

# A Revolutionary Road to Freedom

## Day One

Start your journey at the **Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center** host to the **Valley Turnpike Museum** providing interpretive panels and exhibits of the early settlement of Harrisonburg.

The scenic mountains certainly played a large part in why many chose the area for settlement. The Valley Turnpike became a major thoroughfare through the great Valley of Virginia. Known by many names, the natural buffalo path and game route used by Native American Indians became the road to western expansion and the wilderness attracting thousands of early pioneers.

In 1737, Thomas Harrison, the son of English immigrants, settled on the land around several natural springs to make his home. The town of Harrisonburg grew up around those springs. His brothers chose to settle in other nearby locations in what would become Rockingham County. Still standing today is the **Thomas Harrison** house located just a stone's throw from historic Route 11 and Virginia's Heritage Migration Route.

Explore and feel the same independent and revolutionary spirit that drove America to freedom and fueled Virginia's Heritage Migration Route creating opportunity for early settlers. In the midst of the Revolutionary War, 1778, the Commonwealth of Virginia established Rockingham County. A year later, Thomas Harrison deeded two and one half acres to the public good. The town fathers used the land to build the first **Courthouse** on what is today, **Court Square**. Known as Rocktown, the town continued to grow as travelers-from Iroquois to Cherokee, Scots-Irish to German, Brethren and Mennonite-stopped for the natural springs; a welcomed respite from their travels.

Part of the city's unique history can be viewed through the work of quilting artisans. Visit the **Virginia Quilt Museum** made its home here, and serves as a resource center for the study of the role of quilts and quilting in the cultural life of society. The museum's permanent collection features over 150 quilts dating from 1810 to the present.

As a central location on a major thoroughfare of the Great Valley Road, Harrisonburg and Rockingham County became home to a large number of Brethren and Mennonites, Christian Anabaptist denominations that are committed to non-violence and pacifism. In the summer of 2006, **CrossRoads: Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center** opened its doors. At Crossroads unveil the life and history of the Brethren and Mennonites. Experience their simple way of living; touch artifacts from earlier days; visit a farmstead, and attend events celebrating their heritage.

## Day Two

Time to shop! Visit the **Harrisonburg Farmers Market** and **Dayton Market** for delicious homemade breads and jams, sweet and savory treats and of course chocolate. Vendors at Harrisonburg's open air market offer wood works, candles and handmade jewelry while inside the cozy shops at Dayton discover country chimes, miniature landscapes, kitchenwares and more.

Local homemade dining options include Traditions Family Style Dining, Union Station Restaurant and Bar and Pano's a community favorite for over 20 years!