

Heritage Walk HISTORIC DILLSBORO

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Founded in the late 1800s by William Allen Dills, Dillsboro retains a glowing charm that has not been diminished by time. Originally small with a general store, drug store, boarding house, train depot and livery, Dillsboro was a central location even then – situated in an area busy with lumber and mining commerce. Passengers descended from the train at Dillsboro to shop, visit with relatives and friends or vacation in the area.

The Dills house, which was the first house in Dillsboro, is still standing and is now occupied by Riverwood Shops, located on a hill overlooking Scott's Creek and the Tuckasegee River. Mr. Dills operated the town's first post office from his home.

Dillsboro in the Late 19th Century



Dillsboro, North Carolina was originally known as New Webster to distinguish it from the older Jackson County seat town just 3 miles to the East. In 1889, the state legislature approved the change of name to Dillsboro to honor William Allen Dills who had selected the site, locating it on his farm. His farmhouse, pictured to the left, still stands and is occupied by the Riverwood Shops.

The town had started to come into its own in 1883 due to the new railroad and the advent of tourism in the area. Just before the turn of the century, Dillsboro was the largest non-county seat town west of Asheville with about 750 residents.

Dillsboro grew up around the railroad, providing goods and services for those who used the Southern Railway and became an important transportation center for local industry. Two passenger trains and two freight trains operated daily between Asheville to the East and Murphy to the West. The freight for Franklin was hauled in covered wagons, which camped twice a week on Depot Square.

The railroad was built by convict labor furnished by the state and they were housed behind stockades near the 836-foot Cowee Tunnel. It required eighteen months to cut through almost solid rock to complete the project.

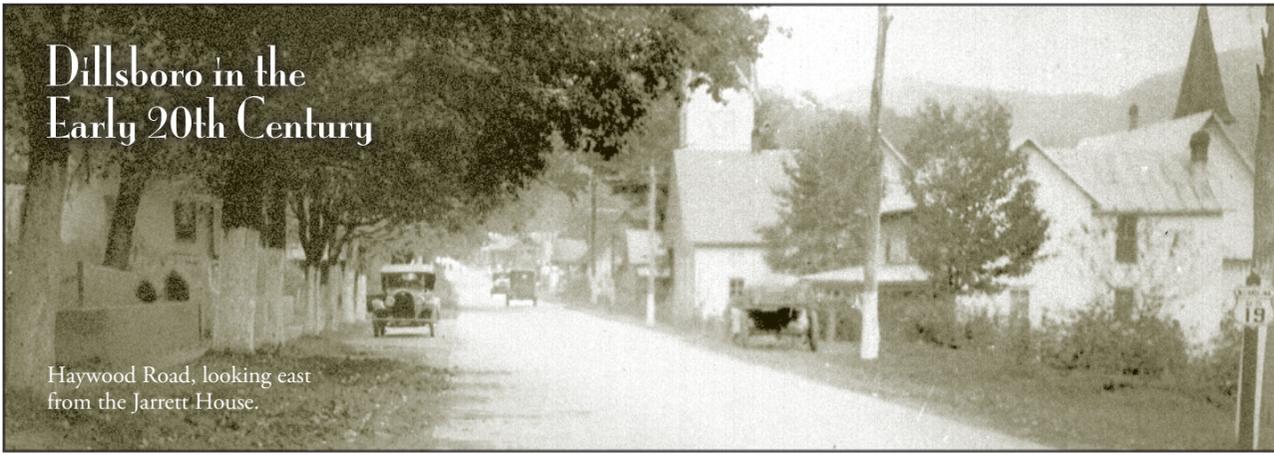
There was no river crossing at Dillsboro until after the turn of the century, but there was a ferry at Webster and a bridge further West at Barker's Creek. It was a full days trip to Franklin by stagecoach with a lunch stop on Cowee Mountain. During these years, the streets of Dillsboro were lighted with Cape Cod lamps. Oil-burning lamps lighted the homes, hotels and boarding houses and the businesses. Dillsboro had the first telephone system installed in Jackson County; it connected the New Webster (Dillsboro) depot with the county seat and was used only for relaying telegrams.

Dillsboro has been a tourist town since 1886 when visitors began to arrive by train and spend several weeks. Word spread about the cool summers and beautiful mountain scenery. It is often stated that the first summer visitors were the Misses Nellie and Hattie Norfleet of Edenton, North Carolina, and perhaps were the first women cigarette smokers the locals had ever seen.



Dillsboro in the Early 20th Century

Haywood Road, looking east from the Jarrett House.



1 Depot Square – Town Park. Wagons camped at Depot Square, location of a livery stable and passenger hack-line to Franklin. Today it is a town park where faithful town dog Brownie rests beneath a marker.



2 Bradleys General Store. 1880s site of William Miller's General Store, later P. W. Kincaid and then the Snyder brothers. Burned in the 1930's and replaced with this stone building, later owned by Louis Bradley, then the Owens and now David Gates.



3 The Enloe House. In 1885, J.J. Mason bought the first residential lot and built this house. Capt. Wm. A. Enloe purchased it about 1895. In the 1980's descendants, Reg and Judy Moody opened the Enloe House Gift Shop.



4 Harris Clay Co. – Gift Shop. Built in 1890, home of Harris Clay Co. and the office of the Dillsboro and Sylva Electric Light Company, recent years various gift shops.



5 Law Office – Barber Shop. One of the oldest buildings in Dillsboro, built in 1870, a drug store and at the turn of the century law offices of J.J. Hooker. Owned by the Cannon family, now a barbershop.



6 Shirley's Boutique. Roy Ray's cut-rate notions/dry goods store in the late 1890's, later Holmes Bryson's and then Cannon Brothers General Store in 1923. Now home of Shirley's Boutique since mid 1980's.



7 Dillsboro Chocolate Factory. Built in 1888 by J. H. McCoy and family home of Wade Wilson family. 1990s, daughter Susan Owen opened a gift shop and now is the home of the Dillsboro Chocolate Factory.



8 Jarrett Memorial Baptist Church. The Baptist built their first church here in 1888. Destroyed by fire, R.F. Jarrett donated money and labor and rock church was rebuilt in 1937 and renamed Jarrett Memorial.



9 Methodist Church – Baptist Fellowship Hall. The Methodist in 1899 built this church and remained open until 1960. The building was later purchased by the Baptist for their Fellowship Hall.



10 The Greystone Building. The Greystone Lodge built 1938 by Reales Sutton. Rock walls, wormy chestnut and hardwood floors made this a showplace for tourists. Since 1979, an antique shop owned by Mildred and Perry Sutton and now a Real Estate Office.



11 Dillsboro Smoke House. Built in 1930 for Darrence Tallent as a Garage/Car Dealer, then home of Perry Sutton's Tire Shop from 1970 and in the 1990s home of the Dillsboro Smoke House.



12 The Monteith House. Built about 1910 and owned solely by the Monteith family, it is now being restored by the Town of Dillsboro as a Park and Appalachian Women's Museum.



13 Kincaid House - Olde Towne Inn. Built about 1878, before the railroad by the Snyder family and later owned by the railroad stationmaster, Parson Kincaid. Fully restored in 1988 by the Newell's and operated since as a Bed and Breakfast.



14 The Pebble Dash House. Built in 1904 by Roy Ray of pebbledash stucco. Owner Charles Snyder in the 1930s replaced the exterior with wood and the Herbert Nolan's, owners since 1982 have restored the interior.



15 Shular – Messer House. One of the oldest homes occupied before the turn of the century by the Shular family, grandson Vaughn Messer and always a private home.



16 Nancy Tut's Christmas Shop. Built before 1900 by Mr. Farley, lived in by David Harris and in 1904 owned by Scroop Enloe and remained in the family until about 1985 as Nancy Tut's Christmas Shop.



17 The Dills Home – Jarrett House Annex. Second home in Dillsboro of W.A. Dills, founder. A Boarding house before the Mt. Beulah Hotel (present Jarrett House) by Major Bryson. Remained in the Dills family until the Jarrett House added it in the 1980's.



18 The Jarrett House. The Jarrett House on the National Historic Register built in 1884 by W. A. Dills as the Mt. Beulah Hotel. Sold in 1890 to R. Frank Jarrett. Famous for fine food and lodging for over 120 years and owned by the Hartbarger Family since 1975.



19 McCoy – Queen House. Built in 1889 by W. A. McCoy and later owned by J. P. Jarrett. In 1910 Mrs. Jarrett used as a boarding house. The Queen family has lived here since 1933.



20 The Cannon – Wilson Home. Built 1905 by Homes Bryson and purchased by M. B. Cannon in 1923. The late Rebecca Cannon married Wade Wilson, later mayor of Dillsboro for 26 years, lived here and where he lives today.



21 Jarrett – Snyder House. Site of Dillsboro's Livery Stable, house built in 1907 by William Major Morgan, sold to Fleet Jarrett, then M.Y. Jarrett. It was Theodore Snyder's home from 1946 until it became the Golden Carp in 1990.



22 Cannon's Cabins – Dogwood Crafters. Built in the 1930s as Cannon's Cabins for summer tourists. Daughter, Rebecca and Wade Wilson joined the cabins for Dogwood Crafters, a non-profit Cooperative, preserving handmade crafts in business for 32 years.



23 W.A. Dills Home – Riverwood Shops. First homes of W.A. Dills, W.A. Enloe and the C.J. Harris families. Then owned by Dr. Ralph Morgan and operated as a working craft community, making pewter, weaving and stained glass, etc. for 50 years.



24 Leatherwood House – Real Estate Office. Built by James M. Leatherwood before 1900, lived in by the Mason, Leatherwood families and home to Nancy Tut's Christmas Shop in the 1970's and now a real estate office.



25 Dillsboro Dam and Power House. Possibly the smallest powerhouse in the US, the dam has generated electricity since 1913. The station includes a concrete dam 12' high and 230' long, with a metal sheeted powerhouse.



26 The Squire Watkins Inn. Built in 1880 by Squire J. C. Watkins, Dillsboro's first Magistrate. The Watkins-Cannon family owned it until 1983 when the Wertenbergers restored it and opened the Squire Watkins Inn.

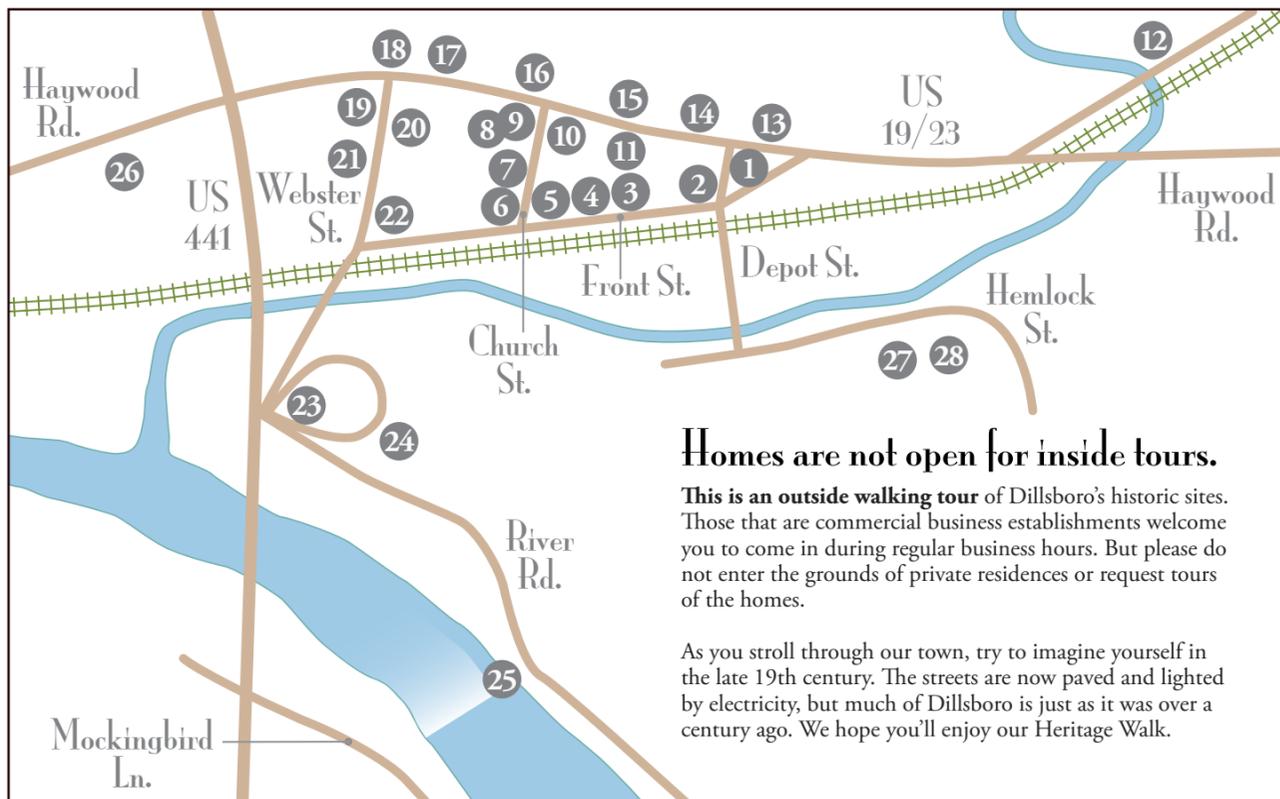


27 The Fisher - Tatham House. Lot first owned by R. P. Potts and house was built in 1898, owned by James C. Fisher, daughter Lucy Fisher Tatham bought it in 1956 and her family still owns it.



28 The Osborne – Mason House. Built about 1890 by Sion T. Early and for years the home of James and Myrtle Osborne. Since 1971, it has belonged to the Margaret Mason family.

Map & Guide to Historic Dillsboro



Homes are not open for inside tours.

This is an outside walking tour of Dillsboro's historic sites. Those that are commercial business establishments welcome you to come in during regular business hours. But please do not enter the grounds of private residences or request tours of the homes.

As you stroll through our town, try to imagine yourself in the late 19th century. The streets are now paved and lighted by electricity, but much of Dillsboro is just as it was over a century ago. We hope you'll enjoy our Heritage Walk.