



The Abbreviated Historical Timeline of Pulaski County

Written for the 2030 Comprehensive Plan

Pulaski County 1740-2010

- 1700's-New settlers and American Indians travel through Pulaski County using "The Great Warpath Trail" (original path follows current I-81 Corridor) New settlers arrive in Pulaski.
- 1740-Jacob Harmon Family settles on 1000 acres at Neck Creek. Jacob killed by Indians in 1756.
- 1745-Council of Colonial Virginia granted 100,000 acres along the Wood's (New) River and westward to the Woods River Company. Land was purchased by early settlers.
- 1746-The Dunkards (German mystic sect from Pennsylvania) settled at Dunkard Bottom on the New River (now under Claytor Lake near the State Park).
- 1755- Shawnee Indian raids drive some settlers away from the area. Others gather at Fort Frederick at Dunkard Bottom on the New River (now under Claytor Lake).
- 1754 - 1758- Over 37 persons from the New River Valley were killed, wounded or taken prisoner by Indian raids.
- 1762- Colonial Government licensed the first Ferry across the New River- Ingles Ferry. Operates for 186 years and last ferry sinks in 1948 with a truck load of coal.
- 1763- French and Indian War Ends. Lands beyond the Alleghany Watershed ordered returned to the American Indians by the King of England. Some Pulaski frontier families refuse the order and stay others leave and settle eastward.
- 1769- New Dublin Presbyterian Church formed at New Dublin. First organized church.
- 1774-McCorkle's store located in New Dublin, a multi-purpose general store served travelers, settlers, soldiers. Purchases were made by Patrick Henry's son, John, while visting his aunt (Patrick Henry's sister, Anne Henry Christian, wife of Colonel William Christian. Young John Henry would charge these purchases by signing his father's name on the store ledger.
- 1775- Fincastle County Committee includes men from Pulaski. Early preparation for war with England, locals store salt, powder and lead leading up to 1776.
- 1776- Declaration of Independence. War with Britain. Local men fight in militias.
- 1779- Peppers Ferry (same site as the 114 Bridge) and Christian's Ferry at Dunkard Bottom began operation across the New River.
- 1795- Page's Meeting House constructed. Early establishment of Methodist in the area.
- 1799- Merchants licenses granted to Allen and Reed stores at New Dublin, Cloyd Store at Springfield Plantation and John Ingles Store at Ingles Ferry. Only three stores at that time.
- 1810- Adam Hance designs "Newbern Town" from his 1400-acre plantation. The Newbern location is chosen due to its location halfway between Christiansburg and Wytheville on the Wilderness Rd.
- 1816- Doctor Floyd & family moves to the Thorn spring Plantation on Old Peppers Ferry Rd. near Newbern. Doc Floyd serves in the VA General Assembly, as Governor of VA and as a U.S Congressman.

- 1820- Newbern Town had a half dozen “ordinaries” (hotels with stables & taverns), blacksmiths, wagon makers, tannery’s, a post office and other businesses that served travelers on the “Great Road”. Newbern is the first town in Pulaski County.
- 1832- Andrew Jackson stayed at the Red Horse Tavern, located near Draper. The Tavern was well known and served travelers along the Great Road from 1820-1856.
- 1833- Asiel Snow settles with family on Little River. Named in his honor, Snowville becomes a manufacturing center with mills, tannery, shoe stores and carpenters. Pig Iron from nearby mines support, blacksmiths, foundrymen, metal workers.
- 1839 – County of Pulaski officially named, nearly 100 years after settlers arrived here. County is named after Count Casimir Pulaski, a cavalry chief in Washington’s Army who gave his life for American Freedom in 1779. The first courthouse in Newbern is built.
- 1840- Census of the U.S- 3,739 persons live in Pulaski. 954 of these were slaves. Ten stores were in operation. The largest manufacturing was a paper mill at the mouth of Peak Creek. Farming was the largest occupation. Corn was the largest crop.
- 1843- Thomas Ingles completes first covered bridge at Ingles Ferry site. Operates until burned in 1864 by confederate troops as they retreat from the Battle of Cloyd’s Mtn.
- 1850’s- Over sixty (60) ordinary’s/taverns and houses of “public entertainment” were open to travelers and licensed to operate in Pulaski County.
- 1850’s- The Pulaski and Giles Turnpike built to cross the mountains into Giles. The Great Road becomes the Southwest Turnpike and it was macadamized (small compacted stones).
- 1853- Hunter’s Alum Spring Resort opens at Alum Spring on Little Walker Creek.
- 1854- Virginia and Tennessee Railroad Line extended from Radford to Central Depot (Dublin).
- 1855- Dublin Town is formed at location of Central Depot also called Newbern Depot. Town of Dublin was incorporated in 1871, lost charter, re-incorporated again in 1906.
- 1861- Pulaski County citizens gather at Newbern Courthouse, vote in favor of secession from the union, sends county resolution to the Virginia Convention.
- 1861- Volunteer infantry companies from Pulaski serve in Civil War. The Pulaski Guards serve in the Stonewall Brigade, fight in major battles along the east coast.
- 1864- Battle of Cloyd’s Mountain. 10,000 union and confederate soldiers battled. New River Railroad Bridge and warehouses in Dublin were burned by union soldiers. Newbern warehouses were also looted and Benjamin Wysor shot in Newbern as he defended his home.
- 1867- Radford Iron Company, mines pig iron, furnace at Max Creek. Operates until 1900.
- 1870- Virginia re-admitted to the Union. County Board of Supervisors form of government replaced the old English system of gentleman justices.
- 1872- County’s first newspaper published in Snowville “The Virginia People”.
- 1872- Pulaski Agricultural and Mechanical Association formed to market the county’s agricultural and industrial products and to sponsor county fairs at the fairground.
- 1876-Francis Bell builds Rockwood Manor and begins exporting cattle to Europe.

- 1868- Post office built at New River, which was a boom town by the 1890's thanks to the New River Station and dozens of businesses located there.
- 1870- Post office built at Martin's Tank. Later called Martin's Station and Town of Pulaski.
- 1887- Norfolk and Western Cripple Creek Line built from Pulaski to Ivanhoe, later extends to Galax. Now the New River Trail State Park corridor.
- 1880- Thirty-two free public schools (one or two room schoolhouses) across the county.
- 1881- Bellspring Post office built on Norfolk Western Line which hauled coal from WV.
- 1882- Boom Charcoal Furnace on Little Reed Island Creek, Allisonia, operates until 1906.
- 1883- County issues "strict quarantine" for smallpox epidemic. In 1893 pox strikes in Pulaski.
- 1886- Pulaski City incorporated as a town, at location formerly known as Martin's Tank.
- 1887- Draper Post office established on rail line, Village of Draper flourished.
- 1890- Over twelve mining (iron, zinc, coal) companies in operation county-wide. Bertha Zinc Works, Pulaski Iron Company and Dora Furnace all operated in Town of Pulaski.
- 1891- Wagon Bridge across the New River at Radford complete. Rebuilt again in 1949.
- 1892- Fire-proof vault built in Newbern Courthouse. Eight months later the building was destroyed by fire. The vault had saved the county records.
- 1892- St. Albans School for boys founded on the New River. Operates until 1916. Later becomes St. Albans Sanatorium a psychiatric hospital.
- 1895- After a three-way battle between Newbern, Pulaski and Dublin. Pulaski chosen as the location of the new county courthouse. A new stone courthouse was opened in 1896.
- 1900- Bellspring ("Churchwood") and New River communities suffer when the rail line was abandoned for the new "low-grade branch line into WV" the towns begin to decline
- 1900- Towes Ferry Bridge across New River Complete. Later destroyed in great flood of 1916.
- 1904- Pulaski Mining Company/ Allied Chemical Company opens "Acid Plant" in Town of Pulaski, local sulphur deposits enable sulphuric acid to be manufactured at plant for 72 years until 1976.
- 1906- Southwest Times newspaper evolved from previous county newspapers.
- 1908- Pulaski Foundry and Machine Company, becomes Pulaski Foundry and Manufacturing in 1916
- 1915- First Hospital on East Main Street, Pulaski, largely funded by Allied Chemical Company.
- 1916- First textile plant- Paul Knitting Mills. In 1927, Dobson-Miller begins later becomes Sadler Hosiery Mills.
- 1917- World War I. Over 1400 men drafted or volunteered for service. War ends in 1918.
- 1918- Over 2000 of 5000 residents of Town of Pulaski stricken with influenza. 125 deaths county-wide.
- 1923- Coleman Vaughan Furniture Company establishes, leads to furniture, veneer and mirror plants
- 1925- Pulaski Hospital moves to new brick facility on Randolph Avenue.

- 1928- Virginia Maid Hosiery Mills begins operation, Wallner Silk Hosiery (1936) and Jefferson Mills. (1937) along with Acme Hosiery Dye Works (1939) establishes Pulaski as a premiere textile town.
- 1929- Stock Market Crash, depression begins. Approx. 8000 county citizens face hunger and shortages.
- 1931- The Lee Highway link across Draper Mountain completed.
- 1935- Lowman's Ferry Bridge opens and new roads built to access. Ends the era of ferry services.
- 1935- Calfee Park opens for its first baseball game. Built with WPA works from the depression.
- 1937- First County Library opens with 717 volumes on the shelf.
- 1939- Claytor Lake and Hydro-electric dam built on New River. 100 miles of lake shoreline
- 1941- World War II begins. Ends in 1945. Ninety-four (94) Pulaski County soldiers died in this conflict.
- 1940- Jefferson National Forest- over 19,290 acres of county land becomes part of JNF
- 1942- Radford Arsenal and New River Ordnance Works begins operations. Influx of new investment.
- 1948- Claytor Lake State Park established. 497 acres of recreational land.
- 1952- Pulaski County Speedway opens near Fairlawn. Renamed Motor Mile Speedway in 2004.
- 1953- Pulaski County Livestock Market opens in Dublin. One of Virginia's largest markets.
- 1960- Gatewood Dam, 50' tall, completed for Pulaski Water supply. Gatewood Park opens.
- 1962-New River Valley Airport opens on 380 acres of land on Rt. 100 near Dublin.
- 1965- Interstate 81 completed through Pulaski County. 18 miles of interstate. 21 miles of service road
- 1970-New River Community College opens in Dublin.
- 1971- County Board of Supervisors appoints first County Administrator.
- 1973- Pulaski Community Hospital chartered on East Lee Highway. Now Lewis Gale Hospital.
- 1974- White Motor Company established near Dublin. Becomes Volvo in 1981.
- 1974- County High Schools consolidate and continues at current location on Cougar Trail Rd.
- 1974- Pulaski County Public Service Authority supplies water service to its first county customer.
- 1987- New River Trail State Park established. Recreation trail on old rail line-Pulaski to Galax & Fries.
- 1989- World Wide Web is invented. Personal computers/connectivity of information begins.
- 1989- County Courthouse catches fire and is rebuilt to original 1896 design at the Main Street Site.

- 1992-1994- NAFTA and GATT trade agreements are signed. Triggers decline in domestic production.
- 2000-Eveylyn Alexander donates 87 acres for Randolph Park. Park opens for all to enjoy in 2001.
- 2006- James Hardie plant opens near Wurno.
- 2007- Thee Draper Village begins with purchase of site and restoration of the Draper Mercantile
- 2008- Fire destroys historic train depot in Pulaski. Rebuilt by the Town.
- 2009- Pulaski Theatre reopens after successfully renovating the century old theatre on Main Street.
- 2010- Walmart Opens in Fairlawn. Fairlawn establishes itself as a retail center.
- 2010- Phoenix Packaging announces new plant. 240 new jobs.
- 2011- Two Tornados strike. First in Mt. Olivet/ Town of Pulaski and next in Draper. 267 Homes damaged.

The Abbreviated Historical Timeline of Pulaski County

As you read the historical timeline, please bear in mind that it was not intended as a historical resource. I encourage the use of actual historical literature/historical books to get a broader look at the history of Pulaski County. The resources that I used in drafting the timeline are listed below and are available at the Pulaski County Library and/or the Raymond F. Ratcliffe Memorial Museum. Thank you to Markie Quesenberry, Carol Smith and Nancy Burchett for assisting me with this project.

When I was tasked earlier this year with managing the rewrite of the Pulaski County Comprehensive Plan, it was my desire to include information on the history of the county. The historical timeline was included in the Pulaski County Comprehensive Plan to provide perspective. As a community we may face future challenges that seem impossible to navigate. Let us remember that persons before us have triumphed over even greater challenges than we might face today. With perseverance, commitment and a bit of luck, I feel confident that the county will continue to improve and prosper well into 2030 and beyond.

With Warm Regards,

Elaine R. HOLETON, Director of Planning & Zoning
County of Pulaski, VA

List of References;

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Historical Digital Archives of the Southwest Times Newspaper, historic news articles available on line by The Pulaski County Library System.

<https://pclibs.newspaperarchive.com/>