

# Chilhowie Virginia

**CHILHOWIE**  
ABOUT 1748, Col. James Patton patented land here and reportedly sold this site to one who became a town. The region became known as Town House for a house known by the name it stood nearby. By the revolution, the settlement of the same name began to develop around the house. In 1854, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad arrived and settlement was renamed Occoquan. A switch a local resident. The community's name changed to Chilhowie in the late 1800s. An acquisition of George Palmer, Chilhowie believed to be an Indian word meaning her home of many deer or valley of many deer. The town was incorporated in 1914.

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## Tour Guide of Historic Places

## Town of Chilhowie, Virginia Incorporated 1913

The Town of Chilhowie (pop. 1,827) is a small commercial center and residential community located along both modern and historic routes of travel in Southwest Virginia. From its earliest days as the site of a historically important stagecoach inn, to its current role as the Gateway to the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, Chilhowie has always been a community in which travelers are welcome and visitors are made to feel at home.



*Mid-Century View of Main Street*

## Town of Chilhowie

325 East Lee Highway  
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September, 2002

Second Edition  
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Third Edition  
August, 2011

Chilhowie (Chil·how·ee), a Cherokee word meaning valley of many deer, was adopted as the town's name when the town incorporated in 1913. During its stagecoach days the community was known simply as Town House. After the railroad was built in 1856 the town was referred to as Greever's Switch, a reference to the name of the first Station Master and to the mechanical switch that allowed freight cars to be moved to a side track for unloading and loading of freight.

Various manufacturing and agricultural enterprises have contributed to the town's growth over the years. Pottery, brick, lumber, textile, fertilizer, equipment and furniture manufacturing companies have all operated successfully in Chilhowie. Cattle farms are a mainstay of the region's agricultural economy. From 1912 to 1989 Bonham Brothers grew and distributed apples and apple products so successfully that Chilhowie became the center of apple production in Southwest Virginia. Today, Duncan Orchards carries that tradition forward by producing and distributing its delicious apples throughout the United States. Chilhowie celebrates its apple heritage each September with an Apple Festival, a fun-filled weekend of festivities, contests and entertainment.

History buffs find local history more than interesting. Local citizens such as William Campbell, commander at the Battle of Kings Mountain, played prominent roles in the founding of our country and Phillip Greever who is said to have fired the first shot at that decisive battle. Elizabeth Russell, Campbell's wife, was Patrick Henry's sister and played a prominent role in the area's early Methodist Church movement.

From Interstate 81 (Exit 35) Chilhowie and State Route 762 (south) provides the shortest route available to Virginia's highest mountain, Mt. Rogers, and to one of the state's largest recreational areas, the Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area. There, visitors

find available a wide array of enjoyable activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, swimming, horseback riding and cross-country skiing in a setting, which is among the most picturesque in the country.

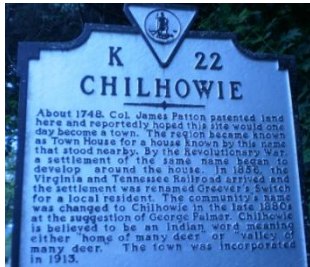
## Tour Guide

### Chilhowie, Virginia

#### 1. Three Historic Markers:

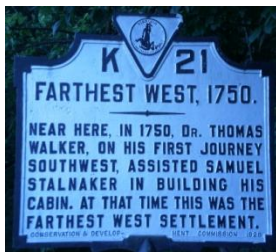
##### Chilhowie

This area of Virginia was patented in 1746 to Colonel James Patton. Samuel Stalnaker in 1750 was the first settler to build his home here. Robert Gannaway arrived in 1804 and later in 1815 opened Chilhowie



[Virginia Conservation Commission, 1941]

##### Farthest West, 1750



[Conservation and Development Commission, 1929]

### Districts & Streets

#### 2. Chilhowie Historic District - Main Street

Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places, the Chilhowie Historic District is a two-block section of Main Street featuring vintage two and three-story brick

CHILHOWIE HISTORIC DISTRICT



commercial buildings.

The first business in Chilhowie was a Pottery Plant built by Minter

Jackson in 1879. The plant was located on land behind the present day Shuler Pizza Factory (#51). In the late 1800's when Main Street developed, the Christian Church was on the west end, where the back parking lot of Greevers Drug Store is now, and

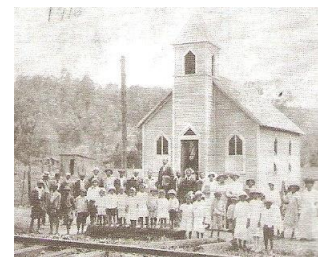


the Baptist Church was on the east end where Superior Mills' parking lot is located today.

#### 3. Chilhowie Street

The Chilhowie Baptist Church, Greever Clinic, and Providence Presbyterian Church are on Chilhowie Street. The Bennett family built the house at 711 Chilhowie in 1903. Oral history dates the house at 613 Chilhowie to the late 1800's. The house at 509 Chilhowie, the former Frank McCormick residence, was built in 1903. Two rooms of this house were originally used by Dr. Apperson as an office on the property of the Apperson home. They were moved to this site during construction of the McCormick residence.

#### 4. Railroad Street



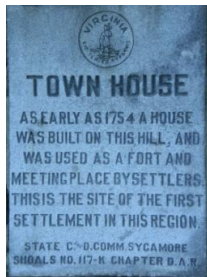
Railroad Street was once known as "Society Row" after many fashionable homes was built beside and facing the railroad following its construction in 1856.

Most of the homes in this section of Chilhowie were destroyed or so damaged in 1977 by two floods that 52 families had to be relocated. The Chilhowie Recreation Park was built where most of the homes once stood. The park

provides picnic shelters, tennis courts, basketball courts, a baseball play area, swings and slides for young children, and areas for hiking, jogging, bicycle riding and fishing.

Reverend George Washington Lomans, son of a freed slave, built a church beside Railroad Street in 1900. In 1916 the First Missionary Baptist Church was built adjacent to the Lomans family home. The bell from the original church is still used in the present brick church, First Baptist Church, which was built in 1955. Reverend Lomans preached on Sundays and operated a very successful store for 85 years.

## **Historic Houses**



### **5. Town House (Circa 1750) - Old Stage Road**

As early as 1754 on the top of this hill a house was built that functioned as a fort and meeting place for settlers. Only the chimneys now remain.

The oldest colonial building site in Chilhowie is on top of the hill in front of you. On this site a four-room log house was built, then added to, and used as a stagecoach inn, post office and home. It served as a gathering place for those who served in the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and War of 1812. All that remains today are the limestone chimneys, reminders of times past when travelers from all walks of life used the Town House to rest from their journeys. (Privately owned)

*[State Conservation and Development Commission, Sycamore Shoals. No. 117-K Chapter D.A.R.]*



(Photo taken approximately 1936)

### **6. T.D. Bennett House (Circa 1904) – 711 Chilhowie Street**



711 Chilhowie Street was originally deeded to T.D. Bennett by the Southern Clay Manufacturing Company in 1903. According

to tax records, the house was probably constructed in 1904 or 1905, the year in which the first taxes were paid on the dwelling. The property is commonly known as the “Old Bennett House.” (Privately owned)

### **7. M.C. Morris House (Circa 1904) 613 Chilhowie Street**



This house was built by M.C. Morris on a lot that, like the Bennett House, was formerly owned by the Southern Clay

Manufacturing Company. Although the house changed ownership a number of times during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been owned by a granddaughter of M.C. Morris since 1959.

### **8. A.C. Beattie Home (1891) - 249 West Lee Highway**



This Queen Anne Style Victorian Farm House was built in 1891 by A.C. Beattie, a farmer, Ninth District Delegate and, for 28 years, Mayor of Chilhowie.

The house is on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The land on which it is built was part of the original Town House tract and has been in the Beattie family since 1837.

**9. Apperson House (1869) - 229 Old Stage Road**



Dr. John S. Apperson practiced medicine as a Confederate surgeon in this area of Virginia during the Civil War. He acquired the

land to build this house with money owed him for services rendered to the Confederacy. The Neoclassical Revival Style house was built in 1869 and an addition was added in 1930 when the house was sold. Ionic columns support a wrap-around porch. Two-story, Temple-of-the-Wind columns support the portico. (Privately owned)

**10. Terrace Heights (Circa 1906) - 307 Old Stage Road**



This eleven-room Colonial Revival Style house was built around 1906 by James D. Tate, the first Mayor of Chilhowie. It has full-height Palladian

windows and Tuscan-type columns support the wraparound porch. It was one of the first homes in Chilhowie to have inside plumbing and electricity. It is presently owned and operated as a funeral home by Bradley-Finney Funeral Chapel.

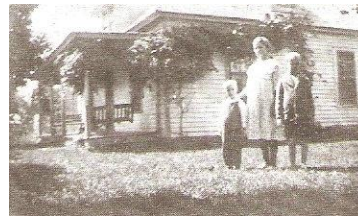
**11. Rush Bonham House (1903) – 225 Church Avenue**



Mr. and Mrs. Rush Bonham built this elegant twelve-room Victorian style house in 1903. The original tin shingles and wrap-around porch

remain on the exterior today. (Privately owned)

**12. Frank McCormick House (1903) 509 Chilhowie Street**



The property at 509 Chilhowie Street was deeded to James and Sally Vance by the Southern Clay Manufacturing

Company in 1903. Two rooms of this house were originally used by Dr. Apperson as an office on the Apperson property and were moved to this site during the construction of the McCormick house.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank McCormick bought the house in 1907 and, as their family grew, added rooms and the back porch, first in 1912 and later. In 1926 when the town water was first available the McCormicks were among the first families in the area to have running water with a bath. By 1930 the house had expanded to include five bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, living room and family room.

**13. Robert Cole House (Circa 1908) - 234 N. Church Ave**



Robert Cole, a prominent Smyth County farmer and merchant, built this Colonial Revival Style brick home.

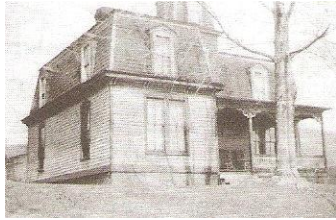
At one time Dr. George Pettit owned it and used part of it as a medical office. (Privately owned) Across the street is the Joe Schler Home built in 1903 by Rush Bonham.

**14. E. J. Rutland House (Circa 1892) - 613 Old Stage Road**



This Second-Empire Style house features a shingled mansard roof and a central tower. It was built by E. J. Rutland, Superintendent of the Virginia Vitrified Brick and Sewer Pipe

Co., similar to his ancestral home in Sheerness, England. Mr. Rutland's company manufactured Chilhowie Brick with clay from the clay field that runs from Old Stage Road to the Middle Fork of the Holston River. (Privately owned by a granddaughter of the Rutland family)



**15. Neff-Bonham Home - 1027 Old Stage Road**



Mrs. Ezra Neff built this home in 1917-18. James Bonham, one of the Bonham

Brothers apple business owners, and his wife, Okie Neff Bonham, lived here. The home is still in the Bonham Family. (Privately owned)

**16. Everett Bonham Home - 1208 Old Stage Road**



Everett Bonham, another of the Bonham Brothers apple business owners, built this home in 1931. It is also owned by a Bonham descendent. (Privately owned)

**17. Site of the John and Susan Sanders Home, "White Hall" - Old Stage Road**



"White Hall" was built in 1819. John Sanders was a landowner and an early settler

in Chilhowie. Silkworm culture was known to be a part of the White Hall property. Susan Sanders was the first woman in Smyth County to have a legal license to run a tavern. Today White Hall Apartments are located on the site.

**18. H. L. Bonham House (1911) - Whitetop Ave**



H. L. Bonham built this handsome brick Colonial Revival Style home in

1911. He was a prominent farmer, lumberman, orchardist and founder of Bonham Brothers Apples. The house still has its original interior woodwork and fireplaces.



This house and the three cottages behind it are listed on the Virginia Landmarks and the National Registration of

Historic Places. The cottages were first homes to H.L. Bonham's sons and grandsons.

On November 19, 2002 the Sam Bonham Family gave the house to the Town of Chilhowie to be used as a tourism center.

**The following are early 20th-century homes:**

**19. William "Bill" Plummer Home - 252 Sulphur Springs Avenue**

- Continue approximately one-quarter mile to Lee Highway.
- Turn right on Lee Highway and go west.
- Observe the historic Smith Home, the first home on the right after turning onto Lee Highway.

**20. W. T. Smith Home - 703 West Lee Highway**

- Observe the historic Copenhaver Home located two doors west of the Smith Home, on the same side of the street.

**21. W. H. Copenhaver Home - 877 West Lee Highway**

• *Observe the historic Eller Home ,the next house on the right after the Copenhaver Home.*

**22. Q. A. Eller Home - 937 West Lee Highway**

- *Continue west on Lee Highway one-half block.*
- *Turn right onto Martin Avenue and go north two blocks.*
- *Turn left onto Skyview Drive.*
- *Go west until Skyview curves left (south) around the Greever Cemetery on the left.*

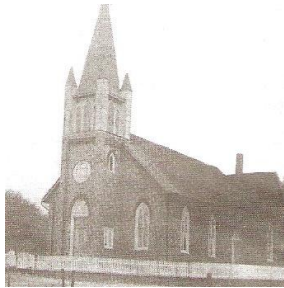
**Churches & Cemeteries**

**23. Chilhowie United Methodist Church (1893-1894) - 501 Old Stage Road**



This Late Gothic Revival Style church was constructed in 1893-94 with brick made in Chilhowie. It is the successor to the Sulphur Springs Meeting House (#22) and is listed on

both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.



**24. Old Methodist Church Parsonage (1908) - 705 Old Stage Road**



This house has served as a parsonage for six Methodist churches in Chilhowie and the surrounding area, including the Chilhowie United Methodist Church. (Privately owned)

**25. Sulphur Springs Meeting House (1806-1893) and Cemetery**

The Sulphur Springs Meeting House, the first Methodist Church in Chilhowie, was located on the west side of the road, directly across from the cemetery. It was built of logs, but around 1880 was encased in brick. It was visited by Bishop Francis Asbury and other early Methodist circuit riders. Colonel W.P. Thompson gathered his regiment here in 1812. Elizabeth Henry Russell, sister of Patrick Henry, often worshipped here and the Meeting House was the home church of the Rev. R. Gannaway. In 1893 the church was moved to its present location on Old Stage Road (#21).

**Other Chilhowie Churches:**

**26. Chilhowie Church of God**

1308 Lee Highway West

**27. Deer Valley Baptist Church**

Lee Highway West  
(200' east of Greever Avenue)

**28. First Church of God**

Lee Highway West and Martin Avenue

**29. Door of Hope Fellowship**

540 East Lee Highway

**30. Chilhowie Christian Church**

172 Apple Valley Road



*Chilhowie Christian Church*

**31. Middle Fork Baptist Church**  
Tattle Branch Rd & Deer Valley Industrial Park

**32. Chilhowie Pentecostal Holiness Church**  
132 Pine Avenue

**33. First Baptist Church of Chilhowie**  
29 Railroad Avenue Cemeteries

### *Chilhowie Baptist Church*



### *Providence Presbyterian Church*

**34. Chilhowie Cemetery**

**35. Beattie-Westwood Cemetery - Old Stage Road**

This cemetery is approximately 300 feet north of the oldest colonial building site in Chilhowie, the site of Town House (#5). The earliest dated marker in this cemetery bears the name John Sanders, a settler who died and was buried here in 1830.

**36. Greever Cemetery**

This is the burial place of Phillip Greever who fired the first shot at the battle of Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780.

## **Schools**

**37. Old Chilhowie High School - Chilhowie Street**



Built in 1931, this is Chilhowie's third high school building. It was used as a Middle School

after a new high school was built in 1958. Today the building is being restored for use as a branch library and community center.

**38. Chilhowie High School/Middle School - 1160 East Lee Highway**



Chilhowie High (1958) and Middle Schools (1991) are located across the street on the south side of Lee Highway.

## **Buildings & Businesses**

**39. Site of the clay field of the Virginia Vitrified Brick and Sewer Pipe Co. (1890-1910) - Old Stage Road**



The clay used in Chilhowie Brick, a brand of kiln-fired brick popular a hundred years ago, came from this section of Chilhowie. The removal of the clay lowered and flattened the slope of the land immediately south of Old Stage Road. The brick company's 41½-acre tract stretched from here to the river where its kilns were located (#39). Part of the clay field was later used for school baseball and football games and other community activities. Currently, the field is being used as a Chilhowie Little League baseball field.

**40. Chilhowie Center Shopping Mall - 150 Lee Highway**

This shopping mall includes a beauty salon, an appliance store, a jewelry store, a variety store, and a theater. Also located in the area are a bank, car wash, coin shop, and church ministry building (a former restaurant).

**41. Valley Health Care Center - 940 East Lee Highway**



This modern facility was formerly known as the Hotel Poole, a very popular hotel built by J. B. Poole in the 1940's.

**42. Site of Chilhowie Brick Plant (1890-1910) - East Lee Highway**



This site was occupied by the Chilhowie Brick Plant, then Town House Hosiery Mill, Buster Brown Mfg. Co. and today the Berry Truss & Component Shop, Inc. The photograph shows the original Brick Plant with round kilns as seen from the south side of the river.

**43. Chilhowie Town Halls and Police Department - 325 East Lee Highway**



Town Hall was completed in February, 2002. It accommodates the business of town government and the police department.

The previous Town Hall (223 East Lee Hwy) was built in 1941 and at one time housed the town government, police department and the volunteer fire department.

The Mayor-Council Plan organizes government in Chilhowie with six council members and a mayor. The Police Department consists of a Chief of Police



and seven police officers. Their main responsibility is to enforce local ordinances, curb traffic law violations and other

**44. Chilhowie Volunteer Fire Department - 315 East Lee Highway**



The Chilhowie Volunteer Fire Department has a modern five-bay brick building that was constructed in

1985-86. The Department consists of a Fire Chief and twenty-five well-trained, well-equipped volunteer firemen and rescue personnel who very ably provide fire and rescue protection not only for Chilhowie but assist neighboring communities as well. The CVFD maintains a modern fleet of fire trucks and rescue equipment to meet most emergencies. It also owns a 1940's fire engine that has been restored and is used in parades and other special occasions.

**45. James D. Tate Motor Co. - 172 Main Street**

The James D. Tate Motor Company building was constructed in the early 1920's. The Vance Company purchased it in 1930 to use as a farm machinery building and office. Presently it is used by Superior Mills to manufacture socks. (Privately owned)

**46. Chilhowie Drug Company - 147 Main Street**

The Chilhowie Drug Company building was completed in 1916. The Chilhowie Masonic Lodge #25 met for many years in the room upstairs over the Drug Company. This two-story brick building features jack arches with keystones, an arched-topped parapet, and a decorative tile floor entry. For many years Greevers Drug Store operated from this building before moving to its present location on Lee Highway. Today the building houses The Town House Gallery, a trading post and antique shoppe. (Privately owned)

#### 47. Bonham Motor Company - 141 Main Street

The Bonham Motor Company garage was built in the 1920's by H.L. Bonham and operated by his son, Sam Bonham. In addition to having a good reputation for repairing motor vehicles it became famous as a gathering place for men who enjoyed swapping stories around its potbellied stove. Checker games were played year round and friendly challenges were made to play croquet at homes in and around Chilhowie in the twilight hours of long summer days. The building is still used today as an auto repair garage. (Privately owned)

#### 48/49. Post Office/Snavely Building - 131/127 Main St

This building was constructed in 1915 with two front entrances and an internal staircase that leads to the second floor. Its second story windows consist of a central window flanked by two groups of three windows. The right side of the building was occupied by the Chilhowie Post Office and the left side by the Snavely Store. Today The Art Place, a community-based art group that provides gallery space for Southwest Virginia artists and exhibits from the Smyth County Historical and Museum Society, occupies the right side of the building. (Privately owned)

The Snavely Store sold dry goods and groceries from its side of the building. At one time an interior doorway connected this side of the building with the Post Office to allow easy passage for Mr. Snavely who also served as Postmaster. Today this part of the building houses a computer business. (Privately owned)

#### 50. The National Bank of Chilhowie - 121 Main Street



The Chilhowie National Bank was organized in 1905 and this building erected in 1909. The bank operated here until 1970 when it moved north one block to the corner of Lee Highway

and Whitetop Avenue (Route 107). This two-story, three-bay brick building was designed in a combination of early 20th century Revival styles using classical motifs in the modillion cornice and modified windows with decorative geometric-patterned brickwork. Treat yourself to a walk inside this building to see the vault and other features from the days it was used as a bank. (Privately owned)

#### 51. Site of Former Stores and Shops - Main Street

Further west on the same side of Main Street, just past the back parking lot of Greever's Drug Store, is the former site of a shoe shop, two small stores, a barbershop, and a building that is now occupied by Crouses Department Store. (Privately owned).

#### 52. Site of the Chilhowie Train Depot - Main Street



The Train Depot was built in 1890, 34 years after the completion of the railroad through Chilhowie in 1856. The town

was called Greever's Switch after Bob Greever who was the depot's first station agent. The depot was demolished in the 1980's and the Smyth Farm Bureau presently owns the site.

#### 53. Site of Chilhowie Milling Co. - Main Street



The Chilhowie Mill was built in 1882 by James D. Tate and remodeled in 1897. The

original mill was destroyed by fire in the late 1980's and was replaced by Rouse Oil Service and a convenience store. The milling company office, constructed in the early 20th century, is the only structure that remains. (Privately owned)

**54. W. H. Copenhaver Hardware - 112-118 Main Street**

The W. H. Copenhaver Hardware Store building, which originally occupied this site, was destroyed in 1909 when all the buildings in this block burned to the ground. All those buildings (see the photograph on the inside front cover) faced the railroad but their 1910 replacements were turned to face what became our current Main Street. The Copenhaver building has two-stories and Luxfer glass transoms across its front. The second story window casings are arched and have keystones and concrete sills. The building was once used as a Piggly Wiggly grocery store. (Privately owned)

**55. H. L. Bonham Office and Cold Storage Building - 120 Main Street**

H. L. Bonham constructed this three-story brick building in 1911 for use in his apple business and was used continuously for that purpose until 1989. It has a flat roof, simple parapet, segmented-arched windows and a modern storefront. Cold storage warehouses were built in 1917 between this building and the railroad over what once was the location of the town's public water well. (Privately owned)

**56. J. S. Morris Furniture Store & Mortuary - (Circa 1910) - 126 Main Street**

This building is a good example of a regionally popular commercial building from the early 20th century. It has a modern storefront with arch-headed windows. A replica of the original transom of ribbed glass extends across the first floor front. In 1926 the building was sold to John Aker Williams who used it to house the Chilhowie Furniture Company and Mortuary. Today the building is used as a party and meeting facility known as The Gathering Room. (Privately owned)

**57. Heninger's Grocery and Dry Goods Store (Circa 1910) - 132 Main Street**

This two-story brick building still has its early plate glass store front and textured, red brick façade. A decorative green tint can be seen in every tenth course of brick. Groceries, clothing, general merchandise and yard goods were sold here. The building has also been occupied by an ice cream

parlor and, in the 1950's, Singleton's Department Store. Today it houses the Town House Grill, opened April, 2002. (Privately owned)

**58. The Vance Hardware Company - 170 Main Street**

The Vance Hardware Co. was started in the 1890's to serve the farming community. Additions were made to the original building in 1902, 1907, and 1926. The 1907 addition is the two-story brick portion visible from Main Street. This building is a good example of a more modern, utilitarian warehouse design and included an elevator. Its original beams and support structure are clearly visible just inside the building's west side entrance. The building is now the home office and business headquarters of Berry Home Centers. (Privately owned)

**Chilhowie Buildings listed on  
The Virginia Landmarks Register and  
The National Register of Historic Places**

**Tour Item No.**

<b>H.L. Bonham House (1911)</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>A.C. Beattie House (1891)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chilhowie United Methodist Church (1893)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Chilhowie Historic District (1911)</b>	<b>2</b>