

CONJECTURED LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL "SHAFERS CROSSING"

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Subject: Conjectured Location of the Original "Shafers Crossing"

Attached are images showing where I believe the original Shavers (Shafers) Crossing may have been located. To assist those who may wish to respond to what I have written, I will number my points:

1. The earliest USGS Topo Map of Roanoke is marked "surveyed 1888-1889, published 1891." Unfortunately, its scale is 125,000:1, so it is not highly detailed. (I will attach a very small image lifted from that Topo map, and will refer to it as the "1888 Topo.")
2. The 1888 Topo definitely places the location of the only road crossing in the "Shafers Crossing" area as *east* of the creek which now flows under the tunnels.
3. The road shown on the 1888 Topo is very likely a portion of the old, original "Salem Turnpike," a very short portion (300-400 feet) of which remains and is presently identified as "Westport Avenue." A large portion of this road, which I knew in my childhood as "Salem Avenue Extension," has now disappeared.
4. S. Kip Farrington's 1946 book, "Railroading from the Rear End," publishes a railroad aerial photograph showing this road coming down to, and terminating at, the Eastbound Main Line at Shafers Crossing. That photograph is in the attached PDF.

5. The 1888 Topo shows a rough alignment of the railroad at that time, and the curve shown east of Shafers Crossing does NOT match that of the present Westbound Main Line. The curve it shows does, however, match the alignment of the present day Eastbound and Westbound Running Tracks east of Shafers Crossing. It is my belief that the location of these two Running Tracks is the location of the original V&T main line, and that the present Westbound Main Line, between about 19th St, and about 30th St, was constructed at the time of the westward expansions of Roanoke Yard between 1905

6. One image which I am attaching is a Google Earth satellite image which I have marked to show approximately where the road would have crossed what I believe to be the original V&R alignment in this area. On the map, the PINK LINE represents a straight-ahead projection of the road, as if the present railroad were not in place, and the GREEN LINE repre-

7. These two lines intersect at a point about 150 feet northwest of the North Hump Shanty; about 150 feet west southwest of what we old timers called the "Coke Rack Crossing"; and about 300 feet due south of the center of the Shafers Crossing

The coordinates for the intersection are Lat 37.2796, Long -76.9764. It is my belief that these coordinates accurately represent the location of old Shafers Crossing within +/- 200 feet, or possibly less.

8. The 1888 Topo shows the road continuing further northwest from the crossing, a distance of approximately 3500 feet west of the creek, to an intersection with a road now known as Salem Turnpike. But the old road which once crossed at "Shafers Crossing" does not exist as an entity today, so one must deduce its probable route.

9. To determine the possible original route of the road northwesterly from Shafers Crossing to Salem Turnpike, the PINK LINE was projected dead forward from the south side of the present railroad, and this path was found to line up almost perfectly with an N&W industrial track off the Westbound Main Line which, in the 1950s-1970s, served the Lightweight Block Company, and which alignment is still in place. This path is marked in ORANGE on the satellite imagery, and the west end of the ORANGE line is at the approximate location of the old Lightweight Block facility.

10. West of the old Lightweight Block facility, a BLUE LINE represents the conjectured path of the old road, to its terminus with the present Salem Turnpike.

11. The cumulative distance between the creek and the junction with present Salem Turnpike, following the path sketched out, is approximately 3500 feet, which measurement matches almost exactly the distance scaled from the 1888 Topo.

12. It is likely that the road presently under discussion was part of "The Lynchburg and Salem Turnpike," chartered February 7, 1818. (See Raymond P. Barnes, History of Roanoke, Radford, Va: Commonwealth Press, 1968, page 14 et passim.) Lynchburg and Salem were recognized towns at that time, but the area of Big Lick (later Roanoke) was populated by only a few scattered farms and the town of Gainesborough was not "laid out" until 1834. If the road in question was indeed part of the Lynchburg and Salem Turnpike, it was in place perhaps three decades before the arrival of the Virginia & Tennessee RR on November 1, 1852.

No man works in isolation. The following men gave me assistance, guidance, inspiration and help in developing the above thoughts: Mr. James Blackstock of Roanoke; Mr. Harry Bundy of Greater Metropolitan Bonsack; Mr. Reid McClure of Salem; Mr. Kenneth Miller of Salem; and Mr. Jeffrey Sanders, President of Roanoke Chapter, NRHS. If there are errors in the above assumptions and work, they are mine.

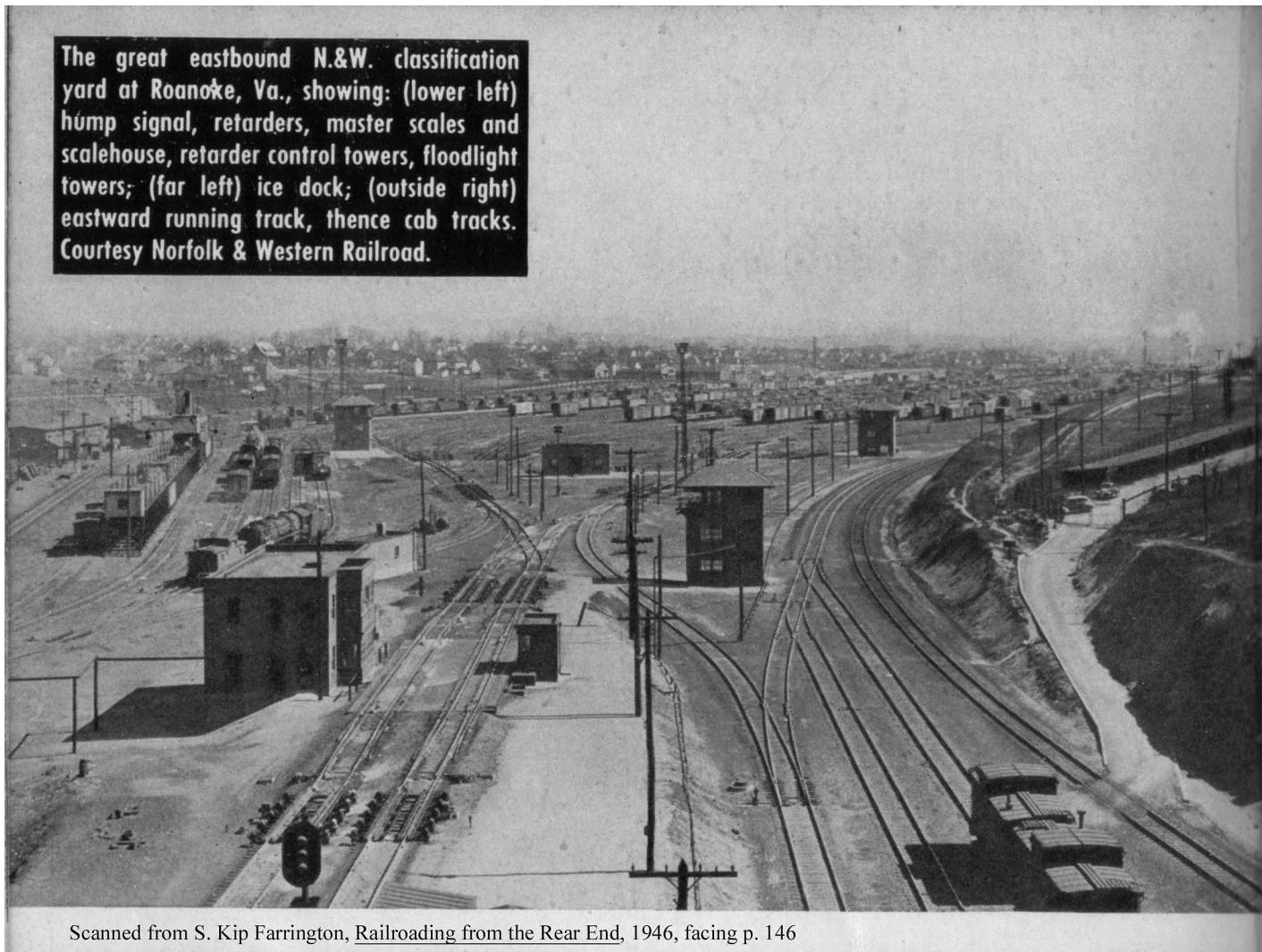
-- abram burnett

ex-N&W, ex-CR, ex-NS

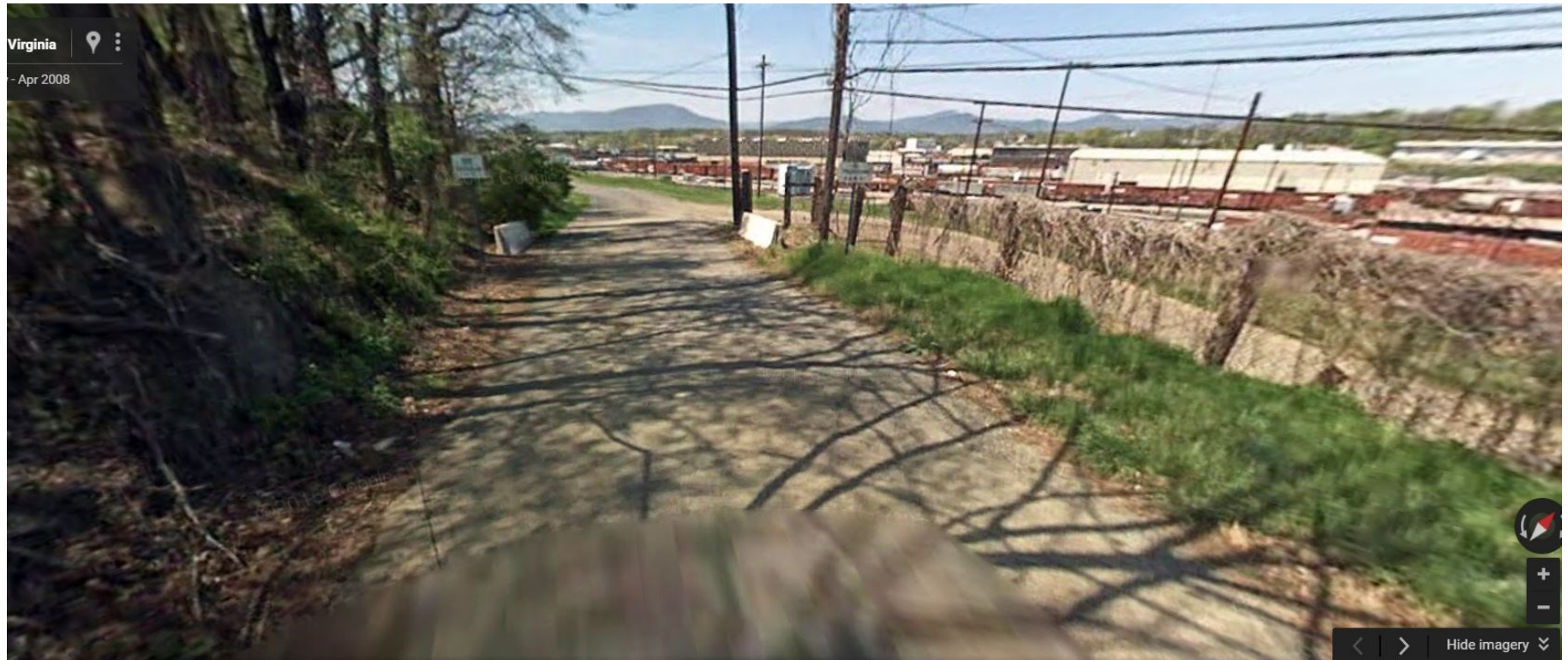
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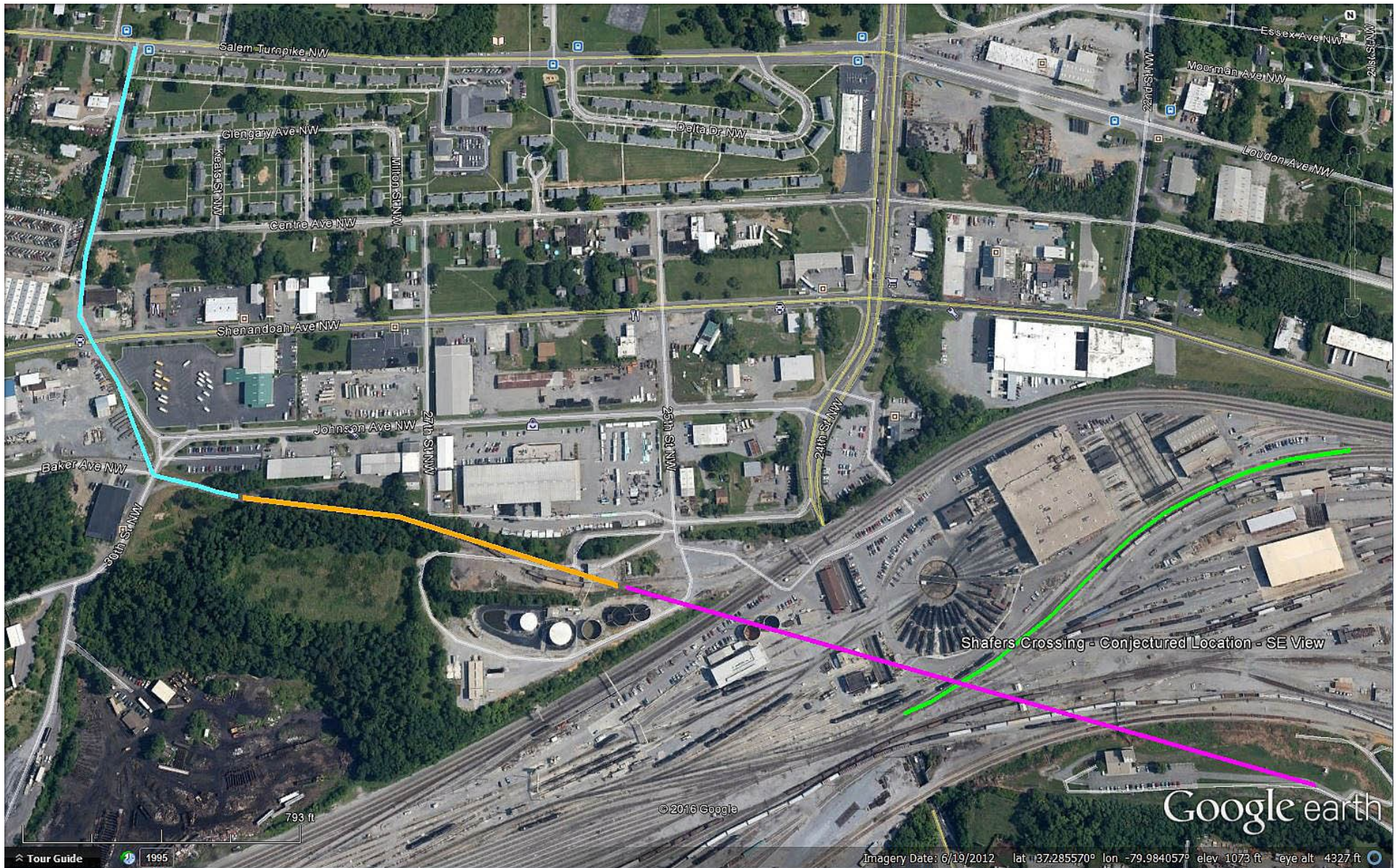
Clip from USGS Topo Map,
Roanoke Quad, Surveyed 1888-1889,
Published 1891.
Red Arrow indicates "Shafers Crossing"



Eastward view of Roanoke Hump. It is believed that the road at right of photograph, a short portion of which is now known as Westport Avenue, is the original road which crossed the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad at Shavers (Shafers) Crossing. The road has been altered and now longer terminates at the Eastbound Main Line, as shown here.



Google Maps street view looking westwardly on Westport Avenue. It is believed that 300-400 feet of this road is part of the old Lynchburg & Salem Turnpike which crossed the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad at Shavers (Shafers) Crossing. The final approach to the track, which was in place in the late 1950s, has been graded out, and the road now swings westwardly, instead of heading northwesterly to cross the tracks.



Conjectured location of original Shavers (Shafers) Crossing. GREEN represents the probable original Virginia & Tennessee alignment. PINK represents conjectured route of Lynchburg & Salem Turnpike. ORANGE represents probable location of said road along a route later used for a siding to Lightweight Block Co. BLUE represents probable location of said road from Lightweight Block Co. facility to its juncture with the road presently known as Salem Turnpike.