

## Salem, Explored and Settled



### Salem, Virginia

The area surrounding Salem was originally occupied by Indian tribes, especially the Souan-speaking Toteró people who still had a village there in 1671 when explorers Thomas Batts and Robert Fallam named the region Toteró Town. Fort Lewis was later built West of the town (1752) in Roanoke County to protect settlers against the Indians and was named after General Andrew Lewis. Andrew Lewis distinguished himself in the French and Indian War, serving under George Washington in 1754 at Fort Necessity.

In 1774, Lewis later led the Virginia troops against a Confederacy of Indian Nations in the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774 and during the Revolutionary

War Lewis drove Lord Dunmore, the last British Governor, out of Virginia. In 1800, the son of General Lewis, William, sold 31-acres to his neighbor James Simpson for \$100. At this time, fewer than twenty-five families inhabited the area between the Roanoke River and Fort Lewis Mountain, but Simpson subdivided the land he purchased from William Lewis into purchasable lots on each side of the "Great Road".; Through the sale of those lots, Salem quickly grew into a prosperous community serving travelers as they headed west along the Great Road. In the first decades of the century, local businesses included taverns, stables, blacksmith shops, wagon and buggy repair facilities, groceries, clothing stores, a horse racing track, and a canal navigation company.

The same road bed known as the "Great Road" into the region later became US-11 and Interstate 81. The town of Salem was officially settled in 1802. George Hartman, a waggon-maker, owned several town houses and lots in 1823, mentioned in his last will and testaemtn. Also, upon the death of Thomas Goodwin in 1818, his estate reflected that he owned three tracts of land consisting of 181 acres on the north and south sides of the James River.