

# History

If you will look around you from any spot in Mount Airy you will see on all sides restful blue hills: the Blue Ridge Mountains, Pilot Mountain, Slate Mountain and the Chestnut Ridges. It was from these encircling hills that Mount Airy and its environs were first called "The Hollows".

Mount Airy is a very old settlement, dating back before 1750. Easily accessible by the three rivers which converge there, and by an old Indian trail which subsequently became Highway 52, this inviting spot quickly became an important trading center, a distinction which still holds true today.

Occupied first by a Siouan Indian linguistic group, the area was wrested from them by the more war-like Cherokees. These Indians in turn were displaced by early white hunters and the more permanent English and German settlers.

The center of trade of this little hollow first grew up along the Ararat River on now Hamburg Street around the plantation of High Sheriff Martin Armstrong. In 1801 Armstrong's farm was sold to Virginian Thomas Perkins whose plantation name, Mount Airy, gradually was assumed by the little settlement and remains so until this day.

Around 1830 the town center moved to its present position on the crest of the hill in the now-business section of Main Street. Its nucleus was a hotel which gradually evolved into the well-known Blue Ridge Inn.

Mount Airy had no major war engagements as such. During the Revolution the little settlement became the base from which a Continental militia routed the troublesome Tories. General George Stoneman of Civil War fame encamped overnight nearby in his notable 1865 raid through North Carolina and Virginia.

The Town enjoyed a slow peaceful growth for about one hundred fifty years attracting professional men as well as maintaining its stable population. In 1885 Mount Airy incorporated.

Three years later, in 1888, with the coming of the railroad the town and its industries began to grow. The two most important and still vital industries were the manufacturing of furniture and the quarrying of granite from the huge deposit just east of town. Additional tobacco factories sprang up and had an encouraging outlook until forced out of business by the powerful tobacco trust.

It was at this time, that of the late eighties and early nineteen hundreds, aided by a disastrous 1892 fire, that the downtown wooden buildings began to be replaced by the interesting brick structures with their distinctive pediments.

Since Mount Airy is reached easily from outside points and has access to a great number of reliable workers, the city is host to many diversified businesses among them textiles, plastics, and electrical appliances, many of them nationally known.

With its admirable climate, beautiful location, and industrious people, Mount Airy will continue to attract desirable residents and businesses.



William Alfred Moore House  
Historical Interest #13



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*(Club Meeting)  
Sept. 5+6  
1988*

## Historic Mount Airy North Carolina



Trinity Episcopal Church  
Historical Interest #10

The fabric of Mount Airy's historic district dates primarily from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A wide and sophisticated variety of architectural styles is represented in the district, reflecting the prosperity during its major growth period. The distinguishing feature of the architecture is the use of the light colored granite taken from the enormous open faced quarry located just east of town.

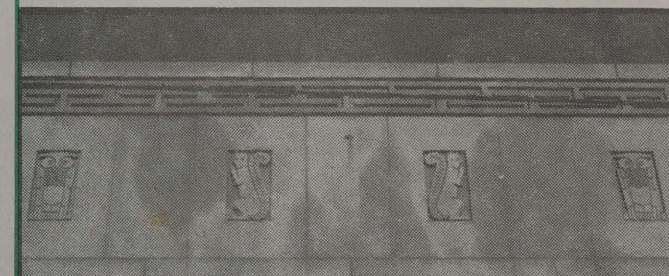
Another feature of the district is the remarkably unaltered and intact condition of the residences.

*We welcome you to our home town*

For additional maps or information, contact:

The Mount Airy Chamber of Commerce  
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Mount Airy, North Carolina 27030  
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## Historic Mount Airy North Carolina



*March - 1990*

## Historic Tour



Mount Airy  
Restoration Foundation



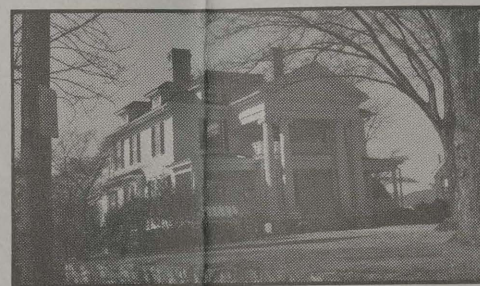
11. **Merritt Building**, circa 1905 — 301 North Main Street. Located at the corner of Main Street and Oak Street, the Merritt Building is one of the most architecturally handsome of the commercial buildings in Mount Airy's downtown business district.
12. **The First National Bank**, circa 1893. Located on the corner of North Main Street and Moore Avenue, the bank was built as a brick structure and remodeled and veneered with rusticated granite blocks in 1910. A notable four-faced copper, brass and colored glass clock is suspended on the building's corner.
13. **William Alfred Moore House**, circa 1862 — 202 Moore Avenue. This house was built several years before the War Between the States. The home is located in downtown Mount Airy. On the front lawn of the house is an outstanding hexagonal summer house with interesting laurel root walls and woodwork. The summer house has matching laurel root furniture. James Moore was one of the early merchants in Mount Airy and owner of a tan yard.
14. **Bank of Mount Airy**, circa 1923 — 202 North Main Street. Located at the corner of Main Street and Franklin Street, this handsome 3-story granite building's focal point is the enframed monumental Tuscan columns.
15. **Alfred E. Smith House**, circa 1900 — 323 Franklin Street. This handsome Victorian home located close to the business district was built by a prominent furniture manufacturer, A. E. Smith. The most prominent exterior feature of the house is its gables sheathed in fish-scale-cut shingles, its wrap-around porch with paired Doric columns, a pedimented entrance bay and a gazebo-like corner.
16. **James Yokley House**, circa 1920 — 350 West Pine Street. This exotic Spanish Colonial Revival stuccoed house with a red tile roof is one of the most unusual structures in Mount Airy.
17. **Hadley House**, circa 1894 — 400 Pine Street. This magnificent house is one of the two finest examples of the Queen Ann style remaining in Surry County. Hadley was a tobacco manufacturer and an extensive owner of rental properties.
18. **John Sobotta House**, circa 1930 — 347 West Pine Street. A fine Tudor Revival style house with beautiful solid walnut interior woodwork. A formal garden in the rear is the focal point of the large well landscaped lot. Mr. Sobotta was a highly regarded local philanthropist, civic and church leader.
19. **C. C. Binder House**, circa 1900 — 315 West Pine Street. This two-story late Victorian frame house was built on a very large lot on a high knoll, well blocked from the street. It retains a wealth of sawn wood and turned ornamentation with a large wrap-around porch.
20. **Snappy Lunch**, circa 1896 — 125 North Main Street. Little altered one-story brick commercial building. Since 1923 it has housed the Snappy Lunch, one of Mount Airy's favorite spots for breakfast and lunch. Mentioned on the Andy Griffith Show.
21. **United States Post Office**, circa 1932 — 111 South Main Street. Handsome two-story granite post office and federal building with art deco influenced classical styling. Fine stone carving accents the main entrance. The classical influence is seen also in the interior woodwork. The deco look is seen in the floral bronze grills which decorate the area above the individual post office boxes.
22. **Andy Griffith Playhouse**, circa 1920 — Corner of Rockford Street and Graves Street. First known site of a public school in Mount Airy. Used for many years as a gymnasium and auditorium for the City of Mount Airy. The Surry Arts Council leased the building in 1975 from the City and renovated it into a theatre and arts center.
23. **Banner House**, circa 1893 — 204 Cherry Street. Charming one-story frame cottage has a wrap-around porch with turned posts and lacy sawn wood brackets. The oldest house on Cherry Street.
24. **Doctor Edward Ashby House**, circa 1930 — 302 Cherry Street. Edward and Sara Belle Ashby built one of the most handsome detailed Colonial Revival houses in Mount Airy. Both Georgian and Federal influences are seen in the unaltered interior; with an elegant Federal Revival entrance and the graceful center hall stair. The boxwood and flower gardens are still maintained. The house is still occupied by the Ashby family.
25. **J. C. Hollingsworth House**, circa 1904 — 319 South Main Street. According to family tradition, J. C. Hollingsworth, a prominent businessman, converted a one-story house into a handsome — but architecturally conservative — three-story structure not long after his marriage in 1893.
26. **First Presbyterian Church**, circa 1907 — corner of South Main Street and Church Street. This church replaced a frame church which had stood on the site since 1873. The church is a handsome Gothic Revival structure which made use of the native granite.
27. **Carter House**, circa 1908 — 418 South Main Street. This house of Judge William F. Carter in its present form, took shape in 1908, when a previous house on the site was moved back from the street and remodeled. This house is one of the best examples in Surry County of the Neo-Classical Revival style.
28. **Doctor Thomas Benton Ashby House**, circa 1900 — 500 South Main Street. This outstanding late Victorian house, with a pivotal rating in the Mount Airy Historic District, is related in its use of materials to the 1890 James Hadley house on Pine Street.
29. **Daniel E. Hoffman House**, circa 1900 — 507 South Main Street. This house, classical in design, was built on land reputedly once owned by the Siamese Twins, Eng and Chang Bunker. The twins lived in a small house on the property while their children attended school in Mount Airy. Mr. Hoffman was associated with the Mount Airy Granite Quarry. Mrs. Hoffman was the daughter of ex-Governor Glenn of North Carolina (1905-1909).
30. **Mount Airy Friends Church**, circa 1907 — 109 W. Wilson Street. This charming Gothic Revival style church was built of the newly-available local granite. At the northeast corner, a crenelated entrance bell tower rises above the roof line of the church.
31. **Estes House**, circa 1875 — 724 South Main Street. This one story frame house is one of the oldest existing structures in Mount Airy. The house was owned by William Estes and during the early twentieth century by his daughter, Elizabeth and her husband, Jesse Prather. Around 1920 Walter Spane purchased this house from the Prather family.
32. **Vera Spane House**, circa 1865 — 703 Haymore Street. This charming house started out as a one-room cabin. The last addition came in 1953. Mrs. Spane refused to tear down the much-loved cabin. It is still attached to the house.
33. **Andy Griffith Home Place**, circa 1927 — 711 Haymore Street. Home Place of Andy Griffith, the television and movie celebrity, until he attended the University of North Carolina.
34. **Mount Airy Granite Quarry**, circa 1775 — Located approximately 1½ miles east of town. Having been in operation since 1775, this is the largest open faced Quarry in the world. It has an unlimited supply yet to be quarried (worked). Many important structures all over the nation are built with Mount Airy granite. The most noted structure in North Carolina is the Wright Memorial at Kill Devil Hills.

**Cover Photo:**

Upper facade features abstractly designed owls and squirrels, appropriate symbols for a savings and loan institution. This was the former Workman's Federal Saving and Loan building which is now occupied by Owen's Jewelry.



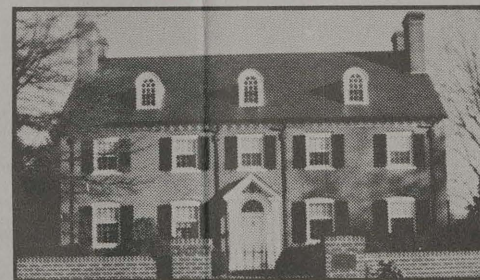
John D. Sargent House  
Historical Interest #9



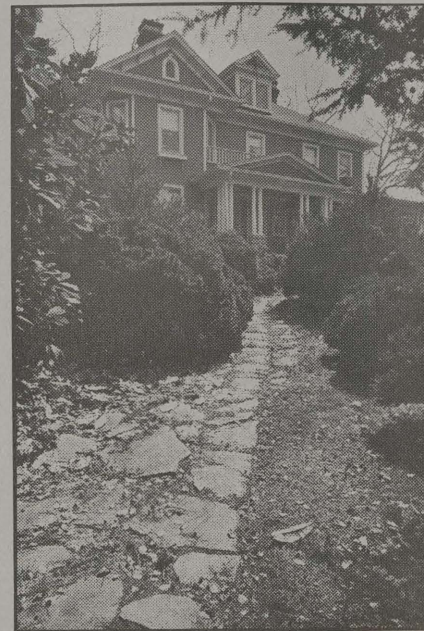
Carter House  
Historical Interest #27



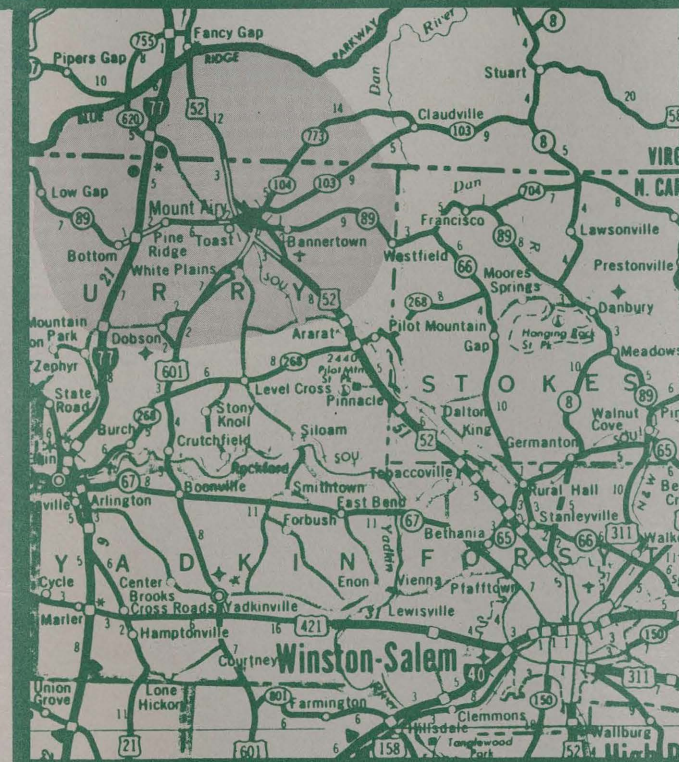
Hadley House  
Historical Interest #17



Dr. Edward Ashby House  
Historical Interest #24



Gilmer - Smith House  
Historical Interest #7



R. R. Galloway Houses  
Historical Interests #5a & 5b

Thomas Fawcett House  
Historical Interest #5c