



This year *Cooperative Living* is taking a road trip along Route 360 as it crosses Virginia from the Chesapeake Bay to North Carolina. Each issue, correspondent Deborah Huso will relate her experiences along the way.

Story and photos by
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Local Food & Battle Lore

A trip through Richmond on Route 360 provides a foodie's farm-to-table tour and a Civil War buff's dream destination.

As I travel southwest on Route 360, leaving the Middle Peninsula for the outskirts of Richmond, I pass an endless stream of fast-food restaurants and strip malls, and then suddenly, to my left, I see a happily painted school bus announcing itself as "The Farm Bus." Pulling up beside it, I find myself in front of yet another oddity: a farm market in the midst of Richmond.

The Farm to Family Market is not exactly a new kid on the block, though. Started after the creation of the Farm Bus in 2009, this little operation seeks to connect city dwellers with locally produced food.

"I started this with the idea of supporting small local farms," says Farm Bus founder and Richmond native Mark



Mark Lilly and the farm bus. Mark and his wife Suzi Miles-Lilly originally used the bus to make deliveries to community-supported agriculture customers, but use it now mainly for educational purposes, visiting local schools to teach kids about agriculture.

Lilly. The core of his operation isn't really the market, but a community-supported agriculture (CSA) direct-sales entity that serves a handful of customers in Richmond and some 250 in the Washington, D.C., metro area.

Originally, Lilly and his wife, Suzi Miles-Lilly, used The Farm Bus to make food deliveries to CSA customers, though they use it mainly now for educational purposes, visiting local schools to teach kids about agriculture. "I

bought the school bus off of Craigslist," Lilly says. "It started out as nothing more than me trying to create a sustainable-food business."

FARM TO BUS AND TABLE

Today, the Lillys work with 40 to 50 producers within a 150-mile radius of Richmond and consider themselves a full-service CSA. They operate year-round and offer local and organic dairy, meat, produce, eggs, bread, and even smoked trout and maple syrup. In the summer, they have five to six pick-up points for customers and even do a few home deliveries.

"This location has been tough for us," Lilly admits, noting he started the market mainly to have a place to park his bus after a neighbor complained about him parking it in his driveway. However, customers can come to the market to buy local foods Friday through Sunday.

The Lillys aren't the only locally minded food purveyors in Richmond. Right on the corner of Route 360 and Cary Street in Richmond's Shockoe Slip area, Kitchen on Cary (opened in 2011) seeks to create a seasonally changing menu featuring regionally sourced ingredients. In addition, the Kitchen's chefs are also teachers at nearby Culinar, The Culinary Institute of Virginia College, and students often practice their arts in the restaurant's kitchen.

"We use as much local product as we can," says Chef David Hughes, who notes the menu currently features Moneta-based Scott's Farm greens, locally sourced honey, as well as Dinwiddie County's Milton's Local Harvest beef. "We don't try to reinvent the wheel," he adds. "We do simple dishes using local products."

As Hughes pulls up a chair at my table, he tells me seven culinary students are currently working in the Kitchen. Hughes himself is a Richmond native, though being a chef wasn't really part of his life plan. He was a mass communications major at Virginia Commonwealth University, and when he moved in with his brother, he started cooking a lot. His brother told him he ought to become a chef, and so off he went to the New England Culinary Institute. Hughes operated his own restaurant in downtown Richmond for 12 years, so he knows the local food scene well and has watched the Kitchen become a noteworthy part of that scene. "Our main goals here are to produce quality meals and quality cooks and chefs."



The Farm to Family Market seeks to connect city dwellers with locally produced food, such as the fresh apples below. Founder Mark Lilly says he started the operation with the idea of supporting small, local farms, and the core of the operation isn't really the market, but a community-supported direct-sales entity that serves a handful of customers in Richmond and some 250 in the Washington, D.C., metro area.



Kitchen on Cary (above), located in Richmond's Shockoe Slip, seeks to create a seasonally changing menu featuring regionally sourced ingredients. Chef David Hughes (left) says, "We don't try to re-invent the wheel. We do simple things using local products." The restaurant's chefs are culinary arts teachers at the nearby Culinary Institute of Virginia, and students get practical experience under their tutelage in the Kitchen on Cary's kitchen.



over the last two decades. “Twenty years ago, it was about Yankees and Confederates duking it out on the battlefield and little else,” he remarks. However, he feels the museum has been at the forefront of changing that. “We want people to really come to grips with history,” he adds. “Even 10 years ago, Richmond barely talked about its slave history even though we’re four blocks from the location of Shockoe Bottom’s old slave market. We want people to understand *all* of the history, whether it makes them comfortable or not.”

And then Rawls gives me a special treat — a private tour of the museum’s basement flag vault. He says the museum is home to 500 of the more than 1,300 Confederate flags still known to exist. Determining the stories behind all those flags as well as much of the rest of the museum’s collection was the first job of the now-famous Civil War historian Douglas Southall Freeman. Among the vault’s treasures is the Confederacy’s first hand-stitched battle flag.

Rawls continues his stories behind the flags as he shows me a number of flags made from wedding dresses, one of them made from the wedding dress of Confederate Gen. A.P. Hill’s wife. Rawls says the museum has 13 battle flags made from wedding dresses. “Women couldn’t fight on the battlefield, so that was their way of expressing support for the war effort and their husbands’ roles in it.”

Then comes an especially moving collection as Rawls opens drawer upon drawer of battle flag poles, many of them worn and darkened where soldiers once carried them into battle. Some were made from sticks — battlefield ingenuity when a flag pole was destroyed on the field and a color bearer wanted to keep the flag flying high. “Looking at this stuff really introduces the human element,” says Rawls. ■



The American Civil War Museum, formerly The Museum of the Confederacy (above left) and the White House of the Confederacy (left) are two of the many historical attractions to be found near Route 360 as it passes through Richmond, a center for Civil War history. Waite Rawls (above), co-CEO of the American Civil War Museum, notes, “1.8 million people go to Gettysburg every year, and there were only three days of battle there. Here it wasn’t three days; it was four years!”

TOURING THE VAULT

It’s pretty hard to travel Route 360 through downtown Richmond without taking in its Civil War history, given the city’s role as the Confederate capital for four years of war. Just a few blocks off 360 is the American Civil War Museum (formerly The Museum of the Confederacy) and the White House of the Confederacy. Waite Rawls, co-CEO of the American Civil War Museum, says of the museum’s partnership with the American Civil War Center at the old Tredegar Ironworks on the James River, “It’s our purpose to help Richmond become the premier destination for the Civil War.” With a jovial laugh, he adds, “1.8 million people go to Gettysburg every year, and there were only three days of battle there. Here it wasn’t three days; it was *four years!*”

Rawls says it makes sense for Richmond to be a center of Civil War studies. “Almost half the casualties of the war were in Virginia,” he explains. “And 30 percent were within 20 miles of Fredericksburg.” It’s no small wonder that Rawls can spew these numbers off the top of his head. Before coming back to his home state of Virginia 11 years ago, he spent his career as an investment banker in Chicago. “I’ve been a Civil War buff since I was in short pants!” he jokes, adding how he remembers giving a speech once for Bank Liquidity Management and managing to tie it into the Civil War. “You should have seen my boss’ look when I referred to it as the ‘War of Northern Aggression!’ ”

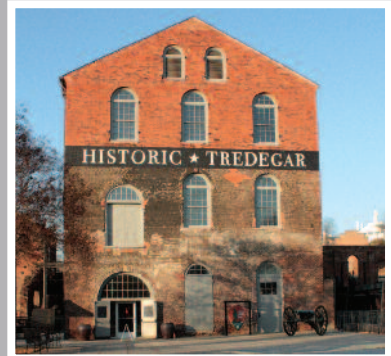
Rawls says he has seen the face of Civil War tourism change dramatically

To Get More History ...

Large chunks of Steven Spielberg's 2012 *Lincoln* were shot in Richmond. In fact, much of the capital area in Richmond was a stand-in for 1860s Washington, D.C. Almost half the filming was done in Richmond's Capitol Square with the Capitol building serving as both the Lincoln White House and the U.S. Capitol in D.C. If you stand in Capitol Square and look up at Thomas Crawford's statue of George Washington, you can imagine Lincoln doing the same. The statue was completed just before the Civil War, and the real President Lincoln, as well as Daniel Day Lewis, likely admired it when visiting the city. Tourists have become so enamored with Lincoln that the Virginia Tourism Corporation has set up a "Movie Trail" website that lets visitors follow in the footsteps of the cast and crew. Check it out at www.virginia.org/lincoln/.

Be sure to check out the American Civil War Center at the Historic Tredegar Ironworks. Here you'll find a statue of Lincoln and his son Tad, who toured the smoldering city with his father on April 4, 1865.

The Center interprets the war from Union, Confederate, and African-American perspectives and also includes the National Park Service visitor center for the Richmond National Battlefield. In the 1850s, Tredegar Ironworks was one of the largest foundries in the country and manufactured ordnance for the U.S. government as well as locomotives and equipment for sugar mills. The ironworks was critical for supplying the Confederate war machine during the Civil War as well. Tredegar ceased operation in 1952, and in 2000, its three major antebellum structures, including the pattern building, cannon foundry, and office, were restored and re-opened as the National Park Service visitor center and later as the American Civil War Center. Learn more at www.nps.gov/rich and www.tredegar.org. ■



Top: George Washington monument outside Virginia Capitol; Above and left: Historic Tredegar Iron Works exterior and interior.

● IF YOU GO ...

Richmond offers much more than one can explore in a single weekend (or, ahem, road trip), but a good place to get the lay of the city is Richmond's main visitor center at the **Greater Richmond Convention Center** (405 N. 3rd St., 804-783-7450, www.visitrichmondva.com, open daily 9-5). Right off of Route 360, just before you reach the city center and the Capitol is the **Chimborazo Medical Museum** (3215 East Broad St., 804-226-1981, www.nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/visitorcenters.htm, open daily 9-4:30), also headquarters for the **Richmond National Battlefield** in downtown Richmond is the

American Civil War Museum and **White House of the Confederacy** (1201 E. Clay St., 804-649-1861, www.moc.org, open daily 10-5). Expand your travels into Civil War history by also visiting the **American Civil War Center** at the old Tredegar Ironworks (500 Tredegar St., 804-649-1861, www.tredegar.org, open daily 9-5).

Explore local eats at **The Farm to Family Market** (2817 Mechanicsville Turnpike, 804-767-8570, www.thefarmbus.com), or pick up some farm-to-table lunch at **The Urban Farmhouse** (1217 East Cary Street, 804-325-3988, www.theurbanfarmhouse.net). And right on the corner

of Route 360 and Cary Street is **Kitchen on Cary**, which also serves up fresh and local fare while training area culinary students (1331 East Cary St., 804-643-1315, www.kitchenoncary.com). I recommend the Mushroom and Spinach Enchilada! ■



Chimborazo Medical Museum