



# Tol'able David Driving Tour

## Highland County, Virginia

Enjoy a relaxing country drive to view filming locations of the 1921 classic silent film, many that look nearly the same over a century later!



Stop by the Highland County Museum in McDowell to see historic memorabilia and information at the Tol'able David Exhibit. Call ahead to schedule a private film showing before or after your tour. Copies of the movie are available at the museum.

We would like to thank the following landowners for allowing us to include their property in the tour:

**Blue Grass Resource Center**  
**Joshua and Cassie Corl**  
**Elmer Halterman**  
**Martha Colaw Hancock**  
**Patrick Hull**  
**Patricia Smith**  
**James Kelly Sweet**

Photos courtesy of:  
**Kent Botkin**  
**Harry Ransom Center**  
**Doug Puffenbarger**

Supported by:  
**Highland Historical Society**  
**Blue Grass Resource Center**  
**Highland County Chamber of Commerce**  
**Highland Tourism Council**  
**Virginia's Western Highlands Travel Council**

Discover more at [highlandcounty.org](http://highlandcounty.org)

Brought to you by the  
**Highland Historical Society**

161 Mansion House Rd.  
P.O. Box 63  
McDowell, VA 24458  
540-396-4478  
[highlandhist@mgwnet.com](mailto:highlandhist@mgwnet.com)  
[highlandcountyhistory.com](http://highlandcountyhistory.com)

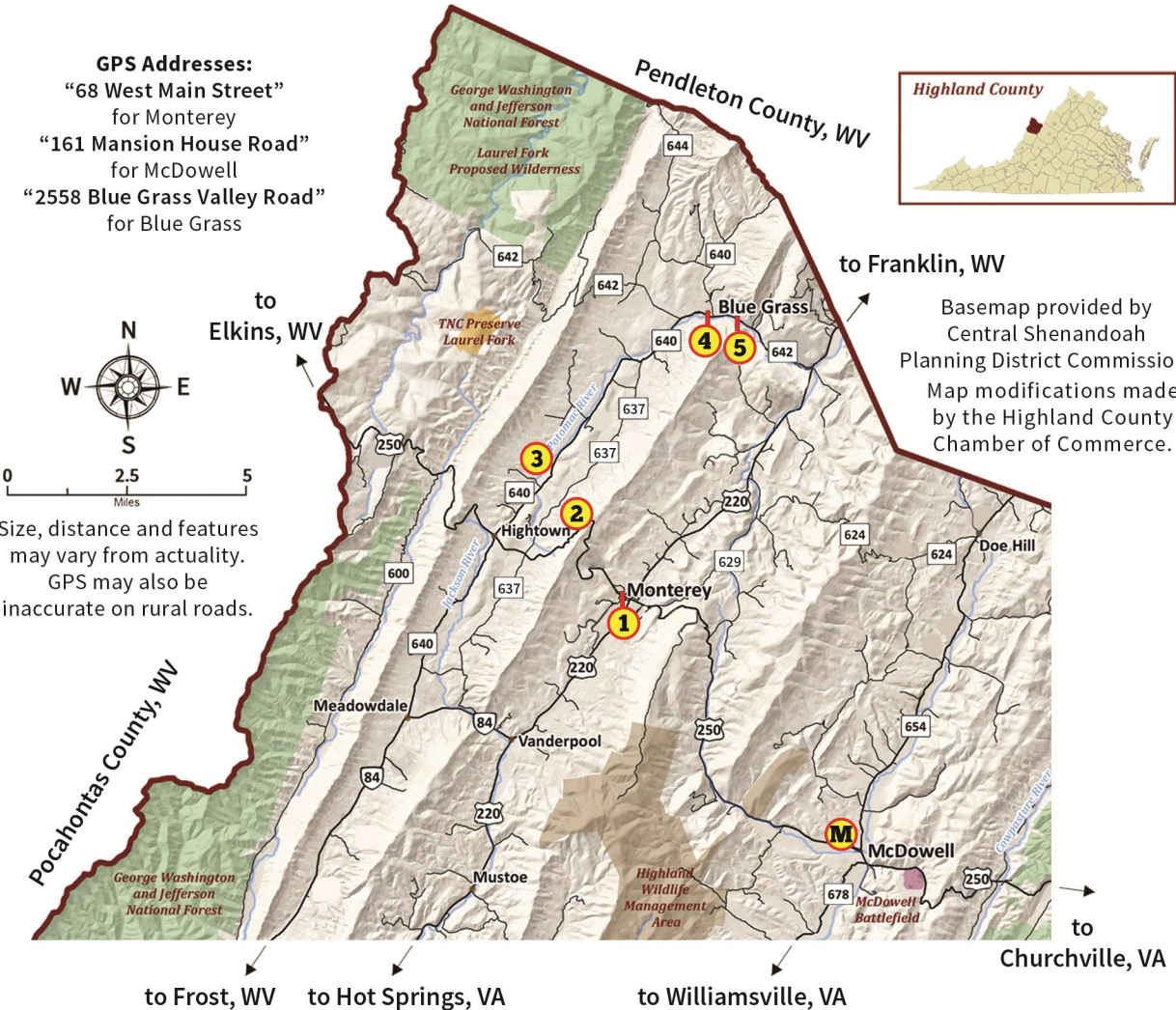


**VIRGINIA IS FOR**  
**FILM LOVERS**

# Hollywood Comes to Crabbottom

Tol'able David, filmed in Highland County, is a 1921 silent film directed by Henry King for Inspiration Pictures. Many Highland County residents appeared in the movie as extras. Awarded a "Medal of Honor" in 1921 by Photoplay Magazine, the movie was a major box office success, regarded by critics and viewers as one of the classics of the silent film era. Many of the locations remain the same 100 years later. Roads may have been paved and streets widened, but many of the buildings stand as they were when the movie was filmed in Crabbottom, which was renamed Blue Grass in 1950.

As you drive through the beautiful Blue Grass Valley, it is easy to imagine what it was like a century ago when Hollywood came to Highland County. We suggest starting your self-guided tour in Monterey, then drive west on Rt. 250 until you reach the small village of Hightown. Turn right on to Blue Grass Valley Road (Rt. 640) to Blue Grass. Beyond Blue Grass, you can take a right when you reach Rt. 220 and head south to complete your loop back to Monterey. You can finish the tour in under an hour or take as long as you want! Don't forget to stop in McDowell to learn more and even watch the film.





# Tol'able David Driving Tour in the Beautiful Blue Grass Valley

Some locations featured on the tour are designated private property by this symbol:(PP). Please do not trespass and respect the owners' privacy. Enjoy!

## 1 Hotel Monterey

68 West Main Street, Monterey



Built in 1904, the Hotel Monterey, currently the Highland Inn, was central to the production of the film. Historic references indicate the stars stayed in the hotel while members of the crew camped in tents on location. The Highland Inn is undergoing a historic renovation and will once again be open for lodging and fine dining.

## 2 Crabbottom Valley

West side of Rt. 250, approx. 3 miles west of Monterey



There are multiple pull-offs on the west side of Monterey Mountain for expansive views of what used to be called Crabbottom Valley. Now known as the Blue Grass Valley, the views appear to have seen little change. The left picture would have been the view the actors had 100 years ago. The right picture is the valley today.

## 3 Kinemon Home

On the west side of Blue Grass Valley Rd. (Rt. 640), approx. 2 miles north of Rt. 250



The farm used for the homestead of the Kinemon family was the Edward Varner home. The original road ran closer to the house, and there were several outbuildings that have not survived the passage of time. (PP)

## 4 Town of Crabbottom

2558 Blue Grass Valley Rd., Blue Grass



Use your imagination as you walk the streets in the village of Blue Grass, formerly Crabbottom, and picture the actors and crew at work.

### Crabbottom Mill



The Crabbottom Mill was destroyed in the 1930s. Currently on the site is Hull's Garage located across from the Blue Grass Mercantile.

## The General Store



The general store was the heart of every rural community in 1921. They stocked everything, from groceries to hardware. These stores also served as a popular place for neighbors to gather and visit while waiting for mail delivery. Still in operation today and now known as the Blue Grass Mercantile, this general store has continued to serve the town for over 100 years.

## F. C. Wimer Mercantile



The impressive stucco building, located at the corner of Blue Grass Valley Road and Wimer Mountain Road, was F.C. Wimer Mercantile from 1859 to 1941. This local mercantile also served as the Crabbottom Post Office. (PP)



Even though original buildings in filmed scenes are not around, much of the layout of town is the same.

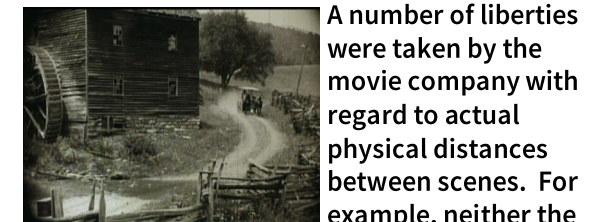
## 5 Hatburn Homestead

On the northeast side of Blue Grass Valley Rd., approx. .5 miles east of downtown Blue Grass



The house used for the Hatburn Homestead was torn down in 1942, although terrain around the house looks very similar to the movie. (PP)

### Other Locations



A number of liberties were taken by the movie company with regard to actual physical distances between scenes. For example, neither the building used for the dance scene nor the mill shown at the end of the movie were located in Crabbottom. The Cleek Mill, torn down in 1936, was actually located in Bath County.



The church is located north of Monterey. (No Public Access)

## M Mansion House

161 Mansion House Rd., McDowell

The Highland County Museum at the Mansion House hosts a Tol'able David Exhibit with more information.