

# The Limestone County Antebellum Trail



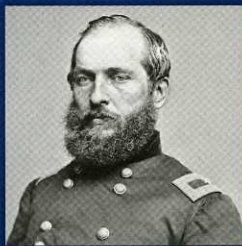
*Trinity School, a school for freedmen, established 1865*

Two of Alabama's oldest towns, Athens and Mooresville, are located here. Fine homes, built of native materials, abound throughout the county.

President Andrew Johnson apprenticed himself to a fine tailor in Mooresville. Another president, James Garfield, who enjoyed our hospitality during the Civil War, once preached in one of our churches. Even Margaret Mitchell visited us for a time, doing research for *Gone with the Wind*. Follow Margaret's lead and come see us soon. Take our ante-bellum

Home of statesmen, scientists, scholars, and soldiers, Limestone County boasts a fascinating history of pioneers, town speculators, cotton planters, and even presidents.

Two of Alabama's oldest towns, Athens and Mooresville, are



*General James A. Garfield*

trail and hear our stories on audio cassette or compact disc. Enjoy our scenic views while you learn about our antebellum homes and about the people who built them and lived in them. Ya'll come soon - and be sure to stay for supper!



# Columns & Culture: History's Gracious Echoes



Greater Limestone County Chamber of Commerce

P. O. Box 150  
101 South Beaty Street  
Athens, Alabama 35612  
Phone: 256-232-2600  
Website: [www.tourathens.com](http://www.tourathens.com)

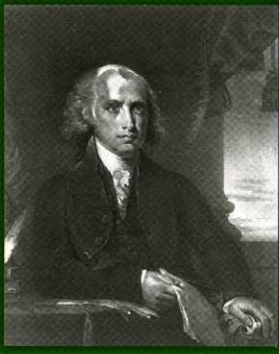
Chamber Hours:  
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



December/2006  
30,000  
Printed in USA

## The Guide to the Limestone County Antebellum Trail

## Early Settlement



*President James Madison*

John Craig and his family, the first settlers of European descent to settle here, camped by the big spring near present-day Beaty Street in 1805. Hostile Indians

soon drove the Craigs out, but the United States concluded the “Cotton Gin Treaty” with the Cherokee the following year. Under this treaty the Cherokee ceded their land north of the Tennessee River except for Chief Doublehead’s Reserve, which lay between the Elk River and Cypress Creek. However, the Chickasaw still claimed land in the area.

In the fall of 1808 two brothers, Robert and William Moore, from the settlements near present-day Huntsville, settled the site of Mooresville on the Tennessee River. In 1810 President James Madison ordered the establishment of Fort Hampton, an outpost located west of the Moores’ homestead, to keep white settlers from trespassing on Chickasaw land. The Chickasaw ceded their land in this region to the United

States in 1816, and the government began selling the region’s public lands soon after.

Limestone County was created by the newly organized Alabama Territorial General Assembly in 1818. Named for Limestone Creek, which cut through a deposit of hard limestone, the new county then had a population of 4,500. That year Robert Beaty and John Carroll bought several acres in the vicinity of John Craig’s big spring and sold lots. A new town, which would soon become “Athens,” quickly grew up around the spring.

On October 15, 1818, the residents of Moore’s settlement petitioned the General Assembly to pass an Act of Incorporation. Mooresville, incorporated on November 16, 1818, was the first town to be incorporated in

Alabama Territory. Athens was incorporated three days later, on November 19, 1818. Alabama did not become a state until November 1819, so Mooresville and Athens are older than the State of Alabama.



*Fort Hampton, a painting showing the fort in 1812  
(Prints available for purchase)*



*Robert Beaty*

## Ante-bellum Economy



*A Limestone County cotton field at harvest time*

King Cotton dominated the Limestone County economy as it did most of the rest of the Old South, and many of the county's residents were small farmers, planters, artisans, merchants, or slaves. The successful planters and merchants built spacious and handsome homes, most of them in the prevailing neoclassical styles of the period.

Planters' homes stood at the center of a large and busy complex of cotton fields; gardens of vegetables, herbs, and flowers; grape arbors, and orchards of apple, fig, peach, pear, pecan, plum, and walnut trees. The planters cultivated their fields with oxen, mules, and horses. Plantation outbuildings included carriage houses, outhouses, stables, barns, tool and molasses sheds, grain cribs, blacksmith shops, cotton gins, and slave houses, known as "the quarters." Most of the quarters in Limestone County had no more than ten to fifteen houses.

Many of the plantations raised milk cows and beef cattle and often had pig pens and yards for poultry and other fowl. People kept their vegetables in cellars and preserved their meat by smoking it in houses built for the purpose. They got their water from well or spring houses, and cooked delicious meals of home grown vegetables and fruits and beef, pork, chicken, guineas, or turkeys in separate kitchen buildings. Even town homes had outbuildings nearby, especially well houses, kitchens, carriage houses (or stables or barns), outhouses, and chicken houses.

These buildings were made of brick manufactured from the native red-clay soil and lumber cut from the virgin timber that grew in abundance in Limestone County. The county's artisans also manufactured household furnishings and tools from the native trees, though the cotton economy allowed the importation of many goods from Europe and the Atlantic Seaboard.



*Mahogany sideboard made by George D. Blair in Athens, 1829*

# Antebellum Trail

As you begin your tour, please note the brown, numbered signs in front of each stop in Athens. Each stop will have a numbered sign in front of it which corresponds to the number in your brochure and your audio tape or CD. Numbered signs are not used in Mooresville; there, the stops are identified only with street numbers. While we begin our trail in Athens and end it in Mooresville, please feel free to follow it in any order you prefer.



Stop 1  
Donnell Home "Pleasant Hill" ca. 1851  
601 South Clinton Street



Stop 3  
Richardson-Gordon Home ca. 1834  
401 South Clinton Street



Stop 2  
Jones-Hatchett Home "Coman Hall" ca. 1855  
519 South Clinton Street



Stop 4  
Walker-Kuykendall Home ca. 1835  
309 South Clinton Street



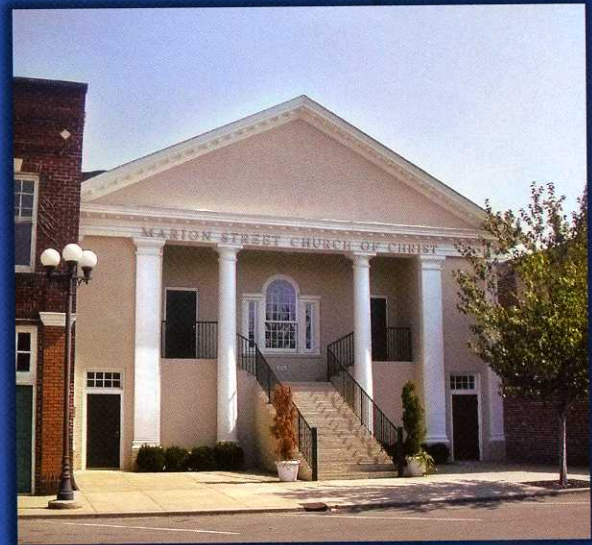
Stop 5  
Beauty-Mason-Garrett Home & Slave Cabin ca. 1826  
211 South Beatty Street



Stop 7  
Sloss-Stockton Home ca. 1845  
202 North Beatty Street



Stop 6  
Vining-Lovvorn Home ca. 1824  
301 East Washington Street



Stop 8  
Marion Street Church of Christ ca. 1836  
124 North Marion Street



Stop 9  
Hobbs-Darby-Cannon Home ca. 1838  
204 North Marion Street



Stop 11  
Tanner-Smith Home ca. 1845  
111 North Madison Street



Stop 10  
Craig-Wilson Home ca. 1845  
207 North Jefferson Street



Stop 12  
Governor George S. Houston Home ca. 1830  
Currently a library and museum  
101 North Houston Street  
Hours:  
Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

