effort will be made to collect all road fines and expend the same in putting the roads in better condition*."[90] Decentralized road repair continued to

[84] Loudoun County Road Cases, RM- 020-1904 Commonwealth of VA vs Snickersville Turnpike Unlawfully Collecting Tolls Feb 28th 1866," page 86 The gates at the village of Hamilton along the Leesburg and Snickers Gap Turnpike Road (today's Route 7) were also still operational after the war
[85] Elizabeth Morgan, "Three Loudoun Roads," Works Progress Administration of Virginia, historical Inventory, January 15, 1937
[86] Isaac B. Potter The Gospel of Good Roads, A Letter to the American Farmer. New York 1891. Pg 10
[87] Potter, page 26
[88] Potter, pages 57-58
[89] McGinn, page 16
[90] Virginia Chronicle; Alexandria Gazette Sept 9, 1886, As seen:

be the culprit of poor road maintenance oversight … "*Several petitions were submitted to the board from the citizens requesting that the road menders use gravel and broken stone in the repair of roads instead of putting ordinary earth in the center of the same. The board instructed the road menders in accordance with the prayer of the petitioners. One dozen sledgehammers for the purpose of breaking stone to repair roads were ordered*…"[91] In Loudoun, a traveler admired the condition of the cobble streets in Leesburg but condemned the rural roads … "*at this season …. when continuous rains and melting snow have rendered the clay roads well-nigh impassable* …"[92] The Loudoun Board of Supervisors' minutes lend insight into the haphazard and decentralized system of road repair. Repairs were still carried out by private, untrained citizens. Each citizen was allocated a small portion to maintain, leading to a lack of standard quality of repair. In 1895, there were over 400 names of individual citizens who claimed reimbursement for their work on Loudoun's roads, clearly highlighting the hodgepodge system of road repair.[93]

An 1878 road case illustrates how few roads were created for the African American Community[94] Samuel Brown, a Quaker leader in the village of Lincoln petitions to open a road to the 'Colored School house.' The schoolhouse (DHR No 053-0845) remains extant today as a residence and it's remote location confirms that when constructed, the African American school was accessible only by a footpath.

In June 1889, seven bridges, both steel truss and stone arch, are mentioned in the county court records. These bridges were located exclusively along major thoroughfares or are associated with points of industry, such as mills in western Loudoun.[95] In 1899, the Loudoun County court ordered road supervisors to "have all Iron Bridges in their respective districts painted,"[96] indicating iron bridges had been in place long enough to warrant repair.

https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG18860909.1.3&srpos=5&e=------188-en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads------- March 2024

[91] [Alexandria Gazette, Local Matters December 20th 1888 As seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG18881220.1.3&srpos=3&e=------188-en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads------- March 2024

[92] Virginia chronicle Alexandria Gazette March 17, 1887, page 1 As seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=AG18870317.1.1&srpos=7&e=------188-en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads------- March 2024

[93] Bos notes July 1895, page 312, as seen: https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalinternet/0/edoc/150744/002%20-%20Minute%20Book%2008-01-1882%20thru%2007-28-1897.pdf 'Viewers' would report to the Board of Supervisors, affirming that repair had been completed. Reimbursements typically ranged from $1 to $2. In 1897 road reimbursements are listed by district for the first time

[94] RP1878-002 Open a Road to the Colored School House.

[95] BOS June 1889, page 243. The seven bridges were: 1) On the Leesburg and Alexandria Turnpike on Goose Creek; [John G Lewis Bridge] 2) at Waterford across the Katocktin, 3) At Hillsboro at Garver Factory across branch of Katoctin, 4) Across Catoctin in Lovettsville District on the road leading from Lovettsville to Pt of Rock, 5) At Circlesville on the road from Lincoln to Philomont across the south branch of Beaver Dam, 6) At Guinea on the road leading from Lincoln to Unison across the same stream, 7) To repair the Goose Creek Bridge near Mountsville on the Snickersville Turnpike [Hibbs Bridge] Of these, it appears that only Numbers 1 and 7 remain in use. Number 1 was metal and no 7 was stone.

[96] May 1899, page 369. https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalinternet/0/edoc/150744/002 - Minute Book 08-01-1882 thru 07-28-1897.pdf

AUTOMOBILE ERA AND THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF ROAD MANAGEMENT (1906-1962)

Despite cobbled streets in the towns and crushed stone on turnpikes, most of Loudoun's rural roads remained packed earth and impassable in most seasons. Few of Loudoun's major thoroughfares were 'macadamized' during this period. A 'macadamized' road was constructed with specified layers of rock, crushed to specific sizes, laid to a specific depth, and then rolled. Macadamized roads received a more consistent treatment but were still a long way from what we considered to be a 'paved' road today. For example, in 1899 a portion of Route 15 was 'Macadamized' between Leesburg and Limestone School Road. However, even after improvements, complaints continued.[97] As Eugene Scheel writes, the 1880s were Loudoun's "age of the village" with post office, blacksmith shops, country stores dotting each crossroads, all placing additional demands on local roads. According to James Head in his 1908 summary of Loudoun County, agricultural was Loudoun's leading industry in both crops and livestock.[98] This agricultural boom would lead to additional pressure to keep local roads in good working order.

Another driver of road improvements at the end of the 19th century was the Rural Free Delivery system of the U. S. mail. Mail was initially delivered by ox drawn cart, horseback, or foot. For service to continue, road condition needed to be more reliable. The nation's first rural route delivery service was October 1896 in Charles Town, West Virginia, only 30 miles from Loudoun's northern border. Upperville, in Fauquier County on Loudoun's southern border, followed closely opening in December of 1898. Rural Free Delivery finally came to rural Loudoun in 1902[99] and with it came the increased demand for better roads.

On a national scale, Logan Waller Page, Director of the Office of Public Roads, advocated for sweeping reforms to infrastructure management during his 1913 address to the National Civil Service Reform League. Page attributed the deplorable state of the nation's roads to "extreme localization," criticizing a framework fractured into "an amazingly large number of miniature systems, each independent of one another." He explicitly condemned the persistence of this antiquated, colonial-era model of local management. In particular, Page targeted the reliance on untrained citizen road overseers—individuals appointed through community influence "without regard to their special fitness for the position"—and urged the complete "elimination of the baneful influence of local community politics" in favor of professional, centralized oversight.-[100]

Virginia's General Assembly addressed the same problems of decentralized road repair and lack of professional expertise by forming the State Highway Commission authorizing Commission to regulate road construction in 1906. While authority over allocation of road funding remained at the local level, the state served as a body to provide professional expertise and additional funding as available. This same year, the Loudoun Board of Supervisors required motor vehicles be

[97]RR-1899, "Beverly Granite Company to Macadamize Road between Leesburg and Limestone Branch. Even the Road Viewers' report, written a year after construction of the road, identifies a loose top surface difficult for travel
[98]Head, pages 84-85
[99] Conversations with Rachel Weatherill. On 07/01/1902 the offices of Purcellville, Round Hill and Alexandria started the service. Leesburg did not get the service until 1904
[100] Logan Waller Page, Director of the Office of Public Roads, Department of Agriculture, address delivered to the 33rd annual meeting of the National Civil Service Reform League, December 1913, Boston Mass, published for the National Civil Service Reform League, 79 Wall Street, New York, 1914, pages 2 - 3

registered[101] marking a turning point when the automobile became more than just the rare oddity. Loudoun's requirement of motor vehicle registration came four years ahead of the state mandate,[102] indicative of the number of vehicles on Loudoun's roads.

With the arrival of the automobile came the demand for hard surfaced roads instead of packed earth. Motorized vehicles might have been faster but did not have the capacity to navigate deep mud or high water. With the auto came associated industries such as motor companies and tire manufactures who also lobbied for better roads to increase demand for their products. A treatise produced by the Garford Motor Truck Company made a case for the social and economic benefits of better roads. Not only did the treatise point out the obvious connection between hard surface roads and reduced cost of hauling agricultural produce to market but also claimed that "*Experts have found that insanity is a social condition with distinct relation to poor roads*."[103] Other moral benefits identified were the association of good roads and religious interest "*good roads – good churches*."[104]

The automobile also increased demand for bridges instead of fords. At the turn of the century, Luten[105] concrete bridges were introduced to the nation and were especially useful in Loudoun's rural areas. These bridges fit the needs of Loudoun County for several reasons. Each form could be custom fit the unique shape of a particular stream crossing and therefore adaptable to remote rural areas. Equally important, Luten's slender bridges used less concrete and iron making them comparatively affordable. Finally, Luten published a design-by-mail catalogue, making his patented engineered designs especially accessible to small government bodies. Examples of Luten bridges that remain in use in Loudoun are the pair along Green Garden Road or the bridge along Quaker Lane.[106] According to Virginia Department of Historic Resources "*For some reason, Loudoun County had a most unusual number of Luten bridges, from the 1914s to the 1920s. These were one way [single lane], arched, poured concrete structures, engineered by the Luten Company of York Pennsylvania and obviously the form, reinforcing and pouring of the concrete were done at each individual site*." In 1907, the BOS recorded debts payable to the 'York Bridge Company' for crossings at Waterford, Sycolin, and Moore's Mill, presumably for Luten Bridges, a necessity for automobile travel and which were becoming common in rural Loudoun. [107]

In 1915, Loudoun County's last functioning turnpike company ceased operations and abandoned its toll house on the Snickersville Turnpike at the Clarke County line. This closure returned the full burden of road maintenance to the county. The final five miles of the turnpike traversing the Blue

[101] 1910 marks Virginia first motor vehicle registration and licensing law
[102] https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/media/vdotvirginiagov/about/history/historyofrds.pdf
[103] S. M Williams "Roads – Their Influence Upon Economic and Social Conditions," Library of Virginia
[104] Hupmobile United American Tour, 1918, as seen LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_11559/?r=0.88,0.566,0.113,0.104,0
[105] The Luten bridge is a poured-in-place concrete engineered bridge attributed to Daniel Luten.
[106] Greengarden Road over Panther Skin. The Luten bridges were constructed in 1916 and 1919. 053-0511; 053-6087-0093 Luten Bridge #6019, and 053-0510; 053-6087-0091 Luten Bridge #6020; Quaker Lane over Beaverdam Creek 053-1046; 053-6087-0052 Luten Bridge #6072 Primary Resource Information: Bridge, 1915
[107] BOS July 1907 https://www.loudoun.gov/3437/Copy-Teste-Books Luten patented his bridges and some were produced elsewhere such as York PA. It's not clear if the bridge at Waterford or Moore's Mill remain in place. However, the double arch bridge crossing Goose Creek at Sycolin remains in place although submerged in the Goose Creek reservoir

Ridge Mountains were in such deplorable condition that Clarke and Loudoun counties actively disputed which jurisdiction would be forced to assume the financial liability for the stretch.

By the end of the decade, as the nation emerged from World War I, focus shifted back to domestic infrastructure and the dire state of the road network. In 1918, the Virginia General Assembly passed critical legislation establishing the Legislative Road Commission. This act centralized the maintenance of primary state highways and, crucially, provided state funding for their upkeep, thereby offering significant financial relief to struggling localities. As part of this transition, two major Loudoun County corridors, present-day Route 15 (from Point of Rocks to Leesburg) and Route 50 (from Aldie to Paris), were transferred to state control. While the state assumed responsibility for these primary arteries, Loudoun County remained responsible for maintaining its extensive network of local rural roads, funding repairs through real estate levies and the implementation of a supplemental county gas tax in 1919. [108]

The 1920s witness the cataclysmic shift of road repair and construction, transitioning from hand labor and ox carts to bulldozers and blades. [109] Curves at crossroads appeared, making way for higher speeds demanded by the emerging automobile. Minor state routes were identified with a three-digit number. In Loudoun, automobile registrations grew exponentially, increasing the demand and funding for better roads. However, Loudoun continued to receive less than its fair share of state funding, caught in a political feud between Virginia's progressive governor, Westmoreland Davis, who advocated for the expansion of the state highway system paid for through bond funding, and the fiscally conservative Virginia State Senator Harry Byrd, who advocated for a 'pay as you go' system funded by savings in state coffers, thus limiting public funds that would be invested into state infrastructure.

Western Loudoun, 1929

[108] BOS notes _____ 1919.
[109] McGinn, page 43

Fiscally conservative attitudes prevailed in the state and continued to plague road improvements for the next decades in Loudoun. Ironically, one notable advancement was the 1932 Byrd Act, creating the state 'secondary road system,' allowing localities to pass road construction and maintenance responsibility for local (secondary) roads to the state level. Road planning and construction continued to migrate from amateur status to professional work of civil engineers. Private individuals no longer applied for reimbursement for road repair through the Loudoun County court. With the extra support from the state, the County was able to purchase used equipment from the state to maintain Loudoun roads including a "leaning wheel grader, road maintainer, road plow and a tractor" to be used in Mercer District.[110] Also in 1932, the iron Pratt Truss Bridge was dismantled from Route 7 and reinstalled on Featherbed Lane over the Catoctin Creek, an enormous feat and also demonstrating the importance of the agricultural economy in this still remote part of northern Loudoun. By the end of the 1930s, Loudoun boasts 35 miles of 'paved' roads.[111]

A 1968 photo of the iron truss bridge over Catoctin Creek near Waterford

In the 1940s, Loudoun again took a lead role in agricultural production, this time in orchard grass used for packing munitions to ship overseas during WWII. Orchard grass was transported in cattle trucks, placing additional pressure on serviceable rural roads. Road improvements made local headlines … "*Loudoun to get large secondary roads fund."* These state funds would go to improve Loudoun's rural roads, "*farm-to-market roads,"* and were paid for by the Byrd gasoline tax.[112] Even so, Loudoun County's rural roads remained in poor condition. Other newspaper reports claimed, "*Lower Loudoun Folks Protest Poor Roads,"* in leading headline in 1952.[113] In the 1950s, Loudoun's booming dairy industry was thriving yet roads continued to plague agricultural profits; "*dairies were located within miles of the W&OD railroad because farmers had*

[110] BOS 1932, a "leaning wheel grader, road maintainer, road plow and a tractor' in Mercer District.
[111] "Map of Loudoun County Showing Primary and Secondary Highways," Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Highways, 1937
[112] The Loudoun News, September 29th, 1949 https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=LNS19490929.1.1&srpos=6&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-roads+loudoun-------
[113] "Virginia Chronicle, The Loudoun News "Loudoun Folks Protest Poor Roads," March 2, 1952 as seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=LNS19520327.1.1&srpos=1&e=-------en-20--1--txt-txIN-loudoun+roads-------

to haul their milk to a stand sitting along the railroad for the milk train to pick up. They couldn't be far away because the roads were horrendous ...."[114]

DEVELOPMENT PRESSSURE AND COALITION FOR PRESERVATION (1963-1974)

In 1962 Loudoun's first planned community, Sterling Park, was constructed on Loudoun's eastern most boarder. With this residential construction came expansion of public water and sewer utility service into a once rural landscape. Expanded utilities and cheaper housing within driving distance to Washington lead to a suburban population explosion in Loudoun. Sterling's population quickly almost equaled the population of all rural Loudoun and with increased local voting power, suburban commuters raised demand for better roads.[115] Dulles Airport, also located in Loudoun's east, opened the same year and the local convenience of an international airport also contributed to Loudoun's population boom. New communities copied Sterling, taking advantage of access to Dulles, public utilities, and affordably priced housing. High-speed highways quickly altered eastern Loudoun's once bucolic landscape. This area in eastern Loudoun quickly transformed to suburbia.

By the mid 1960s, with suburbanization well underway, maintenance of Loudoun's rural roads in the eastern part of the County couldn't keep pace with expanding suburban population. Public complaints became a chorus that would be repeated for the next half century. A 1966 newspaper article cites 600 miles of "substandard" roads in Loudoun, which were further hampered by snow build-up in sunken lanes, lack of trained personnel, incompatible soils for roadbeds, and the local desire for preservation of stone walls, which landowners insisted VDOT repair when widening a road. Mr Wiggins, the resident engineer of state highway department, was quoted saying "…[he] *considered* [Loudoun's] *situation a crisis of emergency proportion, the situation being almost unbelievable with the western end of the County being in much worse shape that pictured; even the paved roads were deteriorating and it was estimated ... under the present system ... under existing law ... it would take sixty years to complete road improvements*." [116]

Population growth and associated demand for infrastructure improvements exploded in the decades following. Although Loudoun's population had remained relatively stable for the century prior, Loudoun's population increased by 50% for each decade in the 1960s and 1970s. There were a few momentous changes that would have major implications for Loudoun's roads. With increased population came the demand for modernizing County infrastructure and services. Loudoun's School Board had previously adopted the policy of consolidation for its elementary schools, closing the one room schoolhouses in favor of bringing students and staff resources into one large structure. In a second wave of consolidation, Loudoun aggregated high school students and in 1954, the County's smaller high schools[117] were replaced with Loudoun County High School

[114] "it's just a way of life" page 83
[115] New City at Sterling LTM August 17, 1961 BOS August 21. https://www.loudounhistory.org/history/sterling-park-beginnngs-1961/
[116] Virginia Chronicle, Blade-Times, December 1, 1956; "Loudoun County Engineer to Use "Eyeball System in Determining Roads to be Repaired," as seen: https://virginiachronicle.com/?a=d&d=TBT19661201.1.2&srpos=1&e=------196-en-20--1--txt-txIN-roads+loudoun------- on August 2023 014 Minute Book 11-1869 to 12-30-1971 as seen June 2026 Ironically, in 2024, 250 miles of roads remain to be paved in rural Loudoun
[117] Leesburg, Purcellville, Aldie, Ashburn, Lincoln, Lovettsville, and Round Hill were consolidated to create the much larger Loudoun County High School (LCHS) in 1954. This did not include Douglass High School, which remained open until 1968 when the county school, system was fully integrated.

(LCHS) in Leesburg. This single decision increased the need for bussing students, especially from the eastern suburbs to Leesburg. A single bus route served Douglass High School which opened in 1941.[118] By contrast, there were 22 routes which served white students.

Through the 1950s, rural western Loudoun County remained largely insulated from the rapid suburban growth reverberating through the eastern portions of the county. The local economy continued to be anchored by agriculture, primarily dairy and beef operations, which had superseded the antebellum milling industry. Local towns such as Purcellville functioned as essential agricultural and industrial hubs, providing necessary services, such as seed and farm supply stores, serving as as processing and shipping centers while utilizing reliable rail transport. Because these centralized hubs met most local agricultural needs, there was little immediate pressure to expand or modernize the surrounding rural road infrastructure.

However, two major catalysts in 1962 signaled impending changes that would profoundly impact western Loudoun's transportation network. That year, Loudoun Valley High School opened in Purcellville to serve the western half of the county, operating alongside the centrally located Loudoun County High School in Leesburg. While the county implemented a token "freedom of choice" plan during this period to technically integrate its schools, only four African American students were initially approved to transfer county-wide. Furthermore, these students were prohibited from utilizing the whites-only school buses. Consequently, the vast majority of western Loudoun's Black student population was forced to continue commuting to Douglass High School in Leesburg, requiring them to ride racially segregated, frequently overcrowded buses over long distances. According to the Edwin Washington Project, by 1960, Loudoun County operated approximately 72 bus routes dedicated to white students and only 13 dedicated to Black students. The opening of Loudoun Valley High School, compounded by the extensive county-wide busing required to maintain this dual educational system, drastically increased heavy vehicular traffic on western Loudoun's unpaved routes, exposing a dire need for structural upgrades to the road network.

This expanded educational infrastructure incentivized new residential development. Planned communities began to emerge on the fringes of western Loudoun towns, notably Catoctin Meadows and the Loudoun Golf and Country Club near Purcellville. This localized development marked a definitive shift from a strictly farming community toward suburbanization, fundamentally altering the demands on the local road network from seasonal agricultural use to daily commuter traffic. To accommodate this growing population, major arteries feeding into Purcellville were paved, including Telegraph Springs Road to the south and the Berlin Turnpike to the north. These infrastructure improvements were executed in phases, prioritizing the segments immediately adjacent to Purcellville before eventually extending outward into the farther rural reaches of the county.[119] As Loudoun County's roads transitioned from agricultural use to daily commuter routes, roads which had not yet been paved (designated as "all-weather surface" on state highway maps) became a growing source of frustration. Commuting residents endured excessive dust, wash-boarding, and deep ruts, prompting endless complaints.

[118] According to the Edwin Washington Project, this was the "Will Brown" route which served communities along Route 7. Areas in southwest Loudoun such as Howardsville, Willisville, and Middleburg had to rely on parents carpooling students.
[119] The Berlin Turnpike, Route 287, was paved from Purcellville heading north to Bollington and then later from Bollington to Lovettsville. Telegraph Springs Road, Route 611, was paved from Purcellville heading south to Philomont, then later further south to Route 50.

Beginning in the 1970s, local grassroots organizations emerged to counter the impending development in southwest Loudoun. In 1972, the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) was established with a mission to protect local open spaces. The following year, the Loudoun Preservation Society (LPS) was incorporated, focusing on the protection of historic buildings and cultural heritage. Continuing through the 1990s, community advocacy led to significant victories for rural preservation. In 1996, the Route 50 Traffic Calming Plan was approved. This landmark decision eliminated a proposed high-speed bypass that would have cut through southwest Loudoun and successfully challenged the prevailing eastern Loudoun sentiment that paving equaled progress. In 1999, southwest Loudoun's rural roads were officially recognized as a significant local historic resource with the creation of the Beaverdam Creek Historic Roadways District (BHRD). As Loudoun's only Historic Roadway District, the BHRD encompasses parcels along the rural road network bounded by the Snickersville Turnpike to the north, St. Louis Road to the east, John Mosby Highway to the south, and Trappe Road to the west. This effort ultimately laid the groundwork for Loudoun's Rural Road Committee (RRC), which continues to advocate for the care of western Loudoun's unpaved roads today.

The push for preservation has continued to expand well into the 21st century. In 2015, America's Routes, a citizen-led non-profit, was founded specifically to protect the rural road network. Today, the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition (LCPCC) facilitates and coordinates the efforts of more than 50 local groups dedicated to preserving western Loudoun. Modern traffic solutions have also continued to mirror early preservation victories. In 2021, the decades-in-the-making Rethink 9 project in Hillsboro was completed, successfully reducing vehicle speeds through the village and eliminating the need for a high-speed bypass. Currently, a similar project is in the planning stages for **Route 15 Improvements**, which includes an associated bypass circumventing the village of Lucketts

Five decades later, residents of western Loudoun remain ever vigilant about protecting their rural landscape and heritage structures against impending development, taking an active role in preservation and conservation. As a result, western Loudoun still boasts 700 miles of rural roads, of which 250 miles remain unpaved.

The **Period of Significance** for Western Loudoun's Linear Roads and Road Networks stretches from 1735 to 1974. The period of significance begins in 1735, a year marked by the survey of the Northern Neck by John Warner[120] which provides a formal representation of Loudoun's nascent infrastructure, specifically documenting three of the county's foundational thoroughfares stretching from West's Ordinary (near modern-day Aldie) and crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains. This date also coincides with the establishment of Aubrey's Ferry, allowing regular passage across the Potomac River into the region that would become Loudoun. Together, these milestones represent the point of transition from wilderness trails to what would become a structured, surveyed network facilitating settlement, commerce, and agricultural development. The period of significance concludes in 1974 marking a fundamental ideological transition in citizens' view of road infrastructure in western Loudoun. Prior to this era, 'improvement' (widening, straightening, or

[120] Warner, John and others, "A survey of the northern neck of Virginia, being the lands belonging to the Rt. Honourable Thomas Lord Fairfax Baron Cameron, bounded by & within the Bay of Chesapoyocke and between the rivers Rappahannock and Potowmack: With the courses of the rivers Rappahannock and Potowmack, in Virginia, as surveyed according to order in the years 1736 & 1737," published 1747[?] as seen: https://www.loc.gov/item/99446122/ June 2026

paving) was typically welcomed. However, by the mid-1970s the rapid pace of suburbanization sparked a counter-movement in western Loudoun, with citizens resisting infrastructure development so as to preserve their rural landscape. 1974 represents the definitive end of the purely 'developmental' era of the road network and the beginning of the modern preservation era that continues today.

F. Associated Property Types

Statement of Significance and Eligibility

Resources described in this MPD may be eligible for listing under one or several National Register Criteria and areas of significance, ranging widely across the established Period of Significance (1735–1974). Specific resource types and subtypes discussed below are based on the results of intensive archival research including study of primary source materials of 19th century maps, archival road cases, and field investigations. Because the mapping of these historic corridors is an ongoing effort, future investigations are likely to identify additional segments, features, and areas of significance, at which time this MPD may be updated.

Resources eligible for listing in association with this MPD are Western Loudoun County's secondary rural roads, including the 30-foot public and private right-of-way of the road corridor and the structures within the right of way, such as a bridge or culvert. Resources must retain their physical integrity including attributes discussed below as well as be reasonably supported by archival documentation.

Loudoun's social, agricultural, commercial and industrial history is deeply intertwined with the physical layout of its roads. Whether a route served as a regional turnpike for commerce or a local farm-to-mill track, each segment reflects the labor, advocacy, and economic necessity of the community that built and maintained it and also still uses the route today. Therefore, all road networks, road segments and associated features for which sufficient information is available should be considered for listing under this MPD

Integrity of Resources

Loudoun's rural road network maintains a remarkable level of historic integrity, shaped by both a finite period of abandonment and also a modern commitment to preservation.

For decades, economic conditions inadvertently favored the protection of these routes. Following the Civil War, the local economy was decimated, leaving precious little funding for infrastructure improvements. Any available capital was prioritized for repairing the major turnpikes that had been destroyed by both armies during the conflict. Following the Civil War until the first quarter of the 20th century, the road network was virtually abandoned for reasons of insufficient funding to allow for proper improvements. It was not until the 1930s, when the state assumed financial oversight of secondary roads, that significant investment began and even then, those improvements were primarily concentrated in eastern Loudoun, leaving the western landscape largely untouched by mid-century engineering.

Today, this historic character is no longer a byproduct of neglect, but rather a deliberate choice. Western Loudoun, particularly its southern region, boasts one of Virginia's highest concentrations of land protected

by conservation easements. [121] This preservationist ethos is further reflected through hundreds of National Register properties and districts that recognize the area's national significance, as well as local policies such as the Beaverdam Historic Roadway District, which provides specific protections for the visual and physical character of the road network. As a result, western Loudoun contains one of the highest concentrations of unpaved roads in the Commonwealth. Where paving has occurred, VDOT's "Rural and Rustic Road" program applies, allowing pave-in-place improvement of the roads without the need for widening or significantly altering the character. Therefore, these rural routes serve as both functional artifacts, maintaining a tangible link to the county's agrarian past and also serve the 21st century resident.

Effect of Modern Improvements on Road Infrastructure

While Loudoun's historic roads must accommodate contemporary needs, certain modern improvements such as turn lanes, wide shoulders, excessive striping, large wayfinding signage and overhead lighting are conspicuously absent. While more subtle modern intrusions such as pave-in-place or routine grading are considered an acceptable layer of evolution, specific modifications designed to accommodate high-speed travel conflict with the 18th- and 19th-century vernacular character of these routes. Evaluation of any network or road segment must exclude the obvious modern intrusion and account for more subtle changes of how modern infrastructure affects the traditional scale, alignment, and sensory experience of the historic landscape.

Overview of Associated Property Types and Registration Requirements

Resource types documented to date that are associated with this MPD include both the Road Network and Linear Road or Road segment. As investigations continue and the "Exploring America's Routes" mapping project progresses, registration requirements can be developed for additional sub-types, and this MPD can be updated accordingly.

Property Types:
Linear Roads or Segments (Property Type I) and Road Networks (Property Type II)

Road segments and road networks are distinguished by their scale and primary focus, yet both serve as essential records of the region's development.

The **Linear Road or Linear Segment (Type I)** offers a micro-level focus on the physical structure of the route within a legal 30-foot right-of-way. The road segment derives its significance from the physical integrity of the roadbed itself, characterized by vernacular features such as human-scaled narrowness, sunken profiles, hand dug ditching, period bridges and flanked by high banks and dry-stack stonewalls. Road segments can retain both their historical significance and physical integrity as standalone resources, connecting two distinct points, such as a mountain crossing or connection to a river landing and can also be part of the larger pattern of a road network. A road segment may be deemed significant for its relationship with prominent geographical features, such as mountain crossings or river access points; or for its association with vital cultural resources like mills and meeting houses; or as defined by its specific method

[121] Western Loudoun represents Virginia's third highest concentration of land in conservation easement, with over 85,000 of acres protected

of construction or legal origin. Linear Roads can be divided into two sub types: 1A: the local roads that served the immediate community and 1B: regional turnpikes that crossed the Commonwealth.

Property Sub-Types: Local Roads and Regional Turnpikes

While Loudoun's local roads and regional turnpikes both played crucial roles in the region's physical development, they differed significantly in their origins, engineering, communities they served, and funding sources. Local roads evolved organically to meet a local need. Created and managed by the county courts through a complex petition system, these tracks were engineered by gentlemen 'Overseers' and constructed through an antiquated system of unskilled labor, where citizens committed physical labor or materials in lieu of taxes. In contrast, turnpikes were professionally surveyed and engineered with improved with crude pavement and bridges, in order to achieve broader, regional transportation goals.

Turnpikes can be further delineated into historic and chartered models, reflecting differences in legal structure. Historic turnpikes received early funding from the Colony and later the Commonwealth. Chartered turnpikes were authorized by the Virginia General Assembly to incentivize private investment by leveraging public funding for construction. Maintenance of the chartered turnpikes was funded by toll collection.

The **Rural Road Network (Type II)** represents a macro-level resource consisting of an approximately 700-mile lattice-like overlay that physically links historic villages, mills, meeting houses, and farmsteads. Its significance is rooted in the sum of the parts, creating the spatial relationships and patterns of connectivity that reflect the distinct social, economic, and religious values of the diverse groups that settled the region. In Loudoun County, a Rural Road Network can be significant for its association with cultural settlement patterns, mills, meeting houses, mills or the like.

Ultimately, integrity for the network is measured by the continuity of its historic patterns, weaving together historic structures and sites, whereas integrity for a segment is determined by its strict adherence to its historic footprint, alignment, and materials. Both are significant for their continuity through 200 years of continual use and for their association with archival documentation.

Linear Roads Subtype: Local Roads

Description Local roads (and their distinct individual segments) encompass the traveling surface and physical corridor within the historic 30-foot right-of-way. Forged by Native Americans and also established by European settlers beginning in the 1730s, these routes form a physical record of both the technical capability (or lack thereof) and the social settlement patterns of Loudoun's rural landscape.

Local roads fall into two categories of Cultural and Engineered routes. **Cultural Routes** include vernacular routes evolving from footpaths, dictating the organization of historic settlement and evolving organically to follow natural topography, existing agricultural fences, or the straight metes and bounds of 18th-century Fairfax land grants. **Engineered Routes** are created from Court orders to find the 'most

convenient way' and bear the mark of gentlemen 'viewers,' 'overseers,' and 'road hands,' lacking any professional engineering or modern heavy equipment to create the road.

Local roads are characterized by a human scale with minimal shoulders. The road edges frequently transition immediately into hand-dug drainage ditches or into high banks. The roadbeds themselves sometimes feature an incised profile of a sunken lane or bedrock popping through, resulting from centuries of travel and erosion. Surface materials include packed earth, loose gravel, tar-and-chip, and modern asphalt, demonstrating the full functional evolution of rural paving. All are considered an acceptable part of the roads' historical evolution. Thousands of archival 'road cases' remain, allowing the modern user to trace the specific physical and legal history of nearly every local road.

Significance The roads may be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for Exploration and Settlement, Transportation, and Community Planning and Development, and under Criterion C for Design and Engineering.

Criterion A: Exploration and Settlement – Individual road segments in Western Loudoun achieve historical significance under Criterion A in the area of Exploration and Settlement for their direct, physical association with the county's diverse patterns of early settlement and exploration. While the broader network demonstrates regional macro-economics (this is examined later), an individual road segment serves as a highly specific, tangible link to local history. These linear corridors define how distinct cultural groups accessed and utilized the landscape, functioning as vital arteries connecting dispersed farmsteads to specific destinations such as water-powered mills, religious meeting houses, mountain crossings, river landings, or turnpikes. Additionally, certain segments derive specific significance from their fixed alignments along the formal metes and bounds of original 18th-century Fairfax land grants. Still in use today, these individual routes act as authentic, localized footprints of the frontier experience.

Criteria A: Transportation – An individual road segment may be eligible under Criterion A in the area of Transportation if it was purposefully constructed to facilitate regional movement and commerce. While some roads were developed organically, many were explicitly engineered for specific economic functions, such as linking farms to local mills or connecting mills to regional turnpikes.

Criteria A: Community Planning and Development – Roads are also eligible under Criteria A (Community Planning and Development), as tangible reflections of the region's physical development and shifting economic, social and cultural values. Originating organically as settlement paths, surveyed property boundaries, or roads to meeting houses, or mills, these corridors were systematically adapted to meet the changing demands of Loudoun's profitable 19th-century agricultural economy. The physical structure of these roads was continually modified to accommodate changing needs of the community who used them. In addition, methods of construction evolved from vernacular techniques to more formalized engineering, all while retaining vernacular features of sunken corridors or hand-dug ditching. By the early 20th century, the advent of the automobile necessitated the continued evolution along the same alignments. To accommodate motorized vehicles, infrastructure upgrades were incorporated including hard-surfaced paving and the increased use of bridges in place of fords. Methods of construction and maintenance also changed, evolving from organically worn surfaces, to drags pulled by oxen, to mechanical graders. Management of the road system also changed from decentralized, decision

making to highly centralized bureaucracy. Despite these massive shifts, the eligible linear roads retain their fundamental historic alignments, preserve their human-scaled vernacular characteristics, and serve as highly intact physical records of the community's continuous adaptation to economic growth and changing transportation modes

Criterion C: Design and Engineering Road segments achieve further significance under Criterion C (Design and Engineering) as physical embodiments of vernacular layman's engineering. Integrity of design of the roads is fundamentally tied to the retention of a characteristic narrow width, preservation the traditional human scale, all while serving performance demands of the 21st-century traveler. This scale is reinforced by a distinct enclosed feeling created by the immediate proximity of dry-stack stone walls, high banks, and old-growth trees. Equally important, the eligibility of these segments depends on the absence of modern intrusions, such as high-speed turning lanes, wide safety shoulders, curbs, gutters, or street lighting. Physical evidence of workmanship, particularly the incised and sunken profiles resulting from centuries of maintenance and erosion, further distinguishes these linear segments as authentic records of the county's transportation history. While certain segments may appear anachronistic to the modern observer, (for example, a road which might dead end at an abandoned mill site or the labyrinth-like quality) the roads today remain as a vital, functional piece of infrastructure while retaining its distinct 18th- and 19th-century historic character.

Integrity To qualify for listing, a County secondary road or segment must be directly associated with the regional historic contexts, be documented on archival maps prior to 1933, and possess sufficient physical integrity to convey its 18th- or 19th-century purpose.

A qualifying road must maintain a high degree of integrity across the following areas for both

Location: The roadbed must occupy its historic alignment as identified in 1933 highway maps or earlier. While historic, evolved rerouting to avoid deep ruts or boggy areas is acceptable and even strengthens authenticity, major modern rerouting designed to facilitate high-speed travel eliminates the road from eligibility.

Design The road must retain its rural vernacular design and must lack any modern 'safety' infrastructure intended for high-speed or urban transit (e.g., widened shoulders, dedicated turning lanes, busses, or street cars). Modern sidewalks and curb and gutter systems must be absent.

Setting: The corridor must retain its topographical relationship with the agricultural or cultural landscape. Modern agricultural uses such as exurban single-family homes, wineries, or breweries are acceptable; however, the introduction of suburban elements such as townhouses are disqualifying.

Materials, While unpaved surfaces are preferred because they preserve the 19th-century sounds (gravel) and sights (rising dust) of travel, the presence of an asphalt surface is recognized as a natural functional evolution of the roadbed and does not disqualify the resource. Routine maintenance, such as traditional asphalt pave-in-place surfacing (consistent with VDOT's Rural Rustic Road program), does not automatically constitute an erosion of integrity.

Workmanship: The road must reflect its pre-industrial origins, meaning it was shaped by human and animal labor rather than heavy machinery. It should retain a narrow, often single-lane width that dictates a slower pace of travel. Rather than blasting through the landscape with modern cut-and-fill grading, the alignment should organically conform to the natural topography and dipping to meet natural water crossings. Workmanship can be evidenced by what is absent: the road must not show signs of excessive, industrial-scale earth-moving designed to increase sightlines or speed.

Feeling: The route must maintain the sensory experience and scale of a pre-industrial rural artery. The road should retain its traditional sense of enclosure, often created by an overarching mature tree canopy or high banks. Outside of the 30 foot right of way, the road edges should feature historically appropriate boundary markers, such as dry-laid stone walls, mature hedgerows, wire or wooden fencing

Association: For the integrity of association to remain intact, the road must still visually and practically function as a link between historic nodes. When traversing the route, the viewsheds should predominantly feature the undisturbed agricultural landscapes, open pastures, and historic farmsteads it was originally built to serve. The lack of overwhelming modern commercial development ensures the road remains inextricably linked to the early settlement patterns of western Loudoun.

Registration Requirements To be eligible for registration, a linear secondary rural road must be located in western Loudoun County and must be constructed before 1933 when roads fell under state control. The road must be documented in archival materials such as road cases, diaries, deeds, maps, or journals.

Mountain Crossings

Description: Mountain Crossing roads are defined by their unique physical geography, specifically traversing one of Loudoun County's four major mountain ranges. These secondary local roads utilized steep, uninviting passes, serving as more direct routes to local markets rather than the well-travelled gaps favored by regional turnpikes. Originating as organic Native American footpaths, they were later adapted by early European settlers who lacked both formal engineering training and public funding. Initially suited only for foot or horse travel, many segments featured gradients too steep for wagons, leading them to be abandoned when the state assumed road maintenance in 1933. Currently, some remain primitive elements of the network, often appearing as narrow, single-track dirt, gravel, or tar-and-chip lanes. Many of these routes begin as standard two-lane public roads on gentle lower slopes before dwindling into unimproved, private paths as they ascend the rugged terrain.

Statement of Significance: Mountain Crossings are locally significant under **Criterion A** in the area of Settlement. These arduous paths, which gradually evolved from footpaths to accommodate wagons and, later, early automobiles provided early residents with direct, albeit physically demanding, access to local agricultural markets. Under **Criterion C** in the area of Design and Engineering, these routes represent a rare and intact embodiment of vernacular engineering dictated entirely by natural topography. They stand as a tangible testament to the resilience of "layman engineers" who carved functional paths out of stark necessity, successfully adapting to the challenging landscape without the benefit of formal training or professional workmanship.

Aspects of Integrity: Integrity of a Mountain Crossing is found in its location within one of Loudoun's four mountain ranges, the Blue Ridge, Short Hill, Cactoctin or Bull Run Mountains. Integrity if also found in remarkably intact rural environmental setting, appearing much as it did during the period of significance, defined by dense hardwood forests and elevation changes as the roads cross the mountains. Notably, these roads are defined by a characteristic lack of formal workmanship, shaped organically over centuries of use. Because most remain unpaved, many Mountain Crossings feature notable gullies and areas of washout, which are not viewed as defects but rather as components that contribute to their historic character and sense of place.

Registration Requirements: To be eligible for listing, under **Criteria A** (Settlement) a Mountain Crossing must physically cross or ascend the slopes of the Blue Ridge, Short Hill, Catoctin, or Bull Run Mountains, with its historic location and alignment corroborated by archival documentation such as maps, road cases, diaries, or deeds. Under **Criteria C** (Design or Engineering), the road must lack any formal design or engineering.

Representative examples of Mountain Crossing Roads are:

The 'Egg Path' Colloquially known as the Egg Path, this Mountain Crossing is a historic narrow trail traversing the slopes of the Short Hill Mountains in northwest Loudoun County. This east-west route served as a vital link for farmers accessing premium agricultural markets between Lucketts and Harper's Ferry. During the Civil War, the road gained additional notoriety as a tactical route used by Confederate partisan John Mobberly to evade Union troops. After the Civil War, the path remained a 19th-century thoroughfare despite never being formally adopted into the state secondary road system. Today the path crosses private property, extending from Snider Lane (State Route 684) to Long Lane with spurs to Steven's (State Route 758) and Branch River Roads. The Egg Path is not represented on the Yardley Taylor Map but is recoded in Civil War journals. The Egg Path is an example of a Mountain Crossing that begins as a two-lane, public, unpaved road dwindling into a private path as the route ascends the mountain slopes.

Shannondale Road (State Route 714) this Mountain Crossing likely had its origins as a Native American trail, taking advantage of an elevation gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains to reach the sulphureous springs on the western slopes. In the early 19th century, the path evolved as the direct route to the popular Shannondale Springs Resort, a 'health spa' in what would later become West Virginia. In the late 19th century, the path remained open, used by farmers transporting wheat to local mills in and near Hillsboro. The Shannondale Road is also an example of a Mountain Crossing that begins as a two-lane, public, unpaved road and dwindles into a private path as the route ascends the mountain slopes. The Shannondale Road is clearly represented on the Yardley Taylor Map.

River Access Roads – Ferry, Ford, or Landing

Description River Access Roads historically related to a Potomac River ford, ferry or landing. Both Native Americas and colonial settlers migrated to northern Loudoun originally wading through the river at low-water crossings. Associated footpaths to reach these water crossings were designed by convenience and necessity, transversing steep slopes or floodplains along the riverbanks in order to reach a point in the river suitable for crossing. As mid and late 18th century migration routes evolved into commercial routes, these river access roads were a priority for public

funding. While modern bridges and regional crossings have largely superseded these locally significant river access points, the surviving historic roads have evolved in several distinct ways. Some roads, such as the modern portions of the Taylorstown Road have been overdeveloped into high-speed, paved corridors, resulting in a loss of physical integrity that renders them ineligible for listing. Conversely, some river access roads remain rudimentary, typically characterized by narrow, unpaved dual tracks and are eligible for listing, such as Noland's Ferry Road. Following the withdrawal of public funding, some of these segments persist only as private roads or as barely visible road traces within the landscape.

The **River Access Roads are locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Exploration and Settlement**, as foundational elements of Loudoun's early overland transportation infrastructure. The necessity of finding accessible, shallow river crossings, and later ferries then bridges, dictated the initial patterns of travel, which subsequently evolved into the established roads we use today.

Under **Criterion C in the area of Design and Engineering**, these routes are significant as intact embodiments of early vernacular engineering. These corridors are distinguished by their survival as un-engineered footprints navigating riparian riverbanks, reflecting the citizen ingenuity. Their significance is equally defined by what is notably absent: modern engineering and large-scale earth-moving operations. Because these rural transportation corridors were established without the heavy machinery required to fundamentally alter the topography, their physical footprints remain intimately tied to the natural contours of the historic landscape These routes retain their original, rudimentary scale, standing as authentic physical records of early pathways into Loudoun.

Aspects of Integrity. Integrity of River Access Roads is established by the connection to one of Loudoun's former or current river access points along the Potomac River. For many of the River Access Roads, the environmental setting remains largely intact, characterized by either the steep slopes or vast floodplains. Integrity of workmanship is defined by notable absence of modern equipment or methods: these roads lack even minimal engineering, often leaving these roads susceptible to washouts and gullies.

Registration Requirements: To be eligible for registration under **Criteria A (Settlement)** a River Access Road's purpose must access the Potomac River in western or the Lost Corner Region of Loudoun County and this should be documented visually in the landscape and also in archival materials such as road cases, diaries, deeds, or journals. Access to the river must remain physically present across public or private property. To be eligible for registration under **Criteria C (Design or Engineering)** these roads retain their primitive footprint, with lack of evidence of formal engineering. Historic alterations in the route, such as a parallel pathway to avoid muddy bottoms, are viewed as a natural evolution of an historic roadbed.

Representative examples of River Access Roads include:

Hibler Road is an unpaved road characterized by its unspoiled stretches of open farmland across the Potomac floodplain. The road terminates at an historically significant ancient Native American river crossing, which later served colonial settlers as a low-water ford. In September 1862, this river ford and associated roadway were used by General Robert E. Lee's army. The road now terminates at Piscataway Crossing Regional Park.

Noland's Ferry Road As the primary access point to Loudoun County in the mid-to-late 1700s, Noland's Ferry Road evolved from a Native American migratory route into a widely used 18th and first half of the 19thc century regional thoroughfare. This route facilitated the vital movement of goods and people across the Potomac River and into Loudoun, anchoring the county's northern trade network. The ferry crossing was superseded by the nearby Point of Rocks Bridge in 1852, allowing the historic road to remain in an unevolved state. The road has a gravel surface but proper ditching and engineering along the river slopes are notably absent.

Others: Ropp Lane, Folly Lane

Boundary Roads

Description: Boundary Roads follow the historic boundaries of 18th-century Fairfax grants, resulting in straight road alignment with little regard for the natural topography. These local thoroughfares skirted along the shared edges of adjoining properties to minimize impact on private land. By following established property lines, these roads provided a path of least resistance from private property owners, securing public access while avoiding crossing productive acreage. This network is found throughout Loudoun County but is most concentrated in the Southwest and Lost Corner regions, areas primarily settled by planters from Virginia's Tidewater regions.

Significance: Loudoun's Boundary Roads are eligible for the National Register under **Criterion A** for their association with patterns of **Settlement**. Boundary roads serve as a tangible representation of 18th- and 19th-century settlement patterns as the 'second sons' of Tidewater gentry pushed westward in search of agricultural land. Boundary roads embody an enduring vestige of British colonialism; their regular alignment crossroads remains visible as a reminder of early attempts to impose a mark of ordered civilization upon the wilderness frontier. Boundary Roads are also significant under **Criteria A for Community Planning and Development.** As the State Highways Department grappled with adapting these grid-like patterns into roads serviceable for higher speed automobile, the sharp 90 degree turn evolved into an 'S' Curve, more commonly seen today. Boundary roads are significant under **Criteria C (Design or Engineering)** for their straight alignment without respect to topography or grade.

Aspects of Integrity: Integrity of design and workmanship for Boundary Roads is found in the straight alignment of the roadway. The historic alignment of these roads remains, confirmed by archival documentation of Fairfax Grants.

Registration Requirements: To qualify as a contributing resource under **Criterion A (Settlement)**, a Boundary Road must align with the boundary lines of an original Fairfax Land Grant. Under **Criterion C (Design/Engineering)**, such a road must retain the physical features and alignment characteristics that demonstrate its function as a formal property or land-grant demarcation.

Representative examples include:

Trappe Road is a two-lane paved and unpaved road, which follows Benjamin Grayson's 1730 patent line and retains its remarkably straight north-south alignment today. (Southwest Loudoun)

Purcellville Road is a two-lane unpaved road, which follows William Fairfax and Francis Awbrey 1730s patent line and retains its remarkably straight north-south alignment today. (Central Loudoun)

Mountain Road and Picnic Woods Roads are both paved and unpaved two-lane roads which follow Catesby Cocke's 1731 patent and retain their remarkably straight alignment today (Northern Loudoun)

Hibler Road is a two-lane unpaved road which follows William Hawlin's 1724 patent and retains its remarkably straight alignment today (Lost Corner)

The full relationship of Loudoun's roads and the Fairfax grants can be more fully understood here:

https://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=76b27b332332488f96ea3233576e9b6d

Mill Roads

Description Mill roads functioned as the primary overland local infrastructure for transporting agricultural products (typically wheat for flour or timber for planks) from farmsteads to local mills and then again from mills to commercial markets or to regional turnpikes. Because 19th century mills had to be sited near waterpower, rather than conveniently located at transport hubs, mill roads represented the sometimes arduous connections linking the agrarian landscape with the broader commercial economy. Originally established as private farm tracks, these routes transitioned into public thoroughfares as millers and farmers advocated for public funding for road improvements. While many mill roads remain in public use today, others were abandoned once the mill went out of service or have transitioned back to private lanes. Mill roads, like Meeting House roads are typically part of a larger pattern forming a 'hub and spoke,' radiating outward from a center.

Significance: Mill roads are locally significant under **Criterion A** for their direct association with patterns of local **settlement**. The roads function as the physical representation of a 19th century decentralized industrial landscape and associated settlement patterns that followed. Under **Criterion A** in the area of **Transportation**, mill roads are significant as purpose-built infrastructure purposely built to connect decentralized rural industrial centers. Rather than evolving organically, these corridors were established to transport raw goods from farms to local mills, and finished products to regional turnpikes. Mill roads also embody the complex system of 18th and 19th and early 20th century petitioning the court for better roads. Today, extant mill roads physically embody the essential transportation networks that allowed Loudoun's economic development. Mill roads are locally significant under **Criterion A** for their association with **Community Planning and Development**. As many mills were destroyed during the Civil War and other mills were rendered obsolete with the advent of steam power, these mill roads remained relevant to the community, adapted to continue to serve the existing regional agrarian landscape. Under **Criteria C (Design/ Engineering)**, mill roads are significant for their lack of professional engineering, designed and constructed by layman engineers using rudimentary methods and materials and often crossing difficult terrain to reach a remote, rural mill. Many of these roads exhibit the physical characteristics of their era,

incised roadbeds, rutted ditches, and original alignments preserving the spatial relationship between the farm, the water-source, and the market.

Aspects of Integrity The integrity of mill roads is rooted in their vernacular design, as the majority were constructed by layman farmers and millers rather than trained engineers. Mill roads retain their original location, physically evidenced by worn travelways and their proximity to extant or archival mill sites. The setting remains remarkably intact in western Loudoun, where the surrounding rural farmland continues to reflect the environment of the Period of Significance.

Registration Requirements. To be eligible for registration as this property type, Under **Criteria A (Settlement)** a road must be associated with a documented mill in Loudoun County. This association can be evidenced through a physical relationship with the mill or mill site or through specific archival road cases that identify association with a mill. Under **Criteria C (Design/ Engineering)** the road must retain its mark of vernacular engineering.

Representative examples of Mill Roads include:

Quaker Lane associated with Newlon's Mill and the unanswered quest for connection to the Ashby Gap Turnpike. Because this vital connection to the nearby turnpike was never realized, the road today remains as a one-lane, unpaved road flanked by dry stack stone walls.

George's Mill Road This road segment connects two mills **(**Kalb and Everhart Mills) along Dutchman Creek to the commercial center of Lovettsville. By linking these remote, water-powered mills to the village, the route provided a vital connection to the Berlin Turnpike and broader regional markets to the north

Meeting House Roads

Description: Within the Virginia Colony, any place of public worship established outside the Church of England was formally identified as a meeting house. Given the Church's role as a governing authority, the lines blurred between governance, civic and religious life, Meeting Houses served as a central nexus for early 18th and 19th century Loudoun. The resulting roads are characterized by a distinct radial pattern, with thoroughfares extending outward from a center to the surrounding countryside.

Significance: Under Criterion A (Settlement/ Exploration) Because many early settlers moved to Loudoun seeking religious freedom, the site of community worship, and associated roads to reach the site, were often the first mark of settlement in what would become Loudoun. Under **Criterion A** in the area of **Transportation**, meeting house roads are significant as purpose-built infrastructure purposely built to connect centers of religious life. Meeting houses were sometimes located on property donated to a particular congregation, rather than along a main throughfare, so meeting house roads were purpose built to reach this particular location. **Under Criteria A (Community Planning and Development)** These local routes served as vital catalysts for community growth, facilitating clustering of social and economic resources like schools, post offices, and local businesses around an early Meeting House. Even though some of the Meeting Houses are no longer functioning in a religious capacity today, the evolved village and radiating roads remain. Under **Criterion C (Design/Engineering)**, these road segments evolved organically, radiating outward from the meeting houses that served.

Aspects of Integrity: Integrity of location is marked a by religious site documented through archival records or through an extant meeting house. The design of these roads reflects their origins as evolved pathways, not engineered routes, to reach an early place of worship.

Registration Requirements: To be eligible for listing under **Criteria A (Settlement/ Exploration)** , a meeting house road must exhibit a coherent relationship to a centrally located church or meeting house. The associated house of worship must either be extant or its historic existence must be documented through archival materials. Due to the dual nature of many early villages which developed as both industrial and religious centers, linear roads can often be classified as both a meeting house network and a mill network. To be eligible for listing under **Criteria A (Transportation),** the meeting house road must be purpose built to reach that particular religious site. To be eligible for listing under **Criteria C (Design Engineering)** the road must be absent modern 'safety' improvements of the road must lack modern 'safety' upgrades such as wide shoulders, turn lanes, or stop lights.

Representative examples of Meeting House Roads include:

Ebenezer Church Road remains as a two-lane gravel road, established to serve the 1769 'Baptist Meeting House and School House,' which at that time could have been only a congregation, rather than actual structure. Today, the Ebenzer Churches, (1806 and 1855) and cemetery remain although the village center has moved ½ mile to the south The Meeting House Roads (Ebenezer, Airmont, Bloomfield and Foggy Bottom) also remain as a literal link to Loudoun's 18th century history

Unison Road remains as a two-lane gravel road and is associated with the early South Fork Meeting, established 1771. The road remains in use today, passing the site of the meeting house and extant South Fork Cemetery. The religious center has evolved over time into a village, once boasting the full complement of agricultural rural activity. Today, the radiating Meeting House roads (Foxcroft, Unison, Furr) remain.

Linear Roads Subtype: Regional Turnpikes

In contrast to local rural roads, turnpikes were important arteries that evolved or were constructed to serve a broader regional purpose. Because of their vital role in long-distance travel and commerce, these thoroughfares historically received regional focus and direct public funding from the colony or state. Both types of turnpikes follow well-used routes Therefore, over time, the physical integrity of many of these routes has been compromised by over-development.

Historic Turnpikes

Description: While early historic turnpikes share certain characteristics with their later chartered successors, they occupy a distinct legislative and physical category. Predating the rise of public-private turnpike corporations, these routes received early public funding but lacked the substantial capital necessary for the sophisticated, professional engineering that characterized later toll roads. As a result, they retained much of the organic, topography-conforming character of colonial-era

traces. Having been largely superseded by modern highways engineered for high-speed, high-volume transit, these surviving historic routes have been relegated to serving primarily local traffic or have been abandoned.

Statement of Significance: Early turnpikes are significant under Criterion A in the area of **Exploration and Settlement.** Often overlaying ancient Native American footpaths, these routes provided the essential regional infrastructure that facilitated the westward expansion of the Virginia colony. Historic turnpikes are also significant under Criteria A for **Transportation**. Although most followed Native America hunting paths and evolved organically, all evolved as engineered routes, receiving regional attention and funding for their importance crossing the Virginia colony. Furthermore, these historic turnpikes are significant under Criterion A in the area of **Community Planning and Development** due to their evolved functional role. While they no longer serve as primary regional arteries, they have remained in use as local roads, embodying a specific period of Loudoun's Colonial history. Early Turnpikes are significant under **Criteria C** in the area of **Design / Engineering** for their early attempts at an 'improved' road, with relatively straight alignment and early attempts at paving with limited funding and professional engineering.

Aspects of Integrity: The integrity of an Early Turnpike is not measured by the 'sophistication' of its engineering, but by its authenticity of alignment and setting. Since these turnpikes travel popular routes, the integrity of setting has often been destroyed by over development, making this sub type of the Linear Road relatively rare.

Registration Requirements: To be classified as an Early Turnpike within this context, under **Criteria A** in the area of **Settlement and Exploration** the route must have been established and in active use prior to the 1802 inception of the 'Turnpike Era;' the road must have served a regional (not just local) transportation need, and must be documented as a regionally important corridor through diaries, road cases, archival maps or state or colonial legislation. Under **Criteria A** in the area of **Community Planning and Development** the historic turnpike must have evolved as a local throughfare or have been abandoned and still extant. Under **Criteria C** in the area of **Design and Engineering**, the road must retain its historic alignment and exist as a continuous, identifiable corridor, and the setting must remain intact, allowing the visitor to fully experience the 18th century landscape.

The Period of Significance of Chartered Turnpikes begins in 1816 with Charles Mercer's state legislation to allow for public private partnerships for the investment into Virginia's regional transportation network.

Representative examples of Historic Turnpike Roads:

Colchester Road This short stretch of unpaved road is one of the last remaining segments of the original route between the Blue Ridge and 18th century Port of Colchester. This route is also known by several other names reflecting the various cultures who travelled this corridor including Shenandoah Hunting Path, The Mountain Road, and the Middle Road. Colchester lost its importance as a vital port in the early 1800s. Colchester Road was superseded in Loudoun County by the Snickersville Turnpike. Today the road survives as a short unpaved segment, retaining is early 18th century feeling.

Bell Road and Williams Gap Turnpike Prior to the 1831 Leesburg- Snickers Gap Turnpike, Bell Road was part of a regional east-west route passing through the 18th century hamlet of Woodgrove. Today Bell Road remains largely as an unpaved road running east from Woodgrove. Williams Gap Turnpike continued Bell Road, running west of Woodgrove to the Snickers Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Williams Gap Turnpike is noted in early deeds and journals. Today, the road has been hard surfaced through Virginia's 'Pave in Place' program yet retains its original alignment and narrow width. The surround farmland and bucolic hamlet of Woodgrove contribute to an intact setting, conveying a 19th century sense of place.

Noland's Ferry Road serves as a definitive example of an Early Turnpike. Evolving from an established Native American river crossing, the ferry site and associated road functioned as one of the earliest and most significant 'gateways' for commerce and migration into Loudoun crossing the Potomac. Archival road cases from the early 19th century document a pattern of repeated petitions for road improvements to accommodate high traffic volumes, signaling the route's status as a major commercial artery. Until the circa 1850s completion of the bridge at Point of Rocks, this road remained the primary corridor connecting the county seat of Leesburg to vital northern markets.

Chartered Turnpikes

Description Chartered Turnpikes in Loudoun County represent a higher level of professionally engineered routes than their historic turnpike counterparts. Turnpikes were publicly chartered routes and were funded through public-private partnerships. Unlike cultural routes that meandered with the topography, turnpikes were professionally surveyed and engineered and featured some of the region's earliest engineered bridges. Road surfaces were typically 'paved' with layers of crushed stone, later gravel, and eventually asphalt. These Turnpikes were characterized by the presence of toll gates located approximately every five miles for revenue collection to support ongoing maintenance of the chartered turnpikes. Loudoun's antebellum Chartered Turnpikes are documented on the Yardley Taylor map.

Statement of Significance: Chartered turnpikes are significant under Criterion A in the area of **Exploration and Settlement.** These engineered routes provided the essential regional infrastructure that facilitated settlement in the western frontier of the state, making commerce, communication and connectivity with Tidewater region possible. Chartered Turnpikes are also significant under Criteria A for **Transportation**, purposely constructed to provide a means of regional transportation. Furthermore, these historic turnpikes are significant under Criterion A in the area of **Community Planning and Development** due to their evolved functional role. While they no longer serve as primary regional arteries, they remain in use as local roads, embodying a specific period of Loudoun's transportation history during the Early Republic and Antebellum Era. Chartered Turnpikes are significant under **Criteria C** in the area of **Design / Engineering** for their early 19th century attempts at an 'improved' road, with straight alignment, Macadam paving, and bridges, using limited funding and engineering.

Aspects of Integrity: For Chartered Turnpikes, integrity of Design and Engineering is primarily found in the retention of their engineered straight alignment, reflecting the 19th-century survey logic of more direct, leveled paths compared to earlier paths or regional routes. Design and Engineering integrity is further indicated by the presence of historic engineered features, such as stone arch bridges or surviving sections of early stone paving (macadam) beneath contemporary asphalt layers. While many turnpikes have been adapted for modern use, some retain integrity of feeling through their smaller sense of scale and association with historic nodes like villages, mill centers, or former toll house sites.

Registration Requirements: To be eligible as a contributing resource under **Criteria A (Commerce)**, a Chartered Turnpike or segment thereof, must have archival documentation of chartered status and must occupy its historic footprint as identified in early charters or documented 19th-century maps, such as the 1853 Yardley Taylor map. To be eligible under **Criteria A (Transportation)** the original purpose of construction must remain clear. To be eligible under **Criteria A (Community Planning and Development**) the road must remain in use as a local road. To be eligible under **Criteria C (Design/ Engineering),** a chartered turnpike must retain its 19th century feel. While modern asphalt is an acceptable layer of evolution, the road must not have undergone significant modern "straightening" or cut-and-fill operations. The presence of associated resources, such as extant toll houses or stone bridges, is essential to maintaining the integrity of feeling and association.

Representative examples include:

Little River Turnpike (chartered in 1802)**:** While largely in Fairfax County and 'improved' to the point of loss of integrity, the segment of the Little River Turnpike through the village of Aldie retains its 19th century feel. The turnpike still retains its association with the extant narrow, two-lane stone arch **Little River Bridge** [DHR 053-0244; 4000148]

Ashby Gap Turnpike (chartered 1802): Today known as Route 50 and connecting the village of Middleburg to the Blue Ridge, segments of this historic turnpike were paved prior to their abandonment in 1957, when the route was 'improved' to the point of losing its physical integrity. West of Middleburg, original segments retain their historic integrity, most notably the segment within in the NOVa Parks System and which includes the historic stone-arched **Goose Creek Bridge** [DHR 053-0156; 74002134]. Some portions of this road have been abandoned by the state and are used as private farm roads.

Snickersville Turnpike (chartered 1810):
Today known as route 741 and connecting the village of Aldie to the Blue Ridge, this turnpike is a 13-mile, 30'-wide, paved thoroughfare [DHR 053-6487; SG100007792] Notable associated structures that contribute to its significance include Hibbs Bridge [DHR 053-0243; 11000067], a single-lane Luten Bridge, and various timber deck bridges.

Leesburg to Snickers Gap Turnpike /Old Route 7 (chartered 1831):
Modern Route 7 Bypass was constructed to the north of the original route, leaving much of the 1831 Leesburg to Snickers Gap Turnpike in place. This Chartered Turnpike connected Leesburg to the villages to the west including Hamilton, Purcellville, Round Hill, and Bluemont (formerly Snickers Gap.) Remaining segments that are eligible retain their historic feel as

they pass through the 19th century villages that they originally served. Today, the route, also known as Dry Mill Road / Route 699, crosses the historic **Clarke's Gap Stone Arch Bridge**, a contributing structure to the W&OD Historic District [VDHR 053-0276] The segment of Old Route 7 through Purcellville, which includes intrusions such as roundabouts, wide shoulders and turn lanes, is not eligible.

Hillsborough and Harpers Ferry Turnpike (chartered 1849):
This turnpike was adopted into the state primary road system in 1953 and is known today as SR 671. The improved route primarily followed the alignment of the original turnpike and has been improved to the point of losing its historic integrity and is therefore not eligible. However, there are remaining segments such as the north-south portion of Loudoun Heights Road and a segment north of Branch River Road, which includes an extant single arch Luten Bridge, that retain their appearance of an evolved chartered turnpike.

The Berlin Turnpike (chartered 1849) : The Berlin Turnpike originally connected Route 9 to Berlin (today known as Lovettsville). When the turnpiked was adopted into the state system in 1944 and 1953, it was largely improved and has lost its historic integrity. However, several segments have been abandoned and are eligible for listing such as a surviving section near Bollington. This segment remains associated with a Luten Bridge and original brick toll house. Another portion of the original turnpike that is eligible stretches from Lovettsville north to the Potomac. This segment is both paved and unpaved and is notable for its association with a Luten Bridge and an extant stone toll house.

Property Type II: Rural Road Network

Description: Western Loudoun's rural road network comprises an approximately 700-mile, lattice-like system of unpaved and paved secondary routes that form a complex overlay across the agricultural landscape. Rather than developing as a unified, pre-planned grid, the system evolved organically through the expansion of discrete, internally connected clusters. The resulting spatial organization is layered, defined by overlapping hub-and-spoke and localized grid patterns that were also dictated by geographic advantage, with specific linear routes to access river landings or crossing critical mountain passes. Ultimately, this network was the physical framework of how the county was populated, farmed and governed.

The network is characterized by the integration of both cultural and engineered routes, combined to create the surviving infrastructure. Many of these corridors originated as vernacular paths dictated by natural topography, Native American migratory routes, or early European settlement patterns. As the region transitioned into a commercial agricultural economy, specific corridors were formally adapted or engineered to achieve targeted transportation goals, such as the mass movement of wheat and flour or military logistics.

The two centuries of chronological development of this network is documented through a succession of primary cartographic records including John Warner's Map of the Northern Neck (1735), Herman Boye's Map of the State of Virginia (1827), Yardley Taylor's Map of Loudoun County (1853), Jedediah Hotchkiss's Civil War-era maps (circa 1860), and Virginia State Highways Maps beginning from 1933.

Significance and Eligibility: Rural Road Networks

Criterion A: Exploration/ Settlement

Western Loudoun's rural road network is significant under Criterion A in the areas of Exploration/Settlement and Transportation, serving as both a tangible record of diverse frontier settlement and the essential overland network that was created by the region's commercial growth. Following the 1722 Treaty of Albany, European migrants settled Loudoun, establishing distinct patterns that mirrored their specific commercial needs, cultural traditions, and religious values. In the southwest and northeast floodplains, Tidewater colonialists established rectilinear boundary roads tracing the formal metes and bounds of original 18th-century Fairfax land grants, an early attempt to impose order on the wilderness that linked the local frontier economy eastward to seats of power in Williamsburg and London. In the county's center, Quakers migrating from Pennsylvania formed dense, labyrinth-like networks connecting farms to meeting houses and water-powered mills to markets. To the north, German immigrants carved paths across the steep ridges of the Catoctin and Short Hill Mountains, linking smaller farm plots to mills and then on again across the Potomac River to maintain their northern social, familial and commercial ties. Ultimately, these distinct cultural footprints coalesced into a complex, multi-tiered transportation system. Rather than functioning as isolated paths, these separate networks provided the regional connectivity necessary to move heavy cash crops, particularly flour, from farmland to decentralized water-powered mills to regional thoroughfares. The network functioned not merely as a collection of thoroughfares, but as the footprint of early community building and the fundamental infrastructure that sustained Loudoun's prolific 18th- and 19th-century agricultural economy.

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

The network is additionally significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development, reflecting the evolving land use and settlement patterns of the cultures who settled Loudoun. Western Loudoun's spatial organization developed organically, driven by its agricultural economy and various cultures. This historic infrastructure has survived and remains in use representing over two centuries of growth and evolution as a physical manifestation of vernacular planning. Ultimately, the network survives as an intact artifact, illustrating how early rural 18th and 19th communities successfully have adapted to accommodate 21st century needs.

Criterion C: Design and Engineering

The rural road network of Western Loudoun achieves significance under Criterion C in the areas of Design and Engineering as a landscape-scale physical representation of vernacular engineering and organic, functional design. Rather than adhering to standardized, professional urban planning or arbitrary grid systems, the spatial organization of this network represents a collective feat of vernacular design, dictated primarily by the requirements of the county's milling industry. Because water-powered flour mills were sited near reliable water sources, the network was engineered to accommodate these disparately located mills. Layman engineers, local citizens, and county courts collaborated to create a complex system capable of safely routing heavy, grain-laden wagons from farmland to mills and further on to regional markets and trained engineers further adapted the network to accommodate the automobile and suburban commuter.

Aspects of Integrity of the road network are conveyed through the following:

Location: For Western Loudoun's rural road network, integrity of location is maintained through the preservation of its continued service to the historic villages, mills and mill sites, meeting houses, mountain crossings, and river access points for which it was established. The network's significance is evidenced by its enduring lattice-like configuration, where key historic nodes remain vital intersections. The primary purpose of the network continues to be local connection rather than modern, high-speed regional throughput. This enduring footprint and continuity of location are verified through extensive 18th, 19th and 20th-century cartography and archival material, confirming the network has not been fundamentally realigned.

Setting: The rural network winds through an agricultural landscape that has largely resisted exurban development and modern commercial encroachment. Much of the surrounding acreage, especially in southwest Loudoun, has been placed into conservation easements, protecting vast open spaces and preserving the network's environmental setting. The cultural setting is maintained by the preservation of the original spatial relationships between the roads and the historic villages that they serve. The visual character of the cultural setting is protected by six local Historic District zoning overlays (Goose Creek, Taylorstown, Bluemont, Oatlands, Aldie, and Waterford), alongside regulated historic cores in the towns of Middleburg and Purcellville. In southwest Loudoun, the local zoning overlay of the Beaverdam Historic Roadway District protects the 30' right of way along the road network. The integrity of the cultural setting is further confirmed by the number of individual National Register properties and National Register historic districts that are located in western Loudoun.[122]

Design: The design of the network is characterized not by formal, standardized urban planning, but by an organic, vernacular engineering dictated by the functional need to connect dispersed social, religious, and commercial nodes. This utilitarian design approach successfully adapted to the undulating topography of the Loudoun Valley. Although the resulting hub-and-spoke and lattice configurations may lack the linear logic expected by modern travelers, the network retains a clear, functional structure that survives as a highly intact record of 18th- and 19th-century intent.

Feeling and Association: The road network retains a profound integrity of feeling, conveying the aesthetic and historic sense of the 19th-century agrarian frontier. This feeling is evoked by its labyrinthine layout and the distinct absence of excessive modern wayfinding signage, which reinforces the network's secluded rural identity and requires travelers to rely on local knowledge for navigation. Consequently, the network retains strong integrity of association, serving as a direct, tangible link to the region's agricultural past and continuing to physically connect the historic turnpikes, villages, and mill sites that defined early Loudoun County

Registration Requirements

To be eligible for listing under this MPD, a rural road network must preserve the overarching 18th- and 19th-century spatial footprint of its initial establishment. The network must physically demonstrate its historic purpose, such as connecting cultural settlement patterns, mill-to-market routes, or religious centers. Also its significance must be heavily substantiated by primary source archival research, found in historic cartography, county road cases, deeds or any other period documentation.

[122] Western Loudoun has over 70 individual National Register properties, over 8 town. Village historic districts and 3 rural National Register Historic Districts.

To maintain eligibility, the network must exhibit a high degree of physical and contextual integrity across the following key areas:

- **Location:** The network must retain its historic alignment and its continuous, physical connection to the historic nodes such as but not limited to villages, mills, or meeting houses it originally served. Significant modern realignments or bypasses that sever the network's connection to its historic landscape constitute a disqualifying loss of integrity.

- **Setting:** To maintain the cultural setting, the spatial and physical relationship between the network and its historic nodes must remain highly legible. To maintain the environmental setting, the surrounding viewshed must continue to reflect the area's historic agricultural or industrial context, avoiding major suburban intrusions such as suburban-scapes of townhouses into the rural landscape.

- **Design:** The network must maintain its organic, topographic, labyrinth-like configuration, prioritizing local connectivity over modern engineering logic. The introduction of modern infrastructure designed solely for high-speed regional throughput fundamentally compromises the network's vernacular design and eliminates it from eligibility.

- **Feeling and Association:** The network must evoke a distinct 19th and 20th - century sense of place that inherently encourages a slower, pre-industrial pace of travel. This is characterized by the surviving labyrinth-like connections and the absence of modern wayfinding signage

G. Geographical Data

This Multiple Property Document (MPD) covers an expansive geographic area within western Loudoun County, Virginia, and the area of Lost Corner. The survey area is divided into three primary geographical regions: the 'Valley Between the Hills,' the Loudoun Valley, and 'Lost Corner.' The Valley Between the Hills is bounded to the west by the Clarke County line (along the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains) and to the east by the Short Hill Mountains. The Loudoun Valley is bounded by the Fauquier County line to the south, the Short Hill Mountains and the Blue Ridge to the west, the Potomac River to the north, and the Catoctin and Bull Run Mountains to the east. The 'Lost Corner' region, located in the northernmost tip of the county, is bounded by the Potomac River to the north and east, Limestone School Road to the south, and the Catoctin Mountains to the west.

This survey includes the County's secondary roads, that were designed and functioned as means to cross a vast rural landscape. This survey does not include town roads designed for 'walkability' in order to connect a more urban pattern and which are located within town limits.[123]

The rural nature of these areas was specifically selected for survey as they represent the highest potential for the discovery of intact, resources associated with the county's 18th, 19th, and 20th-century agricultural and transportation history. Due to the rapid suburbanization and modern infrastructure development in Eastern Loudoun, the survey focus was restricted to these western

[123] The six towns in western Loudoun include: Lovettsville, Middleburg, Round Hill, Hamilton, Purcellville, and Middleburg. Each of these localities is managed by its own governing body.

regions where the historic road network remains largely preserved in its original scale and alignment.

Survey Results and Boundary Definition

For the purposes of this MPD, the National Register boundaries are defined by the legal 30-foot right-of-way of the roadways. This boundary encompasses the physical roadbed as well as the immediate margins that historically facilitated drainage and maintenance.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This Multiple Property Document (MPD) was developed as part of a comprehensive initiative to document, interpret, and preserve the historic rural road network of Western Loudoun County, Virginia. The document focuses on the evolution and significance of these transportation corridors from the 18th through the early 20th centuries. It was prepared by a research and survey team led by America's Routes, working in collaboration with preservation professional, Jane Covington. This effort receives on-going support from the "Exploring America's Routes**"** project, which seeks to pair archival research with modern mapping to identify the most significant intact segments of the county's historic road system.

Public Outreach, Research, & Evaluation Methods

Multiple public outreach and engagement activities were undertaken to inform the development of this MPD and ensure community support. Foremost, a digital presence was created through the America's Routes web site in 2019.[124] This digital presence was supported by numerous local press releases,[125] short clips on local TV news,[126] and national publicity, including front-page article appearing in Sunday's Washington Post in February 2024.[127] Local, in-person events include story telling at 'Tales and Ales' and presentations to community groups such as Leesburg Garden Club. A traveling museum exhibit, supported by in person presentations, was created in 2023 and was hosted by the Middleburg Museum, the Loudoun Museum, the Waterford Foundation, and Virginia Preservation Piedmont, where VDOT was also included as a guest.

America's Routes has also made every effort to spotlight the roads. Loudoun's rural road network has been recognized by Preservation Virginia's list of "Most Endangered Places' in 2020 and has

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[124] America's Routes https://americasroutes.com/

[125] Loudoun Now https://www.loudounnow.com/archives/loudoun-s-rural-roads-declared-eligible-for-historic-registry-listings/article_6bdfe280-b4ac-5cce-a534-daee7948ff09.html

[126] https://wjla.com/features/7news-stories/the-long-road-home-gravel-roads-loudoun-county

[127] Washington Post, February 2024 A Radical Plan to Save a Rural Oasis https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/interactive/2024/loudoun-county-gravel-roads-national-register-historic-places/

been recognized by Loudoun's Department of Economic Development as a 'Signature of Loudoun' in 2024.

Research for this MPD drew heavily from the Loudoun County Road Cases, an extensive archive of 18th and 19th-century documents that detail the petitions, surveys, and construction orders for the county's earliest thoroughfares. To ensure a thorough historical context, the project team also conducted research at the following repositories:

- Loudoun County Clerk of the Circuit Court Archives (specifically for road plats and viewer reports).
- The Thomas Balch Library (for local genealogy, land records, and historical maps).
- The Library of Virginia (for state-level turnpike and transportation records).
- Library of Congress (for extensive collection of archival maps)
- VDOT's list of Loudoun's bridges
- VDOT's Virginia Transportation Research Council publications

The 1853 Yardley Taylor Map served as a foundational tool for cross-referencing archival road cases with surviving landscape features. By comparing 19th-century surveys with contemporary aerial photography and GIS data, the team was able to verify the continuity of historic road alignments.

Individual road segments and networks were selected for survey based on their ability to represent the development of the rural economy, agricultural transport, or military movements in Western Loudoun. Following field surveys, any segments that had been significantly widened, paved with modern materials that obscured historic character, or substantially realigned were excluded from the final list of contributing resources. Properties and road segments were considered potentially eligible for listing if they:

1. Maintained a tangible link to the historic context outlined in Section E.
2. Retained physical integrity, specifically regarding alignment, width, and the intact setting including agricultural landscape, historic villages, stone walls, tree canopies, or historic bridges.
3. Conveyed a clear historical association with the county's 18th and 19th-century development.

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