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Downtown Historic Heritage Walk



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1. Original Fannin County Courthouse

2. Historic Butt Family Home

3. Former City Hall & Jail

4. Old Trailways Bus Station

5. Rialto Theatre

6. Rexall

7. Royal Theatre

8. Hall Building

9. Gartrell Building

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15. Train Depot

16. Bank Building

17. Old Post Office

18. Victorian Home

19. Baugh House

20. Original L&N Railroad Building



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VISITOR CENTER

1. Fannin County Courthouse - 420 West Main Street

The original courthouse was built in 1895, then burned down in 1936. This building was rebuilt the following year and used as the Courthouse from 1937-2004, before the new one replaced it. The Art Center leased it in 2004, and after renovations, opened its first exhibit in 2007. Details of the original interior can still be seen today.

2. Historic Butt Family Home - 480 West Main Street

This circa 1914 historic home once belonged to Colonel William Butt and his wife, Fanny. When the train used to carry passengers from Atlanta to Blue Ridge, the couple once hosted their friend for tea, Margaret Mitchell, author of *Gone with the Wind*.

3. Former City Hall & Jail - 301 Church Street

The City of Blue Ridge Police Department was established in 1887. This building was built in 1936-37 as a WPA (Works Progress Administration) New Deal project under President Roosevelt. Originally, the building served as the Blue Ridge City Hall and Jail, but the jail cells have not been used since 1999.

4. Old Trailways Bus Station - 287 Church Street

Built around 1955, this charming building was the local Trailways Bus Station. The buses would take passengers to Atlanta, where they caught a bus to different bus to other locations. Trailways National Bus System was established in 1936 and formed a union of 5 different lines to compete with Greyhound bus lines. With the decline of bus ridership, the building became Davenport's Electric Motor Service, then a hair salon.

5. Rialto Theatre – 801 East Main Street

7. Royal Theatre – 787 East Main Street

The Rialto Theatre opened in 1946-47. It replaced the Royal Theatre that opened in 1939. The Royal seated only 200 people, creating a need for a larger facility. The Rialto had 500 seats and a balcony. At one time, the Royal and Rialto were owned by the same person, Willard Mowbray. Movies became so popular in the 1940's that Mowbray re-opened the Royal in the 1950's, offering 700 seats for moviegoers!

6. Rexall – 793 East Main Street

Built in 1945 as the Rexall, then later purchased by good friends N.L. Prather and W.A. Walden who converted it to the Blue Ridge Pharmacy. The store sold different types of merchandise, pharmaceutical items, and also had a long counter with tall stools where you could enjoy sandwiches, ice cream, and beverages. The ice cream came up from Atlanta on the train. The Rexall sign still graces the outside of the building, offering a glimpse of what it might have looked like to walk down the street on your way to have a sandwich or an ice cream float.

8. Hall Building – 771-781 East Main

One of the oldest buildings in Blue Ridge, built around 1900 as one unit, now consists of 3 units, with the 2nd story being a hotel run by Colonel William Butt. It housed a few stores through the years and was purchased by the Hall family in the 1940's. When

the building was divided into separate stores, Helen Hall ran a women's clothing store during World War II. Don Hall opened a men's clothing store in the 1960's, selling the building to Jack and Janet Hall, who opened a store called "The Little Shop" where they sold gifts and greeting cards until they closed in the 1990's.

9. Gartrell Building – 733 East Main Street

This structure started out as a hay grain and feed store on one side, and a grocery store on the other. The Douthit Hotel, originally located on the 2nd floor, later reopened as the Gartrell Hotel after Annie Gartrell and her husband, who used to run the Blue Ridge Hotel and sold it, moved their hotel to this location during WWII before closing in 1970. During the 1960's, the 1st floor hosted a 5 and 10 cent store on one side, and a flower shop on the other, both called Lovell's.

10. The Douthit Building – 723 East Main Street

Built around the 1900's. It was a two-story structure at one time and Mr. Douthit offered rooms to rent on the second story. A 5 and 10 cent chain store called Lay's operated on the ground floor on one side, and local resident Reid Mull ran a dry goods store on the other side. The building burned down around 1950, a new larger building was constructed on the land and both Lay's and Mull's dry goods reopened, closing around 1977.

11. The Jones Building – 709-715 East Main Street

Structurally one building, it was constructed using recycled bricks from the Mary P. Willingham School for Girls that operated from 1916-1931. Owned by brothers Jack Jones Sr. and Hoke Jones, Jack opened the very first self-serve grocery store (709) while Hoke ran a pool hall (715), where older folks thought it to be a "den of iniquity" where young men could be "led astray". You can still see the marble plaque reading "Jones Brothers 1946".

12. Mercantile – 490 East Main Street

Mr. T.G. Hall built this between 1900-1917 for a general mercantile and clothing business. During WWII, Jack Walker then Fred Stiles owned the building, and each ran a store upstairs. At one time, the downstairs was used as a bottling plant for the then very popular NuGrape soda, closing after just a year. Over the years, the store sold eggs and chickens, operated as a radiator shop, and was purchased/renovated in 2000 for today's shops.

13. Cigar Building – 560 East Main Street

Built in the early 1900's, records show that the downstairs was a hardware store and stored 500 feet of hose upstairs. In the 1930's, it served as a boarding house and restaurant run by "Granny" or "Maw Blackstock." Railroad and Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) workers would rent cots for 50 cents a night in one of the upstairs rooms. The building later became a laundromat, dry goods store, beauty shop, then a funeral home. The murals came in around 1971 when it was a wholesale candy and tobacco store.

14. Andy's Jewelers Building – 590 East Main Street

When the train was still running from Atlanta to Blue Ridge, Andy contracted with the rail line to repair and service employee

watches. The store was open for many years before closing, but the tiled front entrance to the current store still bears the name of 'Andy's Jewelry.'

15. Train Depot – 219 Train Depot

The depot was built in 1905-06, replacing the original depot that burned down. Passenger service saw a decline when the new "superhighways" became more prevalent in the 1950's. The rail line eventually ceased to carry passengers and became a freight line train until it finally stopped running in the early 1970's. The depot was the first building in Blue Ridge to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Years later, in the 1990's, volunteers restored the tracks and train in order to start the Blue Ridge Scenic Rail.

16. Bank Building – 260 West Main Street

Built in 1926, this was the Fannin County Bank from 1927-1976, with pink marble wainscoting and crushed marble and granite terrazzo flooring. To the back of the structure, you can still see the original bank vault from 1927!

17. Old Post Office – 165 Depot Street

Fannin County's very first Post Office in the 1890's was once across the street where the parking garage is now. This location opened as the Post office around 1961 and operated until it moved to its present location on the Orvin Lance Connector in 2009.

18. White Victorian Home – 477 West First Street

This beautiful Victorian home was built in 1890 by Sylvester Long, a railroad construction gang boss. The banisters and ornamental trimmings were all made by hand. When the railroad shops closed in 1906, the home became a temporary hotel. In 1909, James Kincaid, the first 'Ordinary' (meaning he was in charge of Probate Court, wills, and estates) of Fannin County, bought the house for \$2,500. He chose the home due to it being one of the few homes that had indoor plumbing, with 14 rooms, 8 fireplaces, 12' ceilings and claw tubs. It was converted into a Bed & Breakfast in 1996.

19. Baugh House – 477 West First Street

Built in 1890 by James Walden Baugh, it is the oldest brick home in Blue Ridge. Baugh was a brick mason who owned the Baugh brickyards in Mineral Bluff, where the bricks for this building were from. Later, the building became home to the Baugh House Museum, operated by the Fannin County Heritage Foundation.

20. L & N Railroad Building – 274 West Main Street

Built in 1895, 9 years after the trains first began, it was known as the L & N (Louisville and Nashville) Building. It stood 3 stories tall, with the 2nd and 3rd floors occupied by railroad offices. In 1901, the 1st floor housed the North Georgia National Bank. In 1912, it was purchased by William Allen, and the bank closed in 1916. Since then, it's served as other banks, a pharmacy, physician's office, attorney's office, meeting spaces, and a telephone and electric company. In the 1940's, roof leakage caused the 3rd floor to be removed, making it the 2-story building it is now.