



*Anyone interested in taking a self-guided tour along the Ramble route should do so on Sat. Oct. 13th when the Madison-Morgan Conservancy has erected signs to help guide the tour.*

*We recommend car pooling—or at least two persons per car, one person to drive and one person to read aloud from the tour guide. Be sure to fill your tank with gas. Self-guided vehicles should plan to leave the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center between 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. The tour will take two - three hours, depending on how much talking and sight-seeing folks choose to do.*

*Seats on the bus for the Conservancy-guided tour are available for just \$5 per person. These buses will leave from the Cultural Center promptly at 2:00 p.m. Bus space is limited.*

*The Madison-Morgan Conservancy is also hosting a dinner, "The Bounty of Morgan County," that evening. All food will be prepared using locally grown ingredients. Tickets are \$15 per person.*

*Call the Conservancy at (706) 342-9252 to make your reservation for the bus tour and/or dinner. We look forward to seeing you there.*

# '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE TOUR GUIDE



*Sponsored by The Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Inc.*

## Sat. Oct. 13, '07

A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

### Saturday, October 13, 2007

Before we drive the first mile of the Greenprint Ramble, the Board of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy wants to acknowledge with gratitude the extraordinary work of volunteers Pamela Hall and Colleen Hall in creating this guide and making the first Greenprint Ramble a reality.

Pamela Hall's prodigious research through old records, books, plats, newspapers and maps augmented by interviews with over forty people and innumerable field trips has created an invaluable history of this southwestern part of Morgan County. Graphic artist Colleen Hall has designed not only our new meaningful logo and ads you have seen in the *Citizen*, but the entire Ramble guide, which is indeed a keep-sake.

In addition to their contributions, we would like to thank the many volunteers who helped organize the details of this Ramble. It is their work that has allowed the Conservancy to sponsor Morgan County's first Greenprint Ramble.

The Conservancy's mission is presenting this Greenprint Ramble in the form of *Education and Preservation*. This Ramble focuses on Morgan County's Greenprint which documents existing valuable resources worthy of protection and provides ways the community can actively protect those resources. The document itself is not a tic, but rather is the vehicle through which we inventory our resources, explore conservation strategies, and add resources for future protection. As you drive this Ramble, think about what you would want to protect for your children's future and for the generations that follow. Your drive is an educational forum, an interactive experience that we believe is the most innovative educational forum that we have offered in our even years as a conservancy. Knowing our history and the landscape of this history will be the foundation for its preservation. If you come away with ideas for the future of Morgan County, this Ramble will have been a great success.

### Start your engines!!! Set your trip-o-meter; mileage numbers starting with '0' will appear to help you confirm your location with the accompanying site description.

**0.0** Leave MADISON-MORGAN CULTURAL CENTER, turning **LEFT** out of parking lot onto FOSTER STREET.

Nathaneal Foster's large land holdings were divided and developed by the Madison Real Estate Company in 1890, when FOSTER STREET was laid out, named, and deeded to the city. Take a look at the 1890 plats for this area, including the Pine/Plum/Poplar Street area, where the lots are little changed. Obviously, development isn't new here, and up the hill, new houses are replacing mixed hardwood forest.

**0.25** The **Conservancy at Horse Branch Hill**, a subdivision developed by Kevin Meeler on property he acquired in 2005, will comprise 10 houses on both sides of FOSTER STREET as you proceed up the hill to MAXEY LANE. Named for the Horse Branch Creek (over which you are passing) which runs through downtown Madison, the subdivision includes four acres donated to the city of Madison to be protected from development in perpetuity. Situated behind the home sites you are passing on the right, this space includes a large stand of white oak, deciduous magnolias, and native azaleas. For those lamenting the loss of the less fortunate hardwoods on this tract, recall that all this land was tufted with the Prior family's cotton less than a century ago, at which time an especially grand white oak in the back of lot ten provided a bit of privacy to teens new to driving and dating who went parking "out here in the country," according to Roy Morris.

**0.5** Turn **RIGHT** onto MAXEY LANE, which becomes CRAWFORD STREET

**0.75** On your left are the **homes of the Penningtons** and the **Pennington pecan grove**, a green reprieve for this early subdivision. Brooks Pennington, Jr., planted these trees as a young man, and they still yield a considerable harvest about every other November. The Penningtons bought the property and built a house for a growing family. The lake now called Lake Pennington was built by Mr. Weyman L. Carmichael, who sold daily fishing passes and bait from a cabin here. The property on the right once was the hunting ground/farm retreat of Dr. James H. Nicholson, who sold off parcels in the 1950s after coming to Madison (his wife's family's home) after World War II. He called the farm Sunnybrook after his favorite brand of whiskey. The influential Senator Joshua Hill, reputed to have saved Madison from Sherman's troops, once owned this land, hence the provenance of the upcoming park.

**1.2** Madison has retained much greenspace through its historic development. Along with privately maintained greenspace, there are six city parks. Most are on donated land, including **Hill Park**, on the right here, and Walton Park at the fork where you will bear left after leaving MAIN STREET up ahead. These broad lawns provide plenty of room for cook-outs, birthday parties, or a pick-up football game. Its watershed filled in with dirt, the aforementioned Horse



Foster Street plat from 1890



Madison map showing city limits with overlay of historic district from Greenprint #12

Turn Left

# 1

Turn Right

# 2  
# 3

# 4





The Confederate Soldier Monument in Hill Park was originally dedicated on the square downtown.



Another Madison monument, Mr. Ted Wallace.



The Perry House circa 1900.



The Brewer boulder, a granite outcropping typical of the Piedmont.

## A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY

Branch Creek was rerouted in concrete under the playing field here and has been known to yield minnows, snakes, and many a crawdad to curious little boys and girls. Built by the city of Madison in the 1930s, a swimming pool lay west of the tennis courts until 2006. (Adelaide Wallace Ponder learned to swim there as a child.) Bell Hill Knight, daughter of Madison's favored son and anti-secessionist Senator Joshua Hill, donated this land to the city, and ironically, it became the site of the **Confederate Soldier Memorial** (originally dedicated on the square in 1908) thanks to the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

**1.3** < Turn **LEFT** on **SOUTH MAIN STREET**

**1.4** < Bear **LEFT** on **441 SOUTH / EATONTON ROAD**

As mentioned above, **Walton Park**, on your right here, was donated by the Walton Family. Formerly lined with tenant houses, it now provides a pleasing counterpart to the lovely Candler and Chambers yards on the left of "Candler Curve".

You are leaving the **MADISON HISTORIC DISTRICT** (comprising approximately 730 acres, established as a National Historic District in 1974 and then as a Local Historic District in 1988) and are entering a commercial district that looks similar to tens of thousands of interstate crossing areas throughout the US. While these homogenous sprawling commercial areas are not as aesthetically pleasing as historic districts, they do provide many services to residents and visitors: fast food, self-serve gasoline, and an assortment of big-box retail options. Among the mom and pop shops present in this corridor, Conner's Auto Parts, Mr. Ted Wallace's Auto Sales ("...since 1948!"), Crowe's Barbecue, Morris Wrecker, Harris Home Furnishings, WYTH AM1250, and Phil Cook Chevrolet remain comforting examples of locally owned businesses.

Behind present-day Happy China was a gully in which watermelons were available for public picking, and behind the flea market were modest tourist cabins.

**2.0** Off to your right, **BEACON HEIGHTS**, one of Madison's first subdivisions, was developed by W. L. Carmichael and named after a beacon light which has since been removed. The development was designed for veterans who paid just one dollar per building lot after World War II. Again the land had been treeless cotton fields, and cotton proved an indignant ex-wife: as new ranch houses pronounced that this area would never be rural again, cotton begged to differ, springing up between the construction sites and providing a small harvest in 1947.

**2.8** At the first traffic light, you will cross the **MADISON BYPASS**, built around half the town in the early 1990s by the Georgia DOT after the right-of-way was acquired by the county. See the neat circle (on the map on pg. 2) that demarcated the original Madison city limits? The original city limits was drawn as a circle half a mile wide and expanded in the 1840s to a mile-wide circle. More than doubling its area, the city of Madison annexed everything you've driven through to include the commercial district out to I-20 in 1989.

**3.3** As you approach I-20, look over at McDonalds on the left and try to imagine the family home of **MARY KNIGHT PERRY** here. Of the fire that took it all in 1946, Louise McHenry Hickey wrote in *Rambles Through Morgan County Georgia*: "There was not merely property loss in the old homestead of Mrs. Weyman Carmichael...but there was irreparable loss of sentimental and historic value." Mrs. Carmichael was the granddaughter of the third ambassador to France, William H. Crawford, whose treasures from traveling Europe, socializing with Napoleon, and serving in the early United States capitol were the décor of this fine home.

When she married Weyman Carmichael, this creative entrepreneur inherited all the land now involved in this I-20/441 interchange and sold off parcels as the interstate was constructed in the 1960s. A "fish-pond" lay where Cracker Barrel now stands.

**3.6** Pass over I-20, move into the right lane, and immediately beyond the T.A. Truck Stop > **RIGHT** onto **PIERCE DAIRY ROAD**

This road was paved after World War II and appears unnamed on the 1897 map, although by 1925 it bore the same name as a nearby creek, Peteet (Road). Pass Bethlehem Baptist Church on the left, and shortly thereafter on the left at **1400 PIERCE DAIRY ROAD**, look for the **Brewer Boulder**, an excellent example of the granite outcroppings that are a signature of the Piedmont. Adjacent, you'll see Mr. Terrell Jackson's farm with goats and creatively used old farm implements in the front yard. Note how quickly we've moved from a busy interstate commercial crossing to rural tranquility.

**5.2** Coming up on the right is **Wood Veterinary Clinic/Paradise Hill** owned by Dr. Phillip Wood and built in 1830 by Mr. Reuben Mann, born 1785 in Virginia, for whom this political district was named. Dubbed Paradise Hill, this cotton plantation was sold by its Union-sympathetic owner to a local at the start of the Civil War. Remember the Perry House that burned where McDonalds now stands? Mr. Carmichael and family moved here after the fire. Dr. Wood bought this Carmichael/Fitzpatrick/Floyd House in 1978 and has a copy of the original land grant (as well as one

# 5

Turn Left

Bear Left

# 6

Turn Right

# 7

# 8

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

of the finest locally found arrowhead collections around). His yard invites birds of every feather with numerous owl boxes and tires recycled as bird houses.

# 9

**5.6** You are passing over **Carmichael Lake** on both sides of the road. Built in the winters of 1929-1932 by African-American workers who needed employment during the Depression, Mr. Carmichael utilized numerous driver-mule teams to build the dam that created the east segment of this large lake. Hand-guided scoops moved the soil. The Albert Wilson family built a 12 by 18 foot waterwheel for the lake in a plan—eventually abandoned—for Morgan County's first hydroelectric plant here. The western half of the lake was constructed with less sweat and more bulldozer power in the 1940s. As opinionated as he was opportunistic, Mr. Carmichael the developer was also the publisher of *The Morgan County News* until 1953.

# 10

**6.1** Upcoming on the left at the intersection with *MISSION/AQUA ROAD* is **Holly Berry Farm**, built in 1817 by the Waring family of Charleston who had a 2000-acre plantation here (it was subsequently the Clemens Farm). Restored by Mrs. Robert Turnell, this early Greek Revival raised cottage has been owned by horse breeders Sandra & Allan Karl since 1986. They fell in love with Madison and Morgan County on tours from Gwinnett County where she got her start in horse-breeding. (She currently is raising ten Peruvians). The pegged porch had to be removed in 2001. They rent out the two cottages behind the corral, the one on the left dating from the time of the plantation.

**MADISON LAKES SUBDIVISION** (not visible from this road), formerly the property of Mr. Winfred Trice, lies just beyond the property you are passing on the left beyond *AQUA ROAD*. Once known as the Fitzsimmons dairy farm, much of this land was also the property of Robert Turnell. An 1100-acre "Master Planned Community", this largest Morgan County subdivision contains private home lots as well as a large town home retirement community.

Mrs. Trice's home is the one atop the next hill on the left with the waterwheel at roadside, a familiar landmark in these parts.

**7.4 2601 PIERCE DAIRY ROAD.** Where this log-style house sits atop the hill, there once sat the homestead of Walter WILSON. Mr. Jake Wilson's great uncle was a young soldier in W.T. Sherman's army who took a liking to this land when Sherman came through Morgan County in 1865. Mr. Wilson came back to buy 1000 acres between Indian Creek and Pierce Dairy Road. His brother, Mr. Albert Wilson, purchased 1000 acres between Pierce Dairy Road and Eatonton Road. When Walter was killed in a log cart accident, the land was divided among six children. Jake's father, Jake, Sr., married a Baldwin (Genie Mae, who wrote a column in the local paper for more than fifty years). These former New Jersey-ites seem a far cry from what most "natives" associate with Yankees. Mr. Wilson and wife Blanche Cronin and sister Harriet Wilson Wade live off Eatonton Rd.

# 11

**7.9** At 2781 *PIERCE DAIRY ROAD*, drop off your pecan crop in the shells at the **Nuthouse of Mr. Raymond Gilbert** on the right, and they'll come back shelled and clean for a very reasonable price.

# 12

**8.5** Upcoming on the right is the **Thomas Family homestead** built in 1917 when the aforementioned Wilson family farm was subdivided into 150-acre lots for distribution among the children, one of whom built this house. Mr. N.R. Bennett, Sr. and Mr. H.O. Thomas bought it in 1945, moving to Morgan County from Athens in a dairy partnership. Chester Thomas (current Morgan County Commissioner) recalls in their first year of farming—WW II not yet over—his father arranged for a truckload of German prisoners to haul in hay that fall. The largest commercial dairy in the county at that time, the Bennett-Thomas partnership was dissolved in 1982, Tim and Debbie Lamb bought the land in 1992 and continue to enjoy the house.

# 13

**8.7** Look up on the hill to your right to appreciate the restored **Pierce Dairy Barns** (now with oak-lined drive) built by Mr. Jacob M. Wilson and crew in 1932 (per initials and dates still found in elements of the foundation). The barns were built for W.O. Pierce, a milk distributor in Atlanta who got a contract to sell milk to the Army. He generated his own power and had an ice plant to keep the milk cold. To the benefit of the local smaller dairies, he bought milk at \$.20 per gallon from those who added theirs to his tanks, and in its heyday dairymen here hand-milked 280 head per day. There were at least five workers' houses on the property, and the formerly grand barns were in terrible shape when purchased in 1995 by Mercer and Alex Williams from Grayson, Georgia. The restoration took nearly eight years and included the addition of a drive and a 17-acre lake. In the past few years Mr. Williams has continued to add parcels, piecing back together the original holdings of Mr. Pierce.

Turn Left

# 14

**9.8** < **LEFT** onto *SEVEN ISLANDS RD.* (the *GODFREY-BUCKHEAD RD.* to locals) a leg of one of the first interstate highways, which in its early days was a stagecoach passage traversing the early republic from Philadelphia to New Orleans.

**10.3** On your right is the **Asa Cox house**, on land deeded in 1805 and possibly the oldest standing home in Morgan County. The Tatums purchased the property in 2002. Occupied last by local carpenter Mr. Eddie Chapman and his mother, the structure in the Piedmont Plain style is a wonderful example of purity, with not a pipe of indoor plumb-



*Lovely Greek Revival doorway at Holly Berry Farm.*



*Chester and daughter Lynda in front of the Pierce Dairy Barns in 1984.*



## A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY



Asa Cox house, probably the oldest standing house in the county.



The Loyd log cabin, restored by Terry Tatum with period implements.



Gravestone of James Shepherd.

ing (the well on the back porch has long dried up) or electricity and little paint. Like many veterans of the Revolutionary War who were rewarded with bounties of land for their service, Asa Cox's father came south to settle after the Creek treaty of 1803 opened land west of the Oconee. Asa's brother Cary built a similar house in Putnam County, where it is used in the Oconee National Forest and where you can see the substantial Cox family cemetery with impressive tombstones. As you can see, the house is stabilized by the addition of some timbers in the lower front wall, but very needy otherwise.

**11.1** Proceed east to the intersection with *E ATONTON ROAD / HWY 441*, where you'll see on the right the **historic marker for Seven Islands Road**. You may turn around as indicated by the signs, at **Joe's Store**. When Joe Hanson sold the local landmark almost twenty years ago, the sign needed no alteration, for another Joe (Joe Ransom of Swords) took over. If you need a barbecue sandwich or a rattlesnake belt, this is the place to stop. **TURN AROUND** and travel back west.

Along *SEVEN ISLANDS ROAD*, travelers from Charleston or Augusta could spend a night at one of many inns, a few of which are still in existence. Originally the lower Creek Trading Path, Seven Islands Road was known as **THREE-NOTCH ROAD** after it was surveyed under Thomas Jefferson by a Mr. Dale who cut blazes at intervals. Seven Islands is a translation of the local Creek expression that referred to the seven crossings that travelers had to make where the trail passed over the Ocmulgee River near Macon. According to Katherine Walters, author of *Oconee River Tales to Tell*, "Thousands of Georgia pioneers traveled across it as they migrated into Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas to seek fresh cotton lands after their own lands were depleted."

From *Rambles through Morgan County, GA* by Louise McHenry Hickey:

There was a network of stagecoach roads over Georgia in those early days, connecting principal towns. Regular schedules were published in the newspapers. From Augusta to the capital, Milledgeville, a coach ran six days in the week, the fare being \$10. A similar charge was made from Milledgeville to Columbus. From Athens to Augusta, the trip was made twice a week, at a charge of \$7.00. The duty of keeping the roads was in the hands of the local county authorities. In the early thirties, the state worked a force of two hundred slaves under a superintendent...but this was discontinued in 1835. With the advent of the railroad the old inns were less and less in use, and hotels were built in their place.

**11.9** On your right is a **log cabin** circa 1831, moved to this location in 1991 from Newton County by Teri Tatum and Jerry McCollum, head of the Georgia Wildlife Federation since 1987, after Teri commuted by the decaying structure for years. (Bob Loyd donated the site on Hwy 129 between Newborn and Broughton to the University of Georgia upon his death.) Teri and Jerry utilized all they could of the original structure, almost unsalvageable, but had to replace much. They left out the chinking and the original loft. They live on the property where Teri had a nursery business featuring magnolias until 1998. Around the cabin, she created a pass-along garden with plants mostly from the antebellum period—including a white quince from Ms. Mary Gardner.

Slow down as you pass by *PIERCE DAIRY ROAD*

**12.4** If you were to pull into the dumpster loading driveway on your right, you might get a glimpse of the old **SHEPHERD FAMILY CEMETERY** with some beautiful granite obelisks hidden behind the adjacent trees. This district of the county was named after the Shepherd family, from which only a few descendents remain. On Mercer Williams' land described above as the Pierce Dairy Barns, another family cemetery exists with graves for Shipperds, possibly an earlier version of the name.

**12.8** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** into the horseshoe drive at Great Oaks (5691 *SEVEN ISLANDS ROAD*) This is the old **Shepherd family homestead** a historic farmhouse owned since 1992 by Jimmy and Debbie Conner. So appreciative of the grand old oaks on the 100+ acres was Jimmy that he named the tract Great Oaks and has kept it in Conservation Use. Settled by Robert Shepherd's great-grandfather, James (1773-1835), from Virginia, the first homestead was located across the road and served as a horse-changing stop. "As the stage rolled down the hill beyond Big Indian Creek, near Mrs. Emma Kilpatrick's place the driver would blow a call on his bugle. This was a signal for the stable boys to get the horses ready to hitch to the stage," wrote Miss Genie Mae Baldwin in her *Fairview News* column. This homestead burned completely.

The Robert Shepherd holdings, as demarcated on a survey from 1925 in the Conner's home, included over 400 acres, with multiple tenant houses, the river rocks from many foundations still marking the location of each in what would have been unending fields of cotton and what now are beautiful hardwood forests, many oaks, walnuts, and poplars

# 15  
# 16

Turn around

# 17

Turn Right  
# 18

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

well over a hundred years old. **THE LARGEST TREE KNOWN IN MORGAN COUNTY**—possibly in Georgia—a red oak with a circumference of over 21 feet, stands on the back of the property and seems only mildly scraped by a gash left by lightning at its base a decade ago. An astutely responsible landowner, Mr. Conner notes how easily grand old trees placed here long before his lifetime are cut off and sold for timber these days, the post-injury insult being “replacement” with rows of quick-growing pines which provide little habitat by comparison. “You see that,” he points to a magnificent oak trunk, “that’s what feeds the deer and the other wildlife here. And these hardwoods make more oxygen, too.”

Along the back property line one can walk a linear clearing with obviously banked flanks about twelve feet apart, the probable location of the **ORIGINAL SEVEN ISLANDS STAGECOACH ROAD**. Behind one of the multiple foundations of lost houses is a huge dug-out pit, still half-lined with stones and far wider than a well. A cellar? A shelter? One of seven children, Jimmy grew up near Sugar Creek and remarks, “We grew everything we ate.” (Growing what you eat—or knowing who did—is the whole idea behind tonight’s dinner.) As you leave the driveway turning right, you can see some remaining dependencies of the plantation across the road.

**14.1** Look right for the first of three emu glimpses you’ll get on this one tour! More common than chickens they are! Then cross **Big Indian Creek’s** double bridges.

Enter unincorporated community of **Godfrey**.

**15.0** On the left is **Pear Tree Farm** (6730 SEVEN ISLANDS ROAD), circa 1800, site of what is still locally called the **Kilpatrick House**, owned by the same family from 1873 until 1971. Dating the house accurately has not been possible: structurally it is consistent with 1810-1830; the land would have been awarded in the 1807 lottery. (More later) The estate was valued at \$1000 when Madison Kilpatrick purchased it in 1873. At one time 1000 acres large, division of the property among offspring has resulted in the current 500-acre plot on which excavations have occurred. Mrs. John (Emma Owens) Kilpatrick, the last Kilpatrick occupant, was for decades the Godfrey correspondent to *the Madisonian* (the local paper owned for decades by the Ponder family mentioned earlier). The farm includes three lakes and extends all the way into Godfrey, as demarcated by its black board fence. It is the weekend retreat of Stephen Young, a Miller Beer distributor. The **HARWELL FAMILY CEMETERY** is located on this property as Dr. Littleton Harwell owned the plot as part of a 900-acre estate in the mid-1800s after brief ownership by the William Bonner family.

Shortly after the organization of Morgan County in 1807, **PETER WYCHE WALTON** (1792-1847) of Virginia settled on Little River beyond present-day Godfrey and called the area **HAMBURG**. (Nobody knows why.) He set up a mill and an extensive plantation, the remains of which we’ll go by later.

**15.9** Cross the railroad tracks at the five-way intersection, proceeding **LEFT** on **GODFREY ROAD** to enter historic downtown Godfrey.

At one time, this little town was a thriving busy railroad stop. Gone are the jail, icehouse, and cotton gin (the latter a necessity to rural Georgia communities) which stood east of the intersection of **GLADES ROAD** and **SEVEN ISLANDS ROAD**.

Pull into the first drive of the **Godfrey United Methodist Church** on your right and sit a spell.

Godfrey United Methodist Church (the original building burned) is on a lot donated by the town’s first family. Godfrey Methodist shares cemetery space with Pennington Methodist and Antioch Church. The name Godfrey was taken from Dr. James Ervine Godfrey (1834-1887) from Savannah who married Peter Walton’s daughter, Mary Perkins. The ceremony was performed by Dr. Godfrey’s father, a missionary to the Indians and slaves in this area, and the couple was given the 1,000 acres on both sides of Little River Road beyond this church. Their house sat adjacent the church. The lovely expanse of pasture now belongs to Floyd Newton, a Walton descendent, who grew up in nearby Pennington.

Before **GODFREY ROAD** was paved, children ran and skipped along this expanse. It was affectionately called the **OLD GREY HILL** and was covered with gravel chunks so large as to make the trip challenging exercise for barefoot children. From any vantage point, one sees more rolling hills, more granite outcroppings, emblems of the Piedmont. A more interesting hill is “**THE MOUNTAIN**”, a peculiar natural collection of non-granite rocks, visible back behind the church, which Mr. Newton believes to be the part of the southern edge of the Appalachians. Indeed, Georgia’s signature red clay is found roughly north of here, while south the soil becomes yellow and gritty.

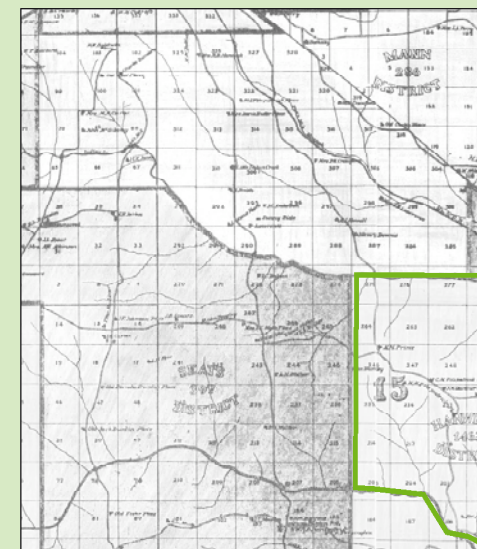
Geographically, we are in the middle of the Piedmont, the topography of which has determined, until recently, how people were able to make a living and subsequently many aspects of Southern culture. Katherine Walters explains in *Oconee River Tails to Tell*:

Placement of the Piedmont region in mid-Georgia between the mountains and coastal plain provides the region with the diversity of both boundary areas. The Piedmont’s definition is within its name---pied (foot) and mont



Jimmy Connor with county’s largest tree, a red oak.

Below: 1897 map of Morgan County showing the Mann, Shepherd, Seats, and Harwell militia districts. The Harwell District is outlined in green.



# 19

# 20

# 21

# 22

Proceed  
left

# 23

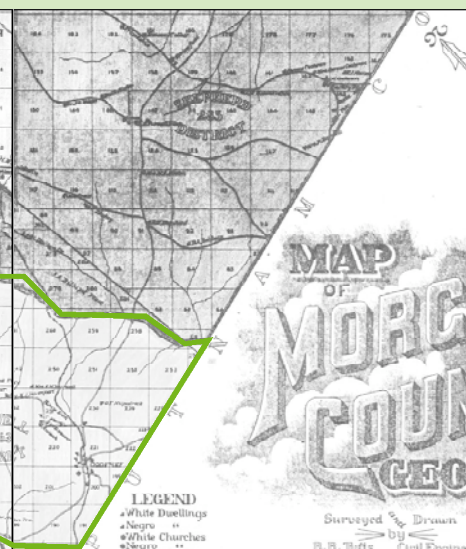




Map showing the five major geographical regions of Georgia. Morgan County is marked in green.



Antioch Church



## A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY

(mount or hill). Its surface features are rolling hills, rocky ridges, and slopes, with valleys between. The Piedmont became the most important agricultural region in Georgia for the first half of the nineteenth century.

The term "Fall Line" is used because of the abrupt drop of surface level dividing the coastal plain of the prehistoric Atlantic Ocean, which built up over millions of years, and the Piedmont plateau. Rapids and waterfalls of the Georgia rivers cannot be navigated above this Fall Line. It is also the dividing line between soils that are mostly level, loose, porous, sandy, and gray, and soils that are harder red clay found in hilly, uneven surfaces. The rapids and tumbling streams and rivers generated water power which enabled the region to dominate manufacturing for a period of time. It was easy and cheap to build dams and water wheels to power the machines.

Leave the church parking lot turning **LEFT** onto **GODFREY ROAD** and drive back through Godfrey **S L O W L Y**

**16.4** The first old brick building on the right was the bank.

Adjacent, **F.P. SMITH GENERAL MERCHANDISE**—now owned by Amici's—was built by Charles E. Daniel, Betty Jo Booth Franklin's grandfather. Her father, Foster Smith, acted as postmaster from his store for thirty plus years. As at other locations in the county, the mailman/engineer might simply toss the mail bag onto a designated platform before grabbing the outgoing mail bag off a post. At her retirement two years ago, Fannie Hardeman had served as postmistress here for forty years. **WAYSIDE INN**, a stagecoach inn, sat across from these store buildings on the lot to your left. The warehouse on the right was used for peach storage and shipment for decades when the Newton family had developed extensive orchards of some 35,000 trees.

Behind the warehouse sat the depot from which four passenger trains per day departed. The trip to Macon took two hours, to Athens, one hour. Betty Jo Smith could catch the morning train to Athens, shop all day, and come home on the evening leg. With the loss of the trestle over the Appalachian River, the Madison-Athens connection became history.

**16.6** Leave Godfrey, bearing **LEFT** onto **GODFREY ROAD** at the railroad tracks

**17.1** After passing a row of late 19th century houses, turn **LEFT** onto **ANTIOCH CHURCH ROAD**

On your right the old **GODFREY GRADE SCHOOL** sat on the lawn which now holds a picnic shelter across from the church. The first two buildings (early 1900s-1911 and 1915-1921) burned; the last replacement was torn down after the school was closed in 1959.

**17.4 Antioch Church**, earliest church organized in Morgan County, dates from 1809, the year the city of Madison was chartered. This structure is its third, built in 1956. The first site was a knoll above the Little River on land Peter Walton donated. Timbers from the original log cabin structure were removed to the present site in 1845 and remain in the undergirding of the present structure. It was at Antioch that Reverend Adiel Sherwood, author of the Georgia Gazeteers, an important series in which much antebellum history of this region of Georgia was documented, preached the first sermon of his 22-county revival in 1809. Four thousand are said to have attended, hundreds to have been baptized. Such was the spiritual impact that town names were changed to reflect the mass incursion of fervor, eg Sandtown, in adjacent Newton County, became Newborn. In the summers members could be new-born at Little River where it is crossed by Highway 83. Behind the church the cemetery is well-maintained.

**17.6** Proceed on **ANTIOCH CHURCH ROAD** back to **GODFREY ROAD**. Turn **LEFT** onto **GODFREY ROAD**. You will pass the **New Enon Baptist Church**, organized in 1867.

The extensive **dairy farm of Aubrey and Thelma Moon** is ahead on the right. After 58 years of milking cows every day, the Moons sold their last milk load on April 19, 2007. Mr. Moon's grandparents settled their farm here and, like everyone else, grew cotton before the boll weevil changed everything. Awarded the Farm Family of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce this year, the Moons now raise heifers and fear suburban residential development.

Drawn by R.B. Tufts, the **1897 MAP OF MORGAN COUNTY** (copies of which are available at the tax assessor's office for \$5) shows the militia districts into which the county was divided. As these districts were named after local land owners, this 15th district was also called the **HARWELL DISTRICT** for the large farm that lay north of here. These districts were laid out with natural boundaries, such as Big Indian Creek, and man-made boundaries—those lines demarcating the 202.5-acre land lots into which the county was surveyed for the land lottery. Thus, the land was surveyed into a gridwork of equal squares subsequently overlain by the sixteen militia districts. By treaties of 1803 and 1805 the Creeks ceded first the eastern half and then the rest of what became Morgan County, divided by a north-south meridian. Surveying was done starting at this meridian and moving east after 1803. Because subsequent surveys began west of Morgan County at the Ocmulgee and ran up to this line, the lines on either side don't align with each other. Lots were awarded by a lottery system and values assigned according to location, timber, fertility, etc. Grants—also called

# 24

Bear Left  
Turn Left

# 25

Turn Left  
# 26  
# 27

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

warrants or bounties—dated before 1800 designate parcels outside Morgan County, whose bicentennial we are celebrating this year (1807 - 2007). An interesting reference available is *Georgia Land Surveying History and Law* by Farris Cadle.

**20.0** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** onto **WALKER ROAD** (entering Walker territory) (unpaved road)

All the property between Walker Road and Godfrey Road stretching to Godfrey was at one time in Walker family possession. The original land grant to John Walker (1760-1836), who moved here from Burke County in 1810, is still preserved by Page Walker, his great-great-great granddaughter. This road is one of 100 miles of unpaved roads in the county.

"People Who Live at the End of Dirt Roads," a reflection by Lee Pitts, goes a little like this:

What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many dirt roads have been paved. People who live at the end of dirt roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride. We wouldn't have near the trouble with our educational system if our kids got their exercise walking a dirt road with other kids, from whom they learn how to get along. Our values were better when our roads were worse! People did not worship their cars more than their kids, and motorists were more courteous: they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust and bust your windshield with rocks. Dirt roads were environmentally friendly; you didn't hop in your car for a quart of milk—you walked to the barn for your milk. For your mail, you walked to the mailbox. Most paved roads lead to trouble; dirt roads more likely lead to a fishing creek or a swimming hole. At the end of a dirt road, the only time we even locked our car was in August, because if we didn't, some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini.

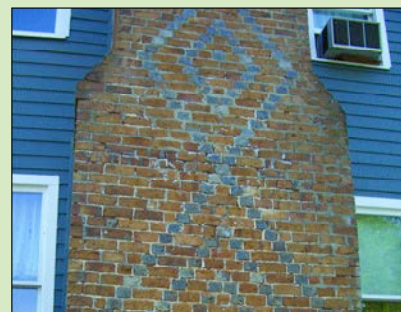
Look down **LAWRENCE ROAD** on your right. New houses have been developed by Michael Hires, now deceased, on 75 acres he bought from Robert "Junior" Hilsman, whose house is in the adjacent pasture. The subdivision, while not a conservation subdivision wherein a certain percentage of total acreage is set aside for protection, is set back from the road with appropriate land buffers and does not alter the prevailing rural agricultural viewscape here. To your left beyond this bridge, the old **PIERPONT SCHOOL** stood where there now is a horse farm.

**21.3** On the right is a Piedmont Plain style house, the **Isaac Walker House** (1120 Walker Road), extraordinary both for its excellent construction and also for its continued occupation by descendants of its original family. Dates found on the sills are 1808 and 1812. With hand-hewn 12' x 12' timbers, heart pine paneling, and pegged construction according to Roman numerals on the beams and studs, the house is a perfect study for the student of early Southern construction. Isaac (1790-1852) was one of four children of John Walker. Robert Wells "Bobby" Walker returned to take the reins at the family dairy on this 400-acre farm in 1972 and assiduously restored the house in the following years. A remarkable feature is found in the diamond design in the chimneys. Brick headers dipped in blue glaze allowed the mason to leave his mark, seen throughout the South, but only on two known homes in Morgan County. This 17th and 18th century design feature is evidence of the building traditions of the early settlers of Georgia.

From the road in front of the Isaac Walker house, you can look up across Hwy 83 and see the new home of another descendant, John Walker Thomas. Just north of his home is the site where sat the country home of John Walker, father of one of Madison's most famous sons, and brother of Isaac, John Byne Walker. The house, **THURLESTON** (now part of the home of Clarence and Kathy Whiteside), was moved into town in 1828 on logs. On the same property is the **WALKER FAMILY CEMETERY** where Isaac and dozens of relatives lie.

**21.6** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** on **Hwy 83**. Be careful—you are entering a busy highway, unlike the quiet rural roads you have been traveling.

In this area, known as the **DAIRY CAPITAL OF GEORGIA**, Morgan County can claim thirty dairies, most of the products sold to Mayfield or the Southeast Milk Coop, which supplies Publix and Parmalat brands. The average size of dairies is 180 cows, and most milk twice a day. In the nineteenth century, most small farms kept a milk cow or two for use of the family and neighbors. Selling milk was a backdoor business. When the vast fields of cotton that covered the land on both sides of nearly every road you have passed along were devastated by the boll weevil in the 1920s, families had to adapt. The establishment of the Madison Creamery in the early 1900s made it possible to send milk to Atlanta, and dairying became a primary business. Unlike the multi-generation dairies of the Midwest and New England, Georgia dairies are young. Considering that the county had 120 dairies just 40 years ago, a local former dairyman laments, "There will be a time when dairying will not exist in Morgan County." Later in the tour, however, you'll meet a dairyman who is adapting to modern market changes.



Chimney of Walker House. Brick headers were dipped in blue glaze to create this unique effect.



Dairy Capital of Georgia

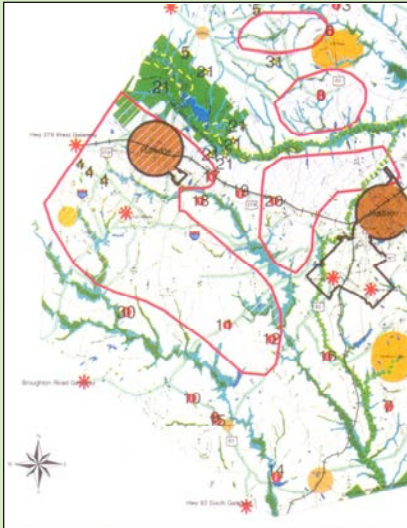
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Turn Right

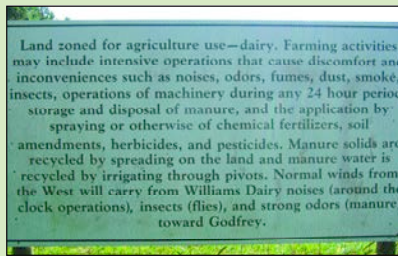


## A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY

# 29



Greenprint 'Concept' map, Southwest corner.



Everett Williams erected this sign to underscore the reality of living next to a working dairy.

**22.9** Immediately after crossing the lovely BIG INDIAN CREEK, look right to see...

**23.1 J.A. Smith Farm** (2600 Hwy 83), owned since 1985 by Tim and Beth Pridgen who purchased it from Mr. Robert Hilsman. Mr. Hilsman owned tracts on both sides of Hwy 83 and gave land to two of his sons, also dairymen, before selling the rest, which included this 100-acre farm. Because the original builder, Joseph A. Smith, was a mule breeder, locals took to calling the place the Jack-ass farm, a title Tim wasn't sure boded well when he was teased about it as he negotiated the purchase. His joy in the land, though, underlies his description of the various geography—forest, meadow, creek bed, hill—and fertility—planted pines, wildflowers, pecans—he has discovered here. Along Big Indian Creek, which splits the property 20:80, and along its many feeders, there are scattered granite outcroppings, one of which Mr. Hilsman called water rock as it made such an ideal natural cistern. Tragically, the original house burned completely in 2003, destroying irreplaceable personal memorabilia of the Pridgens, an original survey of the Smith property, and Tim's collection of arrowheads from the farm. He and Beth had the house reproduced as closely as possible to the first structure, which Tim had hand-restored with help from the Binions after 1985.

Morgan County continues to grow: the 2000 population of 15,457 grew to 17,492 in 2004. As development pressure began increasing in Georgia in the early eighties, disputes over water sources, traffic congestion, and loss of habitat became concerns for its citizens. Every day metropolitan Atlanta is estimated to lose 54 acres of trees and to accumulate 28 acres of impervious surface such as pavement for roads, driveways, parking lots, and roof tops. The addition of sodded yards, which need regular mowing and treatment with chemicals, cause not only the loss of habitat for wildlife, but creates water quality problems that cost tax dollars to remedy.

One of the goals and objectives expressed in the GREENPRINT was to support the continued existence of a viable agricultural and forestry sector in the county. With 130,248.18 acres in CONSERVATION USE, (of Morgan County's total of 227,125 acres), farmers are able to reduce their tax burden on land that otherwise would not generate enough income to allow maintenance as forest, field, or pasture. While opponents of Conservation Use designations argue that land-owners are benefiting from an unfair subsidy, it is equally valid to assert that the tax-paying public receives enormous benefits from same. From the protection of areas harboring wildlife to the protection of a rural agricultural way of life, Conservation Use assessment assures non-development for a ten-year period. And as long as trees don't go to school, cows don't call 911, deer don't cause kitchen fires, and chickens don't require law enforcement when they squabble, agricultural and forest land will continue to save taxpayers in costs for infrastructure and services.

Conservation Use is temporary. A CONSERVATION EASEMENT, however, protects land from development forever, keeping the land in private ownership. Conservation easements allow great flexibility for the landowner and allow the landowner to realize some economic value from the land by reserving a minimal amount of land for future development, reserving the right to farm as usual, or reserving the right to lease to hunters.. Morgan County has a relatively high proportion of agricultural acreage in Conservation Use. Additionally, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy has been successful in co-sponsoring seven conservation easements protecting approximately 600 acres in perpetuity (forever). No other county in Georgia has had such success in soliciting donated conservation easements.

**25.1 Ahead on the right** you'll pass land on which Wayne Vason placed a conservation easement, one of four he and his family have arranged. Beginning at the "Welcome to Madison" sign, you will notice a wooded buffer along the road. This three acre conservation easement consists of a 100-foot buffered viewshed, which will protect forever this vista along Hwy 83 (one of Morgan County's most scenic roads). Future development of this area is intended by the future land use map to be industrial in order to take advantage of the interstate access. Viewshed protection measures like this conservation easement can help protect the scenic qualities of a community.

**25.8** You may **TURN AROUND** in the Liberty Gas parking lot and proceed back south on Hwy 83. As you proceed south, notice the aforementioned viewshed conservation easement on your left. You will notice that the buffer has been cut all the way up to where the conservation easement begins, illustrating the real protection that conservation easements have on land. If there had been no conservation easement, most likely this whole buffer would have been cut.

Some words about water—dirty water. AQUA (with as many different local pronunciations as p-e-c-a-n) ROAD got its name from a water tower that used to stand at its intersection with the railroad. Water was pumped from adjacent Big Indian Creek to replenish the train for its uphill journey south to Godfrey. It's earning the name anew: the new water reclamation plant, not visible from Hwy 83, being constructed between Interstate 20 and Aqua Road will clean up to fifty percent of Madison's sewage, the filtered effluent emptying into Four Mile Branch, a tributary of Little River.

Turn Around

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

Under construction now, this state-of-the-art facility is a sequencing batch reactor, meaning raw sewage will be treated in batches in simultaneously functioning processes. Unlike the current two flow-through facilities that utilize chlorine, the new one will aerate, disinfectant with ultraviolet rays, then filter sewage to produce effluent cleaner than the water already flowing to Little River from its tributaries. Initially the plant will handle 250,000 gallons, but its capacity will be expandable to a million gallons a day to accomodate expected development.

**27.4** As you approach *AQUA ROAD* on your left, you can make out the frames of abandoned chicken houses on the high point of this pasture. Across the street are high-dollar houses on two-acre lots. Notice two very different development patterns.

**27.8** A half-mile down the hill you will see a subtly marked drive to **Deep Shade**, the farm owned since the mid-1960s by H.G. "Pat" Patillo of Decatur. Formerly part of the Fears farm, the land exemplifies fertile Piedmont forest and includes the Fears cemetery, old homestead, and several long sections of historic stone walls that encircle or delineate areas the use of which remains a mystery. Mr. Patillo has constructed a sturdy fence around the perimeter of the cemetery and keeps it cleared with sensitivity to any manipulation of structures. From this road all the way to Ms. Mattie Fears' Homeplace on *CLACK ROAD* the Fears siblings, buried here, owned everything. It is said that one could see all the way to Madison from the homestead over the two contiguous miles of cotton fields from which this hardwood forest has grown.

**29.1** ▶ Turn **RIGHT** onto *HILSMAN ROAD*

David Hilsman's dairy is on your left. Upcoming on your right is **Full Circle Farm**, circa 1820, home of Ellen Warren, a Morgan County commissioner since 2004. With 33 years as a Delta flight attendant under her wings, Ellen purchased the raised cottage farmhouse and acreage in 1978. The house was built by the Roberts family of Virginia, and their cemetery sits in the pasture across from the house on your left. In her passionate interest for providing a home to lost, neglected, and surplus animals, Ellen has created a menagerie that is the delight of many a child visitor. Look carefully to spot dozens of [neutered and spayed] dogs, cats, emus, peacocks, llamas, a pot-bellied pig, cows, horses, and donkeys, not to mention a variety of fowl. Full Circle Farm is a working commercial beef farm.

**30.2** ▶ Turn **RIGHT** on *SPEARS ROAD*

Having passed half a dozen family cemeteries now, you should know that Marc Atkinson (of Fayetteville, GA and of Madison's Atkinson family) led a few volunteers in mapping all the family cemeteries of the county and compiling a directory of more than 12,000 people buried in same. You can access the directory at the county archives in the Marshall "Woody" Williams building downtown. This past summer Morgan County Senior Planner Allison Moon and two interns from the University of Georgia worked tirelessly on an assessment of locations and conditions of more than 200 cemeteries. The survey includes GPS points, photos, and descriptions to be published in a document that will allow additional entries as "new" burial sites are located.

**31.4** ◀ Turn **LEFT** on *CLACK ROAD*. On your right is **Miss Mattie Fears' homeplace** (2911 *CLACK ROAD*).

The Fears siblings, two brothers and two sisters, none of whom ever married, bought the 243-acre estate in 1906 from S.G. Carter, whose name appears on the 1897 map. After Miss Fears (1874-1964) died, the estate sold for \$25,700. Referred to as the "brick house farm" in the deed books by 1883, the actual date of this early structure has been difficult to determine, even by local historian Marshall "Woody" Williams, who considered every sales value in every transaction on record, a wide range of architectural features, and building methods as they appear on other county structures. Kent Smith and Bob Robinson bought the place in 2003.

Back on the road take a look across the road at another lovely vista and example of the Piedmont. Clear back to Hwy 83 and beyond, Mr. A.L. Williams of Monroe and Primerica Insurance owns roughly the same lands the Walker family claimed almost 200 years ago.

Notice the paths of old cedar trees along our route. **CEDAR "FENCE ROWS"** are a typically southern rural landscape feature where landowners need long-lasting, drought-resistant evergreen screening. According to local horticulturist Rick Crown, cedars will also grow well even in the lowliest of soils and so were widely planted when farmers had utterly depleted the land with years of uninterrupted cotton. Cedars are good choices for xeriscaping—landscaping with native plants and trees which require little water, gaining recognition in these times when so little is falling.

**33.5** Crossing the **Clack Broach Bridge over the Little River**, take a moment to reflect on the drainage area of this waterway, a tributary of the Oconee River. Draining all of southwestern Morgan County via Pole, Hunnicutt, and Shoal Creeks, Little River is a significant feature on which many a farmer has depended and on which Putnam County

# 30

Turn Right

# 31

Turn Right

Turn Left  
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# 33



*A Fears family gravestone in the Fears Cemetery, now in Deep Shade.*



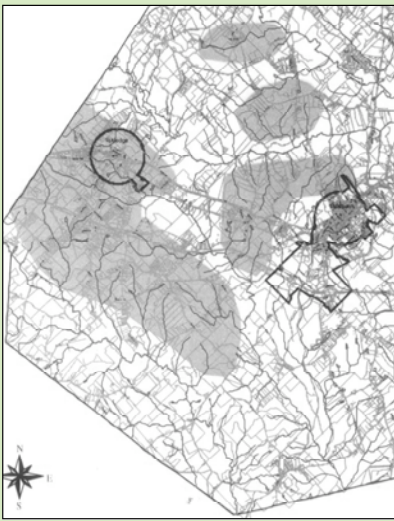
*Look carefully for a glimpse of an emu at Full Circle Farm.*



*Ms. Mattie Fears' Homeplace.*



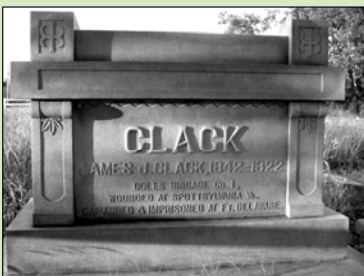
## A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY



From the Greenprint's, Groundwater Recharge Area map. The shaded areas indicate the water recharge areas.



Wilson and Regina Broach at the Clack Family homestead.



Gravestone of James J. Clack in the Clack Cemetery.

citizens depend for their water supply. Its level is largely dependent on rainfall, the capture of which depends on effective surface channels. Water in the Little River provides habitat for multiple species of fish, beavers, otters, and amphibians. Until the Oconee River was dammed for the creation of Lake Sinclair, eels were commonly seen and caught migrating upriver to breed.

In an area that stretches from Rutledge to the land you are driving over, the Greenprint map delineates **MORGAN COUNTY'S LARGEST GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREA**, a location where it is most likely that water can seep into and replenish an underground aquifer. Between watersheds such as rivers and creeks, water for human activities must be supplied by drilling wells to access such aquifers. This recharge area is comprised essentially of the land between Little River and Big Indian Creek. The replacement of permeable land with impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs, and driveways is an often unaccounted for cost of development.

**34.4** On your right, beyond the original route of *CLACK ROAD*, sits a beautiful example of a **tenant cottage**, the birthplace of Mr. Wilson Broach as well as his father, for whom the bridge over Little River was named. Mr. Broach's family "row-cropped" before turning to dairying, to which the backyard barn attests. You have just passed pastures of his beef cattle. The house retains its original siding, structure, and chimney, which was damaged when an oak blew over on the house in a storm. The back shed was added before the family moved around the corner in 1946.

**34.8** ➤ Turn **RIGHT** onto Broughton Road

**34.9** On your right is the **Clack family homestead** built about 1840 and modified by James Clack (1842-1922) who came to Morgan County from Alabama and squatted on what was expanded into a thousand-acre holding. He brought with him a young Arthur R. Broach, father to Clack Broach (of bridge fame). Of pegged construction, now with attached kitchen and a gas pump in the back permanently advertising 32-cent gallons, the house is the weekend quarters for the family of Wilson and Regina Broach. Meticulous caretakers, the Broachs even keep the old farm bell in working order. Wilson recalls that, as the timepiece of the farm when he was a boy, a "clang-clang" at a time outside the usual schedule brought everybody running from the fields prepared for calamity. The **CLACK CEMETERY** is behind the house.

**35.** On your right is the **Russell Johnston Dairy**. Only the third dairy in the state to pasteurize on the premises, the Johnstons use low heat, do not homogenize, and use no hormones to push their Holsteins. They treat their animals with antibiotics only when they are sick and then test for same down to one part per billion. Russell believes in providing grass, using natural pesticides, and, especially, selling locally. He has already sold all his product with contracts to supply Whole Foods in Atlanta—the farthest his milk will travel—and Madison's own Hunker Down. Any and all are invited to stop.

**35.9** Turn **LEFT** immediately after Russell Johnston Dairy onto *MALONE ROAD* (unpaved road), which you can follow a round in a circle to the left back to *BROUGHTON ROAD*

➤ Turn **RIGHT** on *BROUGHTON ROAD*, paved in 1951

**36.2** Look right to admire the well-tended gardens of Ralph and Jackie Johnston (2250 *BROUGHTON ROAD*).

We are now heading into **NEWTON TERRITORY**, including the upcoming cattle farms right and left, managed timberland, and some early twentieth century Victorian farmhouses.

**37.0** The first house on your left was that of Floyd Newton's great uncle, Lorange Newton, whose father gave him the best forty acres of the lot to stay in Morgan County. He built this house and then skipped town to Social Circle. The house was for the past decade operated as a bed and breakfast, and the grounds now sport some beautiful horses.

**38.2** The **Newton family home**, on the right, where Floyd and his siblings were born and raised, is set in the loveliest of settings surrounded by graceful, protective century-old oaks, pecans, walnuts, and a Dawn Redwood and Bald Cypress planted by Floyd. Extending from Little River to Gap Creek (some 300 yards south of the house), this farm was the wedding gift to Floyd's great grandfather John (descendant of the first Presbyterian minister in Georgia of the same name) and his bride, a daughter of Edmund Walker (A Walker land grant from 1806 is framed inside). In the back where the vegetable plot used to be is a boxwood parterre garden of shrubs he rooted from those in the formal gardens surrounding Boxwood, his family home in downtown Madison.

In a recent interview, Floyd's son Godfrey Newton offered, "It may be interesting [that] the current house was built in three months' time in 1901 after the original burned. The original kitchen, which ironically didn't burn, was rolled around and attached to the current house where the existing kitchen is now. Other dependencies remaining from the original antebellum house are the smokehouse and well in the front. All of the gingerbread ornamentation on the

# 34

Turn Right

# 35

# 36

Turn Left

Turn Right

# 37

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

house and other woodwork inside was milled prior to construction at a milling business in Madison." In the newel post of the main staircase is a drawing of the house plan and grounds with signatures of the carpenters who accomplished its construction. Godfrey Newton continued, "The papers are sealed in a box within the top of the newel post. Another interesting detail is that my grandfather and every one of his siblings (five total) carved their initials in the concrete hearths of the bedrooms upstairs. My dad and his siblings were all born in what is now the front game room. This has always been the headquarters for my family's farming operations, which have existed continuously since before the Civil War. Those operations have included row cropping (cotton and various grains), peaches, dairy and beef cattle and most recently tree farming."

Mr. Floyd Newton recalls the excitement created when he and friends playing in the fields or hunting in the woods heard the loud whir of the cream separator begin its work from a building opposite the dairy barns. As the cream was recovered in ten-gallon cans for the trip by wagon to Broughton (and subsequently by train to Atlanta), the boys would swill skim milk that otherwise went to the cats.

**38.7 Pennington Community.** You have arrived in historic Pennington. You may park in the church lot. Feel free to take some time, walk around and see the historic church, store, homes, and cemetery.

On your right is **Pennington Methodist Church**, the present building dating from 1903 and added fellowship hall from 1994, still is filled with spirit during weekly services. On Newton-donated land, the church took nearly thirteen years to complete, as the congregation was serious about paying for materials when used. During the dedication ceremony in 1903, the last outstanding \$83.20 debt was erased by contributions to the collection plate, and the church has been debt-free ever since. Construction of the Fellowship Hall over a hundred years later, under the leadership of Brooks Pennington, Jr., entailed no debt. In summers past Hemperley fans kept the balmy air moving.

In the cemetery are Confederate markers and graves representing the families who have farmed in this community for generations. "During the 1950s, the cemetery land was deeded from the church by the Methodist Conference to a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. In 1990 the John Williams family gave additional acreage joining the cemetery. The trustees employed a licensed surveyor to make a survey plat of the cemetery indicating each plot and grave," wrote Brooks Pennington, Jr., in 1995.

In cold months Wilson Broach recalls having Sunday school services in the car or on the steps of the schoolhouse. The site of **PENNINGTON SCHOOL**, a first through sixth grade institution, is in the triangle of trees across from the cemetery between Farrar and Broughton Roads. It was razed when the road was put through. The school had two or three rooms, and first graders, depending on the number, might be lined up in one row of desks with second, third, and fourth graders in order in the next rows. Former teachers included Mrs. Brooks (Lucille) Pennington, Sr., Mrs. Mattie Malone, and Mrs. Sarah Vaughn, who drove student Horace Hardeman to school in her Model A. (Not until the second day of school did he make it, having never been in a car before and gotten a whipping from his father to quell his fear on day one.) Ossie Williams recalls that teachers kept lunches warm on the radiator, from which emanated tantalizing smells. The outhouse was for girls only; boys in need had ample woods. Today annuals planted by students still bloom yellow and white in the former schoolyard.

The gravel road between the store and the church was roughly the dividing line between the Newton and Pennington properties. The recipient of a land grant for his service under General George Washington, Thomas Pennington came to Savannah with his wife via Virginia and North Carolina. Like Peter Walton, his grant is also from the eighteenth century: "Given under [the] hand [of] James Habersham...this Seventeenth Day of May 1784." His grandson, W.B.R. Pennington, Sr., was one of the first persons to be buried in the church cemetery in 1903.

The **Pennington House**, now a hunting/country house, is the birthplace of Brooks Pennington, Jr., 1925-1996, founder of the now globally-distributed Pennington Seed and much-appreciated local benefactor. The family can trace at least eight generations to this area (although the last two generations have lived in Madison). In part of what is now the large pecan grove along Hwy 83, lighted tennis courts, one of the only sets in the state, existed behind the house. Players deposited \$.25 in a coin slot to activate the lights. The well-maintained commissary, which served as the voting place in Pennington for many years, was run by Brooks Pennington's parents until they retired and Mr. and Mrs. John (Ossie) Williams took over. It stopped operating in 1956. Local boys rode bicycles down what were then dirt versions of Hwy 83 to Madison and Monticello. Perhaps the greatest example of community cooperation here is the construction of the Williams' barn behind Everett and Carol Williams' home across from the church: neighbors got together and put it up in six days flat in 1939.



*Old farm commissary at Pennington.*



*Pennington Church cemetery.*



*Top: Pennington House, now a hunting/country house. Bottom: The old mill stones, flanking the front path, recovered from Little River.*

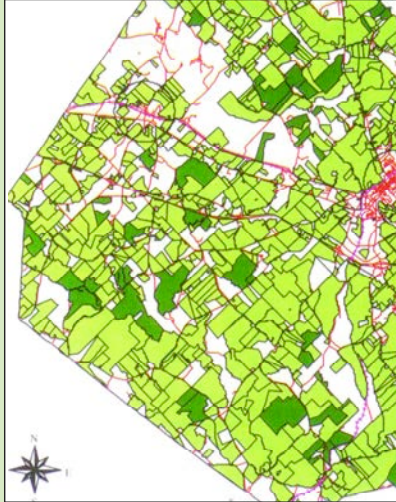
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# 40



## A SOUTHWESTERN SLICE OF MORGAN COUNTY



From the Greenprint's Agricultural Land Use map, the dark green areas indicate commercial forestry areas.

### IN A COUNTRY ONCE FORESTED

*The young woodland remembers  
The old, a dreamer dreaming*

*Of an old holy book,  
An old set of instructions,*

*And the soil under the grass  
Is dreaming of a young forest,*

*And under the pavement the soil  
Is dreaming of grass.*

WENDELL BERRY

**38.9** ◀ **LEFT** on **WILLIAMS STREET**. If leaving the church parking lot, cross over **BROUGHTON ROAD** onto **WILLIAMS ROAD**, heading toward **HWY 83**

At the stop sign is the Little River crossing mentioned above as the designated **swimming hole** for this part of the county. There were even male and female bathing "sheds" on the bank. Just west of the bridge is also where members of Antioch Baptist Church were baptized in the summers, occasions at which fifty or more cars might be seen along the banks.

**39.2** ◀ Turn **LEFT** onto **Hwy 83**, paved in the 1930s, its topsoil sold off to pay for asphalt.

**39.8** On your left was and is one of the most historically significant plantations in Morgan County, sitting east and west of Hwy 83, and now called **Little River Farm** since its purchase in the 1980s by Mr. A.L. Williams. Locals still refer, though, to **Walkerrest** (seen at 40.3), built in 1815 by Edmund Walker, second son of John Walker, in the Piedmont Plain style you saw earlier in brother Isaac's house. The kitchen was of course originally detached, and an older simple cottage now used as a guest house sits front left of the main house. An almost totally self-sufficient farm, Walkerrest had a carbide gas well in back to fuel lights throughout the house and nearby Little River to water livestock and fields. **EDMUND WALKER'S FAMILY CEMETERY** and a **SLAVE CEMETERY** are well maintained behind the house. Purchased in 1954 by historic preservationist and antiques authority Henry Green, the house underwent a three-year restoration to update bath facilities and remove the few alterations made in the Victorian style added at the turn of the century. The Greens landscaped with traditional gardens of boxwood to which Mr. Williams has added hundreds of trees and his own family cemetery.

Across Hwy 83, where rows of Southern Magnolias provide an elegant evergreen foreground for several lakes, sat rows of tenement houses on which folks recall Christmas décor from nearby American hollies. Southern Magnolias are native to the southern coastal region, and although they are not native to the Piedmont, they have thrived in this region.

**40.7** The adjacent late nineteenth century house built by P.G. Walker is also a part of Little River Plantation.

**40.9** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** onto **GODFREY ROAD**

At this intersection is a **historical marker for Antioch Church**.

Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc., A. L. Williams, and the Pennington families own timber land along this stretch of Godfrey Road. Hard Labor Creek State Park plus a 500-acre swath of the Oconee National Forest near Swords make up about 25% of Morgan County's government managed timberland. Another roughly 25% of the county is privately owned timberland managed for harvesting. Because of the same tax pressures that individual landowners face, increasingly corporations have sold these forest lands. Where Evergreen and Georgia Pacific owned over 25,000 acres each in the early 1990s, these companies have sold much of their holdings to Weyerhaeuser and Plum Creek, respectively. Weyerhaeuser has since sold much of its land; in fact the only forest Weyerhaeuser now owns in Morgan County is near Rutledge and is in the process of being developed. Economically these real estate transfers are entirely expected. While individuals can keep up to 2000 acres in Conservation Use, this provision does not apply to corporations who own larger tracts.

**A REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST**, Plum Creek has garnered attention in *The Economist* this year for sales of land near small communities in Washington where golf course/condo communities are being developed. From Wikipedia: "This bellweather change is expected to affect many small communities similar to Roslyn [Washington] over the next decades as development property and areas with strong character become more desirable."

**43.7** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** onto **WALTON MILL ROAD**, now the ingress to a number of hunting clubs.

Look for the buffalo in the field on your left.

In his essay, "Some Things You Can't Pave Over," Madison native and creative writing professor at the University of Georgia Philip Lee Williams writes,

"What is it about dirt roads that makes Southerners want to relive Thunder Road? No surface was ever less agreeable to speed than a rutted dirt highway, and yet generations have persisted in leaving the asphalt or tar and gravel and spending their adolescence on dirt.

Dirt roads are pretty much the same anywhere in the South. They all choke you with dust. They are all full of dangerous pits, and in winter you can find yourself in a ditch before you know you've lost control. In the summer, kudzu lurks in plain sight, twiddling its vines and waiting for you to slow down so it can race out, grab your tires, and snake you off to a horrible death in its murky depths.

Turn Left

# 41

# 42  
# 42

Turn Right

# 43

Turn Right

## THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE

Passing another car on a dirt road is fun. If you can avoid going into a ditch or off a bridge that says, "Load Limit, Eight Pounds," you will probably clog your carburetor, run over a Glad bag full of baby food jars, or fishtail into the kudzu. Then there are possums.

For possums, flat is beautiful. For every round possum I've ever seen, there have been 40 flat ones. Lemmings have nothing on possums. There is hardly a Southerner alive who hasn't seen one of the ubiquitous little beasties waddle in front of the car lights, stop, and Get Flat.

Around 1958, when I was first beginning to learn the fine art of riding on dirt, only 29 per cent of Georgia's roads were paved. Of the 89,000 miles of roads in the state, some 63,000 were unpaved. It seems strange now to recall that in the 50s most Southern counties marked their civility by their miles of paved roads. When county commissions met, when influence was peddled, what was often at issue was whose roads might be next in line for paving. A hard-surface meant affluence, easier access to town, and a mark of distinction.

I have talked to dozens of grown men who, though toughened by the wretchedness of life, could lapse into nearly poetic sentimentality about their own dirt roads."

Notice how we're not stirring up dust even in this dry season? The county began spraying unpaved roads with calcium chloride last year, and it has really made a difference if you're driving the vehicle behind.

At **45.6-8**, on your left you can look just through the closest line of trees and see the rises of foundations that made up **Hamburg**, the aforementioned settlement of Peter Walton that predated the community that is now Godfrey.

Coming up on the farm of Wayne Vason and Lee Harper we can give thanks that a conservation easement protects this lovely area significant for its wildlife, watershed along Little River, and archaeological importance. Stretching along Walton Mill Road from the gate to the power lines, the 101-acre conservation easement protects an area of habitat for diverse wildlife, one half of this sixty-one acre lake, and important archaeological sites. Again, easements are individualized; Mr. Vason has reserved two one-acre building sites in case his children want to add a residence in these woods someday.

**46.0** As you cross over a short bridge, look out left and you may be able to see a flat-topped mound in the V of the lake, added in 1978, after industrious beavers showed how easily it could be done by damming up one of the two streams feeders.

**46.1** ▶ *Turn **RIGHT** onto LITTLE RIVER ROAD*

On your left the fourth Vason conservation easement consists of 151 acres of a 250-acre tract from the eastern side of Little River up to the Newton's property. This conservation easement protects natural habitat in perpetuity (forever) along Little River.

Cross **Little River** on the *new* bridge.

When Jerry and Linda Hilsman excavated and cleared the site for their house off Little River where the foundation pillars of **WALTON MILL** still stand, they found what they felt was the site of an older mill upriver. The property where both are located along with the intact bridge of 1850 – predecessor to the one currently on Little River Road – is now in the able hands of Bill Kilmer, who purchased the property in 2001 from the Hilsmans and is committed to preserving what can be preserved. He and wife Linda have a deep interest in discovering how the land has been used and to sharing its rich history with others. The Walton home, in severe decay, had to be razed by the Hilsmans before they built the house and guest house on the site, just up from the mill site. Numerous mill stones have been unearthed in the area, and Bill collects the pottery shards and arrowheads that surface, many perhaps left over from the village that occupied banks between the river and Walton Mill Road. Additionally, the **WALTON FAMILY CEMETERY**, with the graves of Peter Walton (1792-1847), his first wife Talitha and all their children, none of whom reached adulthood, is not far off the driveway. A **SLAVE CEMETERY** of more than 100 earthen rises is farther downhill.

Walton's Mill burned around 1940. Recall that a segment of Seven Islands Stagecoach Road passed in back of the old Shepherd home place? Another segment passes through the Kilmers' property.

Bill Kilmer is a man of firm belief in his role: "We do not own this land; we're just stewards of it for those in the future," he affirms. He is the perfect caretaker of land that contains abundant evidence of stewards who were here long before Waltons, Walkers, Newtons, or us—the Cussetas, a subtribe of the Creeks in this area and throughout Putnam County.



*Two images from Walton Mill site.*



*Old bridge over Little River.*



*Walton family graves.*

# 44

Turn Right

# 45



## '07 GREENPRINT RAMBLE MENU

# The BOUNTY of MORGAN COUNTY

## APPETIZERS

*Pridgen's Cheese  
Bala Mushroom Soup*

## MAIN COURSE

*Morgan County Pork,  
Venison & Quail  
with Chilton's Chutney  
and  
Symmes Horseradish*

*Tewksbury Grits  
with Sausage*

*Variety of Locally Grown  
Autumn Vegetables*

*Rushing's Cream Corn  
Squash Casserole  
Chilton's Legumes*

## BREADS

*Jack's Creek Pumpkin Bread  
Georgia Cornbread  
Pamela's Churned Butter*

## DESSERT

*Annie's Baked Apples  
Monica's Ice Cream  
"Growing Our Own"  
Planting Seeds for Conservation*

Oren Lyons, Professor of American Studies at SUNY, Buffalo, and member of the Onondaga Council of the Iroquois explains:

"The ideas of land tenure and ownership were brought here. We didn't think that you could buy and sell land. In fact, the ideas of buying and selling were concepts we didn't have. We laughed when they told us they wanted to buy land. And we said, "Well, how can you buy land? You might just as well buy air, or buy water." But we don't laugh anymore, because that is precisely what has happened. Today, when you fly across this country and you look down and you see all those squares and circles, that's land bought and sold. Boundaries made. They did it. The whole country."

And in *Oconee Tales to Tell*, Katherine Walters wrote:

"Indians, as individuals and as tribes, did not understand the concept of land ownership. To them, land was an inseparable part of nature—like air and water. These were necessities of life to sustain the humans living upon it. The Great Spirit made the earth for the good of all mankind and it was not to be bought and sold."

On the right is a new house development on land owned by Tom and Lauren Dupree. **The Farm at Madison** will be developed by the Baldwin Realty firm. One of the first buyers is adding an exotic bird sanctuary/zoo.

**47.2** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** onto Hwy 83, then quickly **LEFT** again where **LITTLE RIVER ROAD** continues.

Had you continued north on Highway 83, you'd have passed **WILLIAMS DAIRY**, one of the largest in the county, begun in 1958 when John Williams bought a dairy herd from an Apalachee farmer. As a child growing up in the Ralph and Jackie Johnston house, Mr. John Williams remembers a time when dairymen could put milk in cans and leave them on a tree stump out by the unpaved road for a distributor to pick up. Today Everett Williams sells to Southeast Milk Inc. and keeps would-be neighbors informed about the workings of a dairy farm—see the sign posted next to the highway at his farm.

Three separate days, three separate people—Wilson Broach, Bobby Walker, Jeanette Saffold—while being interviewed in the writing of this tour guide, had the same thing, almost word-for-word, to say: "When we were kids, we could sit on the porch or even be in the house and just hear a car go by and know who it was just by the sound. You knew what time a day to expect most people 'cause you knew where they were going, and if somebody you *didn't* know came by, it was something to talk about—who they were kin to and what they might be doin'. Nowadays you don't know half the people who come through here." And over and again, people recalling childhood in Morgan County affirmed, "It was a good life, a hard life, but a good life....Childhood was great; it was so much fun. Being on the farm was so much fun. We'd play in the cotton wagons and have wars with stiff cornstalks and build forts in the rare boxes and drive all over the place in the pastures when we were only twelve or so."

**50.0** ▷ Turn **RIGHT** onto **FARRAR ROAD**

Look right to see **Black Diamond Farm** of Sandra and Ed Black who raise miniature horses and ponies, which they are glad to show to miniature visitors. Equestrian farms are getting more common all over the county, with several riding trainers to choose from here.

**51.4 To the Newton House.** If you are traveling on the organized tour on October 13, 2007, and you have made your reservation for supper, turn **LEFT** onto **BROUGHTON ROAD** back to Newton House.

**To Madison.** Turn **RIGHT** onto **BROUGHTON ROAD** and then **LEFT** onto **WILLIAMS ROAD**. At the stop sign, turn **LEFT** onto Hwy 83, which will take you back to I-20 and Madison.

What better way is there to appreciate this treasure we call Morgan County than to ride through it, experience the history, and talk about how lucky we are.

## We hope you've enjoyed the Greenprint Ramble.

# # 46

Turn Right,  
then Left

Turn Right

# # 47

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## FROM THE GREENPRINT:

### MORGAN COUNTY GREENPRINT PURPOSE AND PROCESS

“Early in 2003, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy initiated the Morgan County Greenprint process, and in association with the Morgan County Commissioners, the City of Madison and the Trust for Public Land, began to plan for the long-term preservation of open space in Morgan County, Georgia. As Morgan County and the municipalities of Bostwick, Buckhead, Madison and Rutledge were in the process of preparing a major update to the Morgan County Joint Comprehensive Plan, it was decided that the Greenprint planning process should be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan Update process.”

*In 2004, the Greenprint was adopted as part of the Morgan County Comprehensive Plan (the first time ever that a Greenprint had been adopted as part of a community's Comprehensive Plan).*

“The Morgan County Greenprint Plan will serve as a long-term strategy for the preservation of features that are valuable to Morgan County residents and landowners: the rural landscape, open spaces, agriculture lands, forests, environmentally sensitive resources, historic properties and structures, and a general quality of life. The plan recognizes the inevitability and desirability of growth and economic expansion, seeking to balance allowance for growth with strategies to achieve significant preservation goals. Implementation of the Greenprint will involve actions from government leaders as well as private entities and citizens, beginning with the inclusion of Greenprint concepts in the Morgan County Joint Comprehensive Plan. Ultimately, the success of preservation efforts in Morgan County will be greatest if Greenprint planning continues as an ongoing process of collaboration among all members of the Morgan County community.”

*The Madison-Morgan Conservancy continues to support the Greenprint planning process and is advocating for the updating of the Greenprint in 2008. With the help of the Morgan County citizens, local officials, and planning staff, we can identify additional sites worthy of protection and add those resources to the list of Preservation Opportunities included in the Greenprint. It is the people of Morgan County that know these resources, and it will be their contributions that will ensure the thoroughness and viability of this Greenprint document.*

THE MISSION OF THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY IS TO PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION ON CONSERVATION MATTERS AND TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE HERITAGE AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE RESIDENTS OF MORGAN COUNTY BY PRESERVING HISTORIC SITES, GREENSPACE, FARMLAND AND TIMBERLAND.