

Robert Beaty Historic District Walking Tour

ATHENS, ALABAMA



(1826) Beaty Mason Slave Cabin

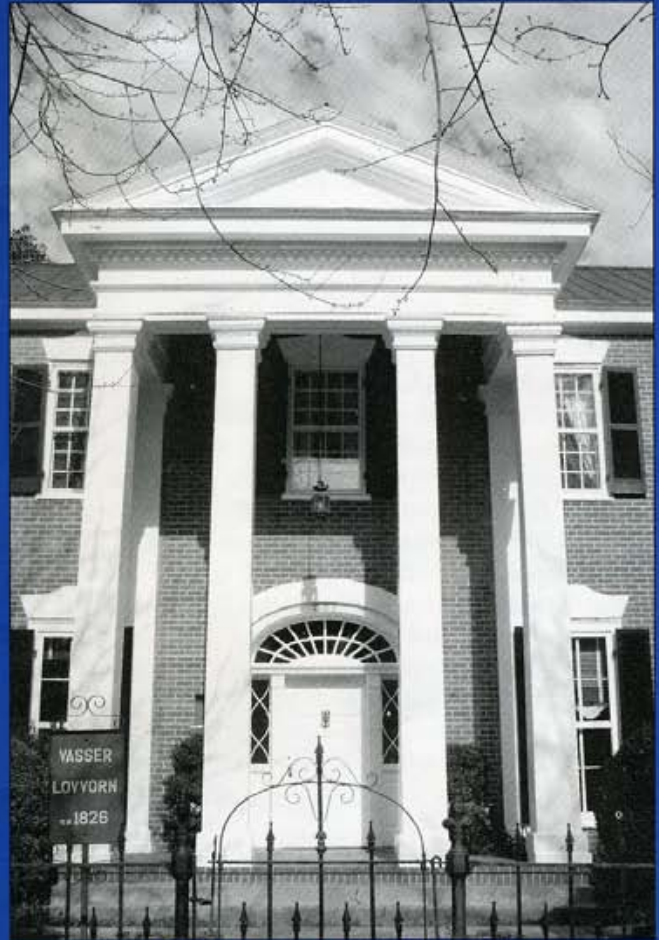
Athens-Limestone County
Tourism Council

Photography by:
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Historical Information
compliments of Faye Axford

“Step Back In Time”

ATHENS, ALABAMA



(1825) Vasser-Lovvorn House

Self-Guided Walking Tour of the Robert
Beaty Historic District

ROBERT BEATY HISTORIC DISTRICT

Placed along with the Athens State University District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, The Robert Beaty Historic District is continually being preserved and protected to uphold its historic beauty.

The District was named for Robert Beaty, co-founder of Athens with John Carroll. The Beaty Home, on the street that now bears his name, is the residence of the President of Athens State University.

Some homes in the District date prior to the Civil War, but most were built in the early 1900's. The primary reason for this was that most of the land south and east of the Beaty Home belonged to John Richardson and Glorvinia Beaty Mason and was filled with groves of trees, a fairgrounds and a race-track, until sold in 1898 and divided into lots.

ATHENS, ALABAMA... A LOOK BACK

John Craig and his family camped by the big spring as early as 1800, but soon left because of the hostile attitude of the Indians in the area. A man named Robinson erected a cabin near the spring about 1808, but was forced to leave in 1810. William Wilder took over the little trading post which had been established by Robinson on the present corner of Washington and Marion Streets. It is said that Andrew Jackson stayed at Wilder's Tavern one time and paid nine dollars too much when he settled up his bill. Wilder followed him along the Huntsville Road to return the money, but could not overtake the tough old soldier.

In 1817 there were only three families living on the land which would later become Athens: those of William Wilder, Joe Bell and W.J. Gamble. It is in the house of Wilder that the first court of the county is said to have convened. In 1818 Robert Beaty and John Carroll bought several acres of land in the environs of the spring and proceeded to sell lots. They were so successful that the town was incorporated in the same year, only three days after the incorporation of Mooresville. Athens was centrally located in the new county of Limestone and thus chosen as the County Seat.



(1) Vasser-Lovvorn

1 301 E. Washington - Vassar Lovvorn Home. Built in 1825, this is a fine example of Federal style architecture. This home served as a hospital during the Civil War. It is said to have had "strange occurrences" in the past—doors opening alone, footsteps and anguished cries heard. However, presently, the home "ghost" seems settled.

2 304 E. Washington - Sanders-Gish Servants Quarters. Built in the early 1900's behind the main Sanders Home on Beaty Street. Remodeled in 1953, it became a small, quaint family dwelling and remains in the Sanders-Gish family.

3 The Old Athens City Cemetery. (1800's) The old Athens City Cemetery is filled with those who died in the first quarter of the town's existence. It was crowded by 1849 and necessitated the opening of the present cemetery farther east.

4 305 E. Washington - Clay-Durham Home. This home was built by Bill Clay in 1936. The late Clement Moore, close kinsman and namesake of the author of "Twas A Night Before Christmas", lived here for a time.

5 306 E. Washington - Sanders-Grissom House. This was built in the Creole style by W.T. Sanders, Jr., a graduate of Harvard Law School, as a temporary home in 1942. He intended to build a larger home in front and convert this into servants quarters and a Carriage House, but he moved his practice to Birmingham instead.



(6) The Scout House

6 313 E. Washington - The Scout House. This house was built in the 1930's for Girl Scout Troops at far less than \$1000. It now houses the Athens City Board of Education.

7 416 E. Washington (ca. 1822) Mason-Looney House. This house has a Medallion door composed of two thicknesses of glass with a medallion etched between them, showing one color from the inside and another color from the outside. The Masons built and lived in this home while building the present ASU President's home. The property was purchased in 1905 from Athens Brickyard by James Looney. The house has been in the Looney family for four generations. Second story added by Looney family.

8 205 East Street - Kennemer-Holt House (1915). This is said to have been built from a portion of the Clements Estate at 211 East Street. Present owners have remodeled extensively.

9 210 East Street (1919) Chambers-Terry House. This house was built by Chambers Lumber Company, which built many of the houses and buildings of that period, including the First Methodist Church and the Legg Spanish type house. A hand-dug basement provides extra room in this comfortable house.



(10) Clements-Miller

10 211 East Street (1907) Clements-Miller House was rebuilt after a tornado destroyed the unfinished home in 1906. Colonel M.K. Clements, past president of Auburn University, prominent educator, lawyer and minister, would answer to the query, "How are you", with "Tip-top plus". Clements High School is named for him.

11 212 East Street (1917) Rankin-Bishop House is said to have been planned and built by Judge James Rankin for his bride. He was a lawyer in the Scottsboro Boys trial. He was appointed to a judgeship, but couldn't assume duties because of a stroke. In the late 1950's an apartment was added to the house and scientists with Dr. Werner Von Braun lived in the apartment. During their visit they could not be spoken to and a large black car picked them up each morning. The house was designed by Gustav Stickley and inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright. The house/lot are part of the ASU President's estate.

12 300 East Street (1901) Osborn-Gates House has the first known porte-cochere (attached carriage port) in the neighborhood. The Osborne's later moved to New York, where their daughter was a Broadway actress.

13 301 East Street (1917) The Freeman House was built as a town house for J.B. Freeman by Chamber Lumber Company and has been remodeled by his descendants to adapt to modern living.



(14) McCully-Corder

14 305 East Street (1905) McCully-Corder House was built for Paul and Ora Kennemer McCully and was one of the first homes built on this street. This quaint Victorian house has been meticulously restored.

15 308 East Street (1905-1910) Griffis-Nelson House is another one-story Victorian house happily restored. It was owned for several years by Sol Mogil, one of the most successful merchants in Athens.

16 310 East Street (1911) Word-Deemer House. During remodeling in 1977, a whiskey bottle was found inside the wood siding.

17 312 East Street (1920?) Carden-Corder House. Remodeled by the family of the late Jimmy Cowart, for whom the Cowart Elementary School is named, added a breezeway and garage. The house has original pine floors, door transoms and a set of sliding "pocket" doors. When the Corder family bought the house they took great pains to restore the house to the period and match new with the old to preserve the character of the house.

18 315 East Street (early 1900's) The Gates House has, under a succession of owners, grown in charm and beauty. A garage, pool, sunroom, breakfast room and bonus room were added by the present owners.



(20) Glaze-Patton

19 400 East Street (ca. 1905) Raney-Sherbert-Leslie House uniquely designed to fit the corner lot.

20 401 S. Beaty (ca. 1915) Glaze-Patton House has been the scene of many memorable parties. Built by Dr. Andrew Glaze, Jr., a leading physician in Birmingham, it was then owned by R.B. Patton, prominent attorney in Athens, and is now the home of R.B. Patton III. Servant's quarters in the back are now used for storage.

21 408 S. Beaty Street (1927) Legg-Hunt House was built for Dr. I.V. Legg in the Spanish design, inspired by the Legg family's residence in Florida, where the family lived before returning to his native country to live. It contains many features unusual to this area.

22 500 Lee Street (1924) The Rawls-Smith house of Dutch Colonial design, was built as rental property for Robert M. Rawls, owner and editor of the Athens "Alabama Courier" paper for over fifty years. Present owners have extensively remodeled.

23 503 S. Clinton (ca. 1870) Rawls-Honeycutt House was built originally for J.W. Black and was badly burned and rebuilt for Black's son-in-law, R.M. Rawls in 1914.



(24) Westmoreland-Hatchett

24 517 S. Clinton (ca. 1855) **Westmoreland-Hatchett House** was built by a wealthy planter, Haywood Jones, with sixteen foot ceilings and twenty foot square rooms.

25 411 S. Clinton (1902) **Walker-Patton House**. A two-story frame was built for Ryan Walker, local attorney. The house is noted for its twelve fluted Doric Columns. Ten outside entrances graced the original home before remodeling and, in 1959, the first private swimming pool in Athens was built in the backyard. R.B. "Buck" Patton and Helen Christopher Patton have owned the house for many years. Servant's quarters are now used for storage space.

26 401 S. Clinton (ca. 1834) **Richardson-Gordon House** was built by William Richardson an attorney from Goochland County, Virginia, and the father of U.S. Congressman William Richardson, who grew to maturity here. The house served as a hospital during the Civil War and is said to have bloodstains still visible on the floor. A soldier is said to have been killed while riding his horse through the hallway and another was shot on the lawn.

27 402 S. Clinton - **McMeans-Brown House**. Mrs. McMeans, wife of the builder, was a big-game hunter and had the living room mantle built around a moosehead display, which was removed by the present owners. Ghosts were left in the home, but remain quiet these days.



(30) Walker-Kuykendall

27a 300 S. Clinton - **McCollum House** Built in 1910 by Dr. McDaniel, a dentist in Athens. At one time the house was owned by Judge Ed Horton. Originally the house was three stories - in the late 70's the house burned and the 3rd story was not rebuilt. The original wood columns still remain in the house and are in good condition. There are pocket doors going into the formal living room. There are four fireplaces.

28 311 S. Clinton (1903) **Pope-Higgins House**. Mr. M.A. Pope, original owner, built many of the sidewalks in Athens, some of which bear his name. This home was damaged by fire about 1934, but was restored. The only known English Walnut tree in the county, which was grown from seed, was lost in 1998 to disease.

29 312 S. Clinton (1915) **Swafford-House**. This two story brick home is one several in Athens with a long roof line and shady front porch.

30 305 S. Clinton (1845) **Walker-Kuykendall House**. Home of the family of Judge William Walker for well over a century has been extensively remodeled. The present owners found that the studs are mortised, tenoned and pegged. The log cabin behind the house was bought from the Witty Family and reconstructed for a guest house.

31 306 S. Clinton (1901) **Horton-Bauer House**. One of the few two-story frame Victorian houses in Athens was built for the family of Judge James E. Horton, Jr., presiding judge of the famous Scottsboro trials in the 1930's.



(36) Griffis-Ward

32 301 S. Clinton (ca. 1900) Martin-Gasser House is said to have had the first bathtub in Athens—a large tin affair which could hold several people. Water drained from the tub was routed to drench the flower garden. The house was later owned by the family of Luther and Haidee Tutwiler Glaze and a number of other families.

33 300 S. Beaty (ca. 1900) Jones-Russell House. W.L. Martin built this one-story frame house on the former Mason property. It was purchased in 1901 by Dr. T.C. Jones, Confederate Veteran who practiced in Athens.

34 301 S. Beaty (1926) Woodroof-Leigeber house was built by Frances Woodroof, Athens social worker.

35 303 S. Beaty (ca. 1925) The Lewis House was built for James E. Horton and Martha Phillips Lewis. Additional rooms have been added at the back of this Dutch Provincial house for needed space.

36 307 S. Beaty (1903) Griffis-Ward House was the first house built after the Mason property was sold for building lots. Many older residents recall attending elegant parties here. The house was purchased by Will Hightower in the 1950's to replace his house near the Big Spring, which was demolished when Hobbs Street was cut through to Highway 31.



(38) Beaty-Mason

37 212 S. Beaty (ca. 1895) Simmons-Harlow House was built by W.W. Simmons and was changed considerably by the family of Dr. Pryor Williams. A picture, made about 1895, shows only this and the Beaty-Mason House existing on the street at that time.

38 211 S. Beaty (1826) Beaty-Mason House was built for Robert Beaty, who with John Carroll, founded the City of Athens in 1818. They donated the Town Spring, cemetery space and land for public buildings. The Beaty House was inherited by the Mason family and was eventually sold to Athens State University to serve as the President's home.

39 Beaty-Slave Cabin (1826) is the only known Saddlebag (or central chimney) cabin in the county. Within the memory of many residents, faithful servants of the Mason family lived here. It was restored some years ago by Bobby Riddle of Decatur, Alabama as a guest house for the President's home.

40 207 S. Beaty (1929) Rosenau-Dwyer House is Georgian Colonial. There are two layers of brick from Athens Brickyard. Home was designed by Mr. Southgate, architect from Nashville, Tennessee. Foundation and walls are one foot poured concrete. Pillars are poured concrete.



(42) Sanders-Shaw

41 210 S. Beaty (1911) **Simmons-McLin House** was built for W.W. Simmons and has been called the "House of the Seven Gables." The lot was part of the original patent made in 1818 to Beaty and Carroll on Barlow (now Beaty Street). This house was started in 1910 and completed in 1911.

42 201 S. Beaty (ca. 1901) **Sanders-Shaw House** has many outstanding features, among them the Corinthian columns, beautiful woodwork, dining room copied from the Chateau Frontenac in Canada, black and white checked marble entrance and porch, floor, and beveled glass doors. Sanders Hall at Athens State University was named for the builder of this house, W.T. Sanders.

43 208 E. Washington (1903) **Glaze-May House** once had a cupola above the rounded windows, but it was destroyed by fire in 1917. The yard is renowned for its flowering dogwood in the spring.

44 202 E. Washington (ca. 1912) **Frost-Gates/Beard Grayson-Scott Interiors** has recently been restored. Beveled glass in the doorway reflects the beauty of the interior. This former residence now houses a business. Go in for a visit.



(45) St. Timothy's Episcopal Church

45 207 E. Washington-St. Timothy's **Episcopal Church** closely resembles the original 1880 structure, which was torn down in the 1960's. The original church was built of brick made by workers of the Mason Family, founding members. Miss Mary Mason, local historian, was one of the most tireless workers in the church. The brick crumbled beyond repair, partially because of the picturesque ivy which clung to its walls. Brick in the Parish House came from an old plantation, "Cambridge". Part of the original stained glass is still in this quaint, beautiful church, which has struggled and survived through many changes, yet retains its charm and special character.



(25) Walker-Patton

**Note: Please do not go into property
- This is a walking tour only.**



(37) Simmons-Harlow



(21) Legg-Hunt



(26) Richardson-Gordon



(34) Woodroof-Leigeber



(35) Lewis



(33) Jones-Russell



(22) Rawls-Smith



(8) Kennemer-Holt



(11) Rankin-Bishop



(18) Gates



(16) Word-Deemer



(13) Freeman



(9) Chambers-Terry



(17) Carden-Corder



(12) Osborn-Gates



(27) McMeans-Brown



(31) Horton-Bauer



(29) Swafford



(32) Martin-Gasser



(23) Rawls-Honeycutt



(27a) McCollum



(3) Old Athens Cemetery



(41) Simmons-McLin



(44) Frost-Gates/Beard



(2) Sanders-Gish



(4) Clay-Durham



(5) Sanders-Grissom



(43) Glaze-May



(7) Mason-Looney

Note: Please do not trespass on property.

For Additional Information Call:
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