

JONES FARM TENANT HOUSE - BEFORE RESTORATION



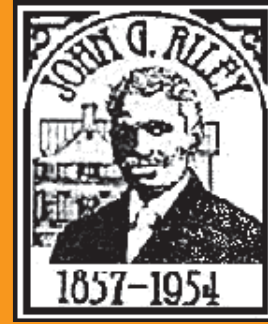
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COVER PHOTO – Meridian Road, Leon County, FL circa 1913. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.

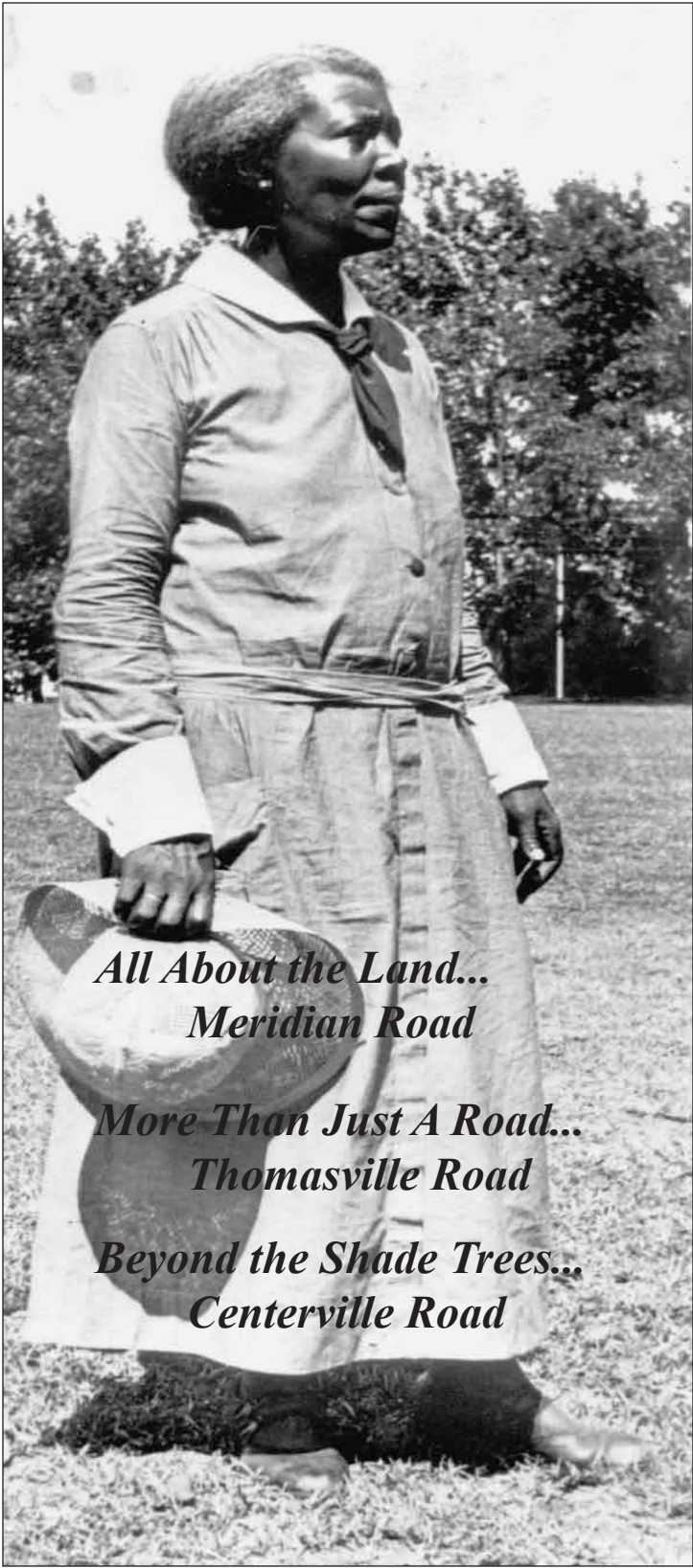
INSIDE COVER PHOTO - Nurse Odell McGreen of the Leon County Health Unit ca. 1930. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.

The North Leon County Heritage Trail

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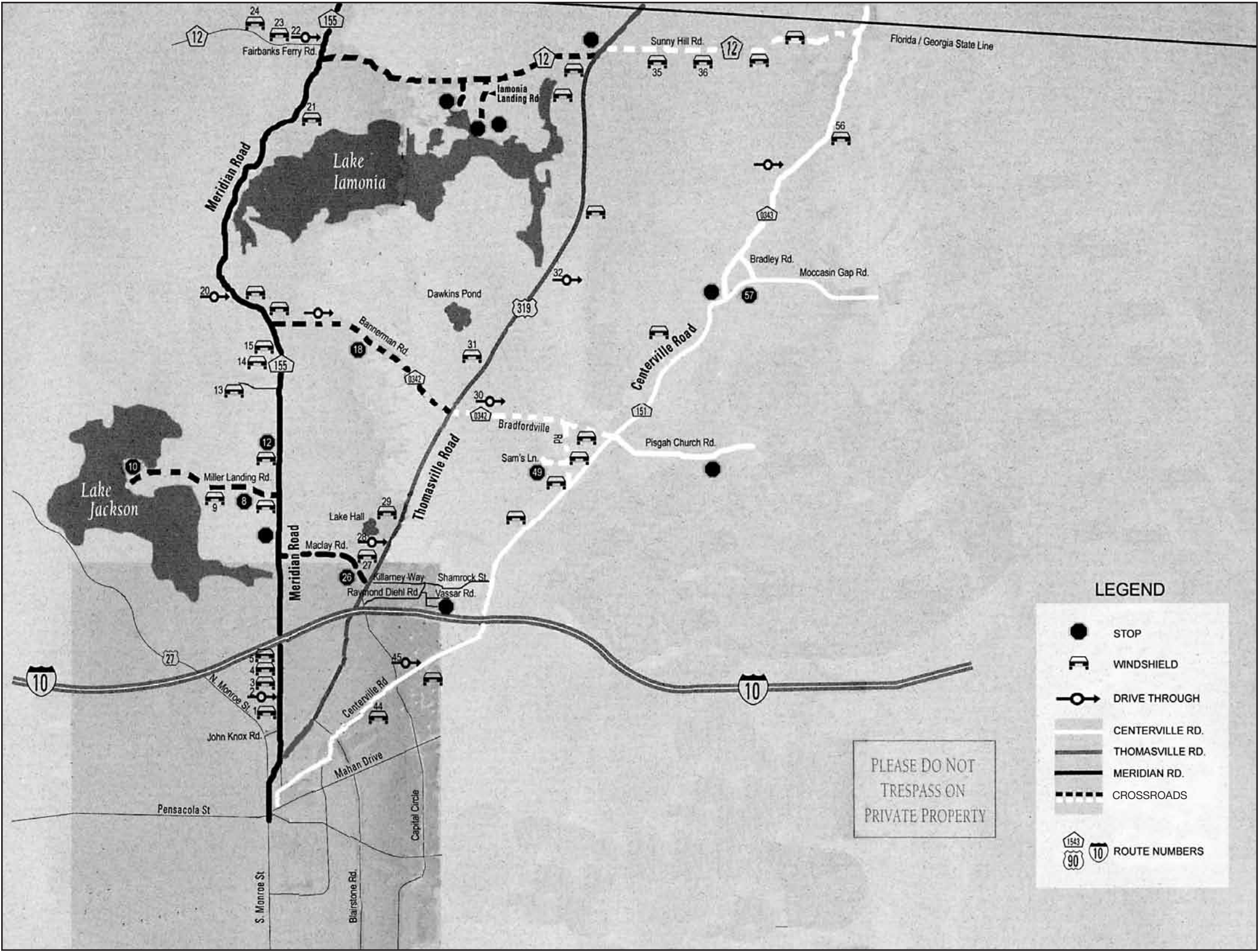




*All About the Land...
Meridian Road*

*More Than Just A Road...
Thomasville Road*

*Beyond the Shade Trees...
Centerville Road*



Introduction

For more than 10,000 years, men and women have walked this land – leaving their footprints in sand and clay. Native Americans, adventurers, planters, slaves and free black men have lived here – each society leaving faint traces and artifacts for their descendents to discover. Vital communities thrived and faded, transformed and melded ... one into the other.

Gradually ... we are learning that the history of each is a part of them all.

We invite you to share in the discovery that is Leon County today. Within its green hills and under its towering oaks, you may discover the reason this place has always held worth for those who possessed it. It is the shared experience of being connected to the land– of having a place to call home.

This booklet describes three tours that will introduce you to these dynamic communities and some of the people who built them. Each route will take from two to three hours to travel – depending on how many stops you choose to make and how long you linger to explore.

Each journey connects to another and we encourage you to discover them all.

Tour Information

Sites of interest are each numbered and identified by one of four symbols. Written directions appear throughout the text and a map is included at the end of this publication. A supplement of related oral histories may be obtained from the John G. Riley Center/Museum for African American History & Culture at 419 East Jefferson Street, Tallahassee, Florida or by calling 850-681-7881. Visit their web site at www.rileymuseum.org.



Drive through

Leon County neighborhoods were often named after ante bellum plantations. Later, communities adopted names that mirrored centers of worship or well-known property owners. Residents rarely said they came from Tallahassee or Leon County – they said they came from places like Kirksey, St. Peters, Blockers, Shady Grove, St. Phillip, or Munree. These “neighborhoods” covered large geographical areas whose borders are not easily defined. Ties to these communities are strong and continue to the present day.



Windshield

These sites include structures that may no longer be visible, are on private property, or are located at a restricted location. You may drive past, or pause, at a windshield site, but please remain in your vehicle.



Stop

Feel free to park and take a leisurely walk around the area. Remember to practice good visitor manners.

Be A Thoughtful Visitor

The three tours outlined here include burial grounds and sensitive historical sites. Please do not walk through grave sites and take care not to drive over, park on, or disturb grassy areas. Avoid scheduling your visit at times when worship services may be taking place. Stash your trash in receptacles provided or take it with you.

All About The Land ... Meridian Road

Meridian Road is **All About the Land** - not only because it was an important reference point - but also because of the ever-changing nature of adjacent property ownership. Native Americans populated the shores of Lake Jackson over 10,000 years ago. The Spanish established strategic missions and early settlers established large plantations. During the Reconstruction era, the land that was divided into small farms that dotted the landscape. Today, shopping centers and subdivisions blend into agricultural and recreational areas.

HISTORICAL FACT: Meridian Road roughly follows the Tallahassee Meridian - an imaginary line that was adopted in Florida in 1824 to conform to the U.S. Public Land Survey System.

Our tour begins at the intersection of John Knox and Meridian Roads.



1 **ST. JAMES CHURCH** is on the left-hand side of Meridian Road. It is the oldest church in the Macon Community. When it was built, Meridian was a dirt road.



2 The predominantly African American **MACON COMMUNITY** was named after Oscar Macon. It had its own school, churches, cemeteries and stores. Census data collected in 1870 indicates residents held jobs as nurses, cooks, carpenters, and seamstresses. A few people were employed at near-by, small farms.

The Macon Community School as it appeared in the 1940s. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.



3 **MT. ZION AT MACON CHURCH** is located on the left-hand side of the road. A school building once stood near the northeast corner of the lot. The church still has an active congregation.

Turn left on Macon Drive. Take another left on Mae Drive.



4 **MACON MEMORY GARDENS**. This burial ground was established in 1948 on land donated by Henry and Annie Mae Macon.

Make a left turn at Bermuda Drive.



5 The **HOME of HENRY and ANNIE MACON** was the white frame house seen off to your left. The aluminum awning kept the home cool in the summertime; the cyclone fence marked the yard that was once filled with abundant gardens.

Turn left on to Meridian Road and head north again. Follow the signs into the Forest Meadows Athletic Area on your left. Pull over to the right-hand side of the parking area.



6 **COTTON SCHOOL**. The old, grey, wooden building that sits off to the right of the park is characteristic of the simple structures built for black school children after the turn of the century. Cotton School may have derived its name from Frederick R. Cotton - the white plantation owner whose holdings once stretched over more than 1,700 acres. The school was moved some time after 1936 to Miller's Landing Road near Cove Road and renamed **SHEPPARD SCHOOL**. It was moved again to its current location and today, serves as a Florida State After-School Program location.

Leave the parking area, turn left on Meridian. Make another left turn on Miller's Landing Road.



7 **POPULAR SPRING / SNEED'S CEMETERY** has been protected and preserved despite the encroachment of development. It is located on the left side of the road - along the tree line.



8 The **ELINOR KLAPP PHIPPS PARK** is managed as part of the Lake Jackson watershed. The park contains over 17 miles of recreational space. Pull in to stretch your legs. Public restrooms are available at this stop.

Resume your tour by turning left from the park on to Miller's Landing Road.



9 **THE ST. MATTHEWS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH** was established in 1884 by Rev. George Curry. The current structure was built in 1953. Look across the street. On the slope, just beyond the tree line, you may be able to see remnants of the **COTTON CEMETERY** – believed to be the original slave burial grounds of the Cottonland Plantation owned by John Cotton. Today, it sits on privately-owned property that has been fenced off to the public.

Continue west on Miller's Landing. Enjoy the beauty of the rolling fields and the towering oaks.



10 **MILLER'S LANDING** lies straight ahead. Boaters can use the public ramp and camera buffs can take advantage of the expansive view. The road that forks off to the right leads to **ROLLINS' POINT**. The Rollins, an African American family, has owned this land for five generations.

Turn around and retrace your route back to Meridian Road. Turn left on Meridian.



11 **ELIZABETH POPULAR SPRING CHURCH** was named after a natural spring that once drew residents from as far away as three miles.

Stay on Meridian. Pass Ox Bottom Road. This area was once a heavily-populated, African American community. The road took its name from a low-lying spot where free-ranging oxen used to cross. Walnut Hill Cemetery lies tucked away in a wooded area - off to the northeast. It was originally a slave cemetery, but few markers remain.



12 **THE ROYALTY NURSERY** has been owned by the Thompsons - an African American family - for many years. Stop by to look at their extensive selection of native plants and ask questions about the area.

From the nursery, turn left and continue north on Meridian Road. Turn left at the Paremores Estates sign.



13 **PAREMORE ESTATES** was developed by Robert Paremores. He distinguished himself as a two-time All-American at Florida A&M University and as a key player for the NFL's St. Louis Cardinals. He also played for the Calgary Stampeders of the Canadian Football League. He returned to Tallahassee and was a popular coach at Godby High School for 33 years. He accomplished a life-long dream when he transformed his Grandfather's property into a significant subdivision that - today - houses some 120 families and has a thriving neighborhood association. Paremores died in 2004 at the age of 65.

Return to Meridian Road and turn left. Watch for the white building on the left.



14 **THE OLD HAMMOCK SCHOOL** was named after the tree-shaded, restful grove in which it was built. It occupied land owned by the Gardners, an African American family. Originally a one-room structure, the building was used as a church, then remodeled as a private residence for its current owner.



The **HAMMOCK COMMUNITY** stretched north from this location.



15 The original 2-story **GARDNER FAMILY HOME** is located on your left and is still owned and occupied by the descendants of Mack Gardner Sr. who once operated a general merchandise store.

Willie Gardner and his son Mack, sitting on the porch of the old Gardner Store.

Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.



Turn right on Bannerman Road.



16 **THE NEW BETHELONIA CHURCH** is on the corner of Bannerman and Meridian Roads. It marks an invisible cross-road between the Kirksey Community to the north and the Blocker's Community to the east.



17 **THE BLOCKERS COMMUNITY** was a thriving neighborhood of houses, businesses, stores and churches from 1930 into the 1960s. The enclave also included juke joints and lounges. Folks would come from all over to hear music, dance and enjoy refreshments. Signs advertising the Juke Box Lounge, Blocker's Inn and the All Occasions Lounge are still standing.



18 **SMITTY'S JOINT**, (La Hacienda Restaurant) Smitty's Farm, or Smitty's Place - by any name, it was a rocking place to be up until the late 1990s. Mr. McKinley Smith Sr. purchased 186 acres here in the 1940s and opened Smitty's Night Club on his August birthday in 1955. His descendents still own 75 acres. Smith's mother – Rosa Williams Smith is buried in the family cemetery at the corner of the parking area.

Smitty's is now occupied by the La Hacienda Restaurant. Stop in for a refreshing drink or some of the best Mexican food Tallahassee has to offer. The restaurant is open from 11am to 10pm, daily.

After your break, pull out of the parking lot, turn left and drive back through Blockers. Turn right on Meridian Road.



19 The **OLD BETHELONIA A.M.E. CHURCH** building is smaller than its successor, but in 1876 – it met the religious needs of both the Kirksey and Blocker's residents.



20 The **KIRKSEY COMMUNITY** stretched over an area approximately six miles east and west and three miles north and south around Gardner's Farm Road. Mack Gardner's descendents acquired 250 acres here in 1957. An old well has been located on the property that may date back to ante bellum times.



21 **BANNERMAN TOBACCO BARN** and **COMMIS-SARY** Charles Bannerman arrived in Tallahassee in 1827. By 1850, he had 1,614 acres of land. He was an innovative farmer, known for experimenting with "new" methods - like using guano for fertilizer. The tobacco barn was built by Charles' grandsons, Will and Hunter. The nearby commissary was built around 1910. Both structures sit on private property.

HISTORICAL FACT: For 1850 tax purposes, Bannerman's land was valued at \$10,000. Given the average price* of unimproved land in Leon County today, the Bannerman property would be worth over \$22.7 million. * University of Florida, 4-2005



22 The **CHINA HILL COMMUNITY** spilled over the Leon County line from neighboring Gadsden County. Florida state records indicate there was a post office at China Hill as early as 1851, but it did not appear in the records in 1860. Originally, there were more small farms in this area than huge plantations. This trend continued after the Civil War as ex-slaves and their descendents bought up parcels of land.



23 **MT. PISGAH A.M.E. CHURCH** is on the right hand side of the road in an area once referred to as Coon Bottom.



24 The **CHINA HILL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH** was founded in 1940 by Sam P. Jones who served as its Pastor until 1968.

End your tour here. Turn around in the driveway of the church and return to Tallahassee via Meridian Road – or connect to the More Than Just A Road Tour by turning right at Iamonia Cut-Off.

More Than Just a Road ... Thomasville Road

Thomasville Road has been the major path to Georgia since well before the Civil War. Immigrants traveled into Florida in wagons, on horseback and on foot via this route. No doubt, it followed trails used by Native Americans. Even the Spanish explorer DeSoto is said to have traversed this way. Thomasville is **More Than Just A Road** – it is a gateway to the past – and the future.

Tour # 2 begins in the general vicinity of the I-10 underpass and Thomasville Road and continues on side roads near the Florida/Georgia state line. It terminates at the Tall Timbers Research Station.

Turn right on Killarney Way, right on Raymond Diehl, left on Vassar, then right again on Baldwin Drive. Follow the road as it winds closer to the woods. The Velda site will be on your right. Park on the street, adjacent to the fence.



25 The **VELDA TEMPLE MOUND** Archeological Site is one of five known temple mound sites in Leon County. It was constructed between 1000-1400 AD by people belonging to the Ft. Walton culture. Their descendents called themselves “Apalachee” and continued to occupy the area during Spanish occupation. These were plantation lands during the ante bellum period. The land was used for grazing well into the 1950s when it was owned by the Velda Dairy Farm. At one point, a trench was bulldozed through the center of the mound, causing considerable damage. There are picnic tables on the site and a well-marked walking trail that will allow you a closer look at the mound structure.

Head out straight on Baldwin and turn left on Arbor Hill, then left again on Vassar. Turn right on Raymond Diehl, left on Killarney Way.

Go straight through the intersection at Thomasville to enter Maclay State Park.



26 **ALFRED B. MACLAY GARDENS STATE PARK** is beloved for its ornamental gardens and its beautiful trails surrounding Lake Overstreet. The park also contains fourteen prehistoric sites, three multi component sites, and eight historic sites—some of which have only just been identified.

The land has been under almost continuous occupation for thousands of years. In the 1870s, African Americans established a community on the northeastern shore of Lake Overstreet. The neighborhood became home to tenant farmers, sharecroppers and hunting plantation employees. The district was self-sustaining - with churches, schools, farms, houses, businesses and churches. Residents had their own fishing spots, swimming holes and cemeteries.

During the 1920s, New Yorker Alfred B. Maclay started to purchase land in this area – eventually acquiring more than 3,000 acres. He designed elaborate gardens and paths to rival those found in his native northeast.

After Maclay's death, his widow donated over 300 acres to the state. To date, only structures associated with the Maclay family have been restored, but funding is being sought to delve deeper into the mysteries buried in the woods and to restore and preserve the history the park contains. Visitors can tour the grounds daily from 8 a.m. until sunset.

Exit through the main entrance and turn left – back on to Thomasville Road.



27 MT. PLEASANT PRIMITIVE BAPTIST

CHURCH AT LAKE HALL, to the right at James Smith Lane, was rebuilt in 1961. The date of the original construction is uncertain.



28 LAKE HALL / LAKE OVERSTREET COMMUNITIES.

The Lake Hall school was mentioned in official county records as early as 1878. It is believed to be the oldest school built for black students that is still standing in Leon County. The John G. Riley Center/Museum for African American history & Culture is leading an initiative to save the school building and restore it for use as a cultural center. Charlie Payne and his wife Mary raised their children in this area where they owned two stores, rented fishing boats and owned a significant amount of property.



This was the main road leading into the Lake Hall Community as it appeared in 1890. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.



29 The OLD HORSESHOE CHURCH / SCHOOL was

built on nearby land owned by Rev. William Henry Witherspoon. It was a one room structure designed to serve students in grades 1-8. The original building was destroyed by fire and classes were temporarily conducted at the Horseshoe Church. Students later moved to the Lake McBride School. The church building – with its high steeple - was donated to the Baptist Church and moved to its current location. As the congregation grew, additions were made to the structure. Plans are being made to restore the building to its original condition and move it to the courtyard of the new church.



The Horseshoe Church at its original location. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.

➡ # 30 **THE LAKE McBRIDE COMMUNITY.** In 1871, Margaret Williams – ex-slave, daughter of John and Amy Wright and wife of John Ford – visited the Freedman’s Bank in Tallahassee to open up a savings account. She reported that she lived on Reynolds Road, near Shell Road. Reynolds Road was near the heart of the Lake McBride Community and is still in existence. Mrs. Williams’ bank documents indicate she cooked and washed clothes for a Mr. Solomon. Census data recorded nine years later indicates most of her neighbors were farm laborers, or had secured domestic employment. By 1930, most residents owned their own land.

Turn right on Bradfordville Road. Drive past the Target store. You will be turning left into a circular drive marked by a cluster of mailboxes.

🚗 # 31 The **OLD LAKE McBRIDE SCHOOL** is in a remarkable state of preservation, but is currently privately owned and closed to the public. It is permissible to pull into the drive and pause near the mailboxes, but please respect the privacy of nearby homeowners and do not venture beyond the fence.

Retrace your route back to Thomasville Road. Turn right.

➡ # 32 **THE DAWKINS POND / LAKE IAMONIA COMMUNITIES.** Robert White Williams reportedly owned over 5,000 acres in the area surrounding present day Lake Iamonia. Early land records indicate he purchased property in several North Florida counties as early as 1826. Williams married Rebecca Branch, daughter of one-time Florida Governor John Branch. Iamonia (pronounced ä mon yä) took its name from the Seminole village of Hiamonee.

🚗 # 33 Watch for the abandoned **SHARECROPPER’S HOUSE** - seen off at a distance through the trees at extreme right

HISTORICAL FACT: In 1910, it took 70 minutes of labor to earn \$1.00 of farm income. By 1980, only 4 minutes were required.



34 **MT. ZION CHURCH** and the site of **DAWKINS POND SCHOOL** can be seen on the left-hand side of the divided road. The school was located to the right of the church building. Minutes of the Leon County Board of Public Instruction of 1872-1875, referred to Dawkins Pond School as School # 28. When it opened, the school board provided one blackboard, one bucket and one dipper.

Turn right on Sunny Hill Road (State Hwy 12) Watch for the second concrete drive on your right. It slopes up to high ground.



35 **FLOYD CHAPEL LODGE** and **CEMETERY** was a Freemason's Lodge site. The building looks like a church – with a cross over the door and a small steeple - but it was never used for this purpose. A cemetery is behind the building and is still in use.



36 Farther down the road on your right, is a sign reading **NIGHTCLUB** that marks the location of the **OLD SKEETER HOLE**. It is on private property, but was once a popular “watering hole” where musicians from all over north Florida and south Georgia would come to entertain the many African American farm owners and workers that lived in the Skeeter Hole community.

CAUTION!

The next two sites on this tour are beyond the paved portion of Sunny Hill Road. Do not attempt this leg of the tour if it is raining - or if you are driving a vehicle with a low ground clearance. The drive is beautiful and rewarding in good weather – but can be hazardous under inclement conditions.

Watch for the small, cinder block church on your right.



37 **BROWN BETHEL CHURCH** still holds services twice monthly. Many parishioners have moved to less rural parts of the county, but still return here to worship. The remains of an old cabin can be seen through the woods to your left.



38 The **NEW HOPE CHURCH** is small, but meticulously maintained by members of the congregation who gather here often for fellowship and worship. The cemetery nearby shelters the remains of notable past residents – including Rev. John Meeks who lived to be 100 years old. The burial ground is still in use. You may turn around in the parking area, but please respect the sanctity of these grounds by remaining in your vehicle.

Return to Thomasville Road via Sunny Hill. Turn left on the divided Thomasville Road. Pull over in the horseshoe drive in front of the small kiosk located on the right-hand side of the road.



39 **DESOTO HISTORICAL MARKER** and **ROBERT E. LEE MEMORIAL**. A rustic kiosk marks a spot on Florida's DeSoto Trail and contains information about the explorer's route through the area in 1539-40. A memorial to Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee was placed nearby by the Daughters of the Confederacy.

Turn right at Iamonia Cut-off (State Hwy 12)



40 **NEW HICKORY HILL CHURCH** and **CEMETERY**. You will have to look carefully to imagine the remnants of the old Hickory Hill Church under the brick that was applied when the building was "modernized." The name was changed at the same time.

Turn left on Iamonia Landing Road. Approach the lake and turn left at the sign for the park.



41 **KATE IRELAND PARK** is operated and maintained by Leon County. The five acre piece of land was donated by Ms. Ireland and subsequently named in her honor in 1998. It features a pavilion with picnic tables and a playground for the little ones. Public restrooms are available at this stop.

Turn left as you come out of the park. Your next stop will be on your right as you make the turn.



42 **IAMONIA LANDING – OZ'S PLACE** and public boat landing. For many years, this small piece of Lake Iamonia shoreline was called Van Brunt Point after the family that owned much of the surrounding land. Today, there is a small picnic area under the trees and a public boat ramp. Oz's Place features food, beverages and a friendly welcome. It is a popular spot for Sunday drivers, boaters and fishermen.

Retrace your route back to Iamonia Cut-off and turn left. The entrance to Tall Timbers is well marked. Turn left into the driveway.



Quail hunting at Tall Timbers. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.



43 TALL TIMBERS RESEARCH STATION and the **JONES TENANT FARM**. The Tall Timbers Research Station stretches over 4,000 acres on the north shore of Lake Iamonia. The center has established an international reputation for their research and experimentation in forestry management and fire ecology.

Before the Civil War, these lands were part of Woodlawn Plantation. In 1895, the property was purchased by Edward Beadel of New York who built it into a quail hunting plantation. His nephew Henry inherited the property and was responsible for some of the early scientific research conducted here. The Beadel home and many of the remaining structures have been restored and preserved and are open to the public at selected times.

A new feature will be the newly-restored tenant farm of Alonzo and Mamie Jones. Their home and its associated corn crib are remnants of a once-thriving African American community. The simple residence is located down difficult and winding country roads, but will become a part of the regularly scheduled tour in 2006.

The center is a working research station and access is controlled. Tour information can be found at www.talltimbers.org, or by calling Juanita Whiddon at 893-4153, ext. 236.



The restored corn crib at Tall Timbers. Photo courtesy of Tall Timbers Research Station.

To return to Tallahassee, turn right on Iamonia Cut-off from the main gate of Tall Timbers. Make another right on Thomasville Road.

If you wish to connect to Tour # 1, turning left on the Iamonia Cut-off will lead you to Meridian Road.

Tour extension – You may want to make a trip to historic Thomasville, GA via Thomasville Road. It is approximately 14 miles – through the Red Hills country and past several working plantations.

Beyond The Shade Trees ... Centerville Road

The **Beyond the Shade Trees** tour begins on Centerville Road - just past Betton Road at Henry Hill Park. Your route generally follows Centerville Road – with short, side trips on Bradfordville and Old Centerville Roads, terminating at the intersection of Bradley Road and Moccasin Gap. You may wish to avoid some sections of this tour in inclement weather.



44 As you head east on Centerville Road, **HENRY HILL PARK** (also known as Hill Gate) can be seen to your right – just a short distance beyond Betton Road. In 1865, Debbie Edwards and Sarah Hill started Emancipation Proclamation celebrations at the Winthrop Place – just north of Hillgate Park. Today, descendants of Sarah Hill still own the land and still celebrate freedom. Hundreds of residents join them to share good food, music, family games and stories of long-ago times.

Follow Centerville as it connects with Blair Stone. Turn left from the far left lane. The road will curve, but stay in your lane. Go through the intersection at Capital Circle NE. Turn left again and stay on Centerville.



This Leon County farmer was still using an ox to plow his fields in 1941. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.



45 The **ST. PETER COMMUNITY** was once densely populated with tenant farmers, sharecroppers and small-farm owners. The original community was generally defined by the present-day post office you passed, to just beyond Brim Lane – ahead and to the right. Locals remember a well-known juke joint called “The Big Oak” that once stood near the large oaks just beyond the intersection of Capital Circle and Centerville Road.

As you approach the intersection of Centerville and Fleischman / Longbladh Roads - slow down and look through the trees to your right to glimpse a view of St. Peter’s and the old Raney School.



Students at Raney School in 1965. Courtesy of the Florida State Archives Photographic Collection.



46 ST. PETER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH and CEMETERY / RANEY SCHOOL. This church still serves the community on the site of the original Indian Branch Church. The Raney School – an original Negro Schoolhouse – is on the property and is still in use as a cultural center. During the days of segregation, it served as a public school for grades K-8. The original date of construction of the school is uncertain, but it is believed to have been named after George P. Raney who was serving as a Circuit Court Judge in Leon County in 1885. Children attended school here until 1967 when desegregation resulted in its closure. The geographical clustering of a school, church and cemetery was very common at the end of the 19th Century.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The Munree Community grew around land donated to newly emancipated slaves by the Metlers who owned the Welaunee Plantation at the close of the Civil War. Welaunee was established by Col. Robert H. Gamble in 1826, and included holdings in Jefferson, Leon and Madison counties. Munree was bounded roughly by Miccosukee Road (to the south of your tour location) to Hwy. 90 and Capital Circle NE to Edenfield. The first structure built on the land was a “brush harbor” where people could worship, teach and conduct social gatherings. The first harbors were constructed of sticks, straw, moss and other items found in the woods. They were later replaced by structures made with board lumber. Homes were clustered in close proximity. The Munree harbor area soon became over-crowded and residents moved out to form the St. Peter Community. From St. Peter, some members of the congregation moved their worship services to an old A&P grocery store building in Tallahassee where the Trailways Bus Station stands today. Major brush harbors were also located in Midway and Quincy.

Cross over Interstate 10 and you will see some of the rapid growth of new subdivisions in northeast Leon County. This area was once home to huge plantations that raised cotton, cattle and a variety of valuable feed-crops.



47 MT. HOREB PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH will appear on the left-hand side of the road just past Brim Lane. As the St. Peter community grew, the need – and desire - to build new churches increased. Some moves were motivated by a necessity for more space – still others were occasioned by differences of opinion among congregants or the rise of a dynamic new preacher. Mt. Horeb was established in 1918. The current church building was constructed in 1970.

Turn Left on Bradfordville Road



48 **BRADFORDVILLE** and **CENTERVILLE ROAD** area. “Henry’s Place” – a small farm owned by Sam Henry – lies just up the road and to the right. The Henry family sponsored a turkey shoot and emancipation celebration each year on December 26. The date was significant – not because of its proximity to Christmas – but because word of the end of the Civil War was not passed on to these plantations until December 26, 1865 – months after Lee’s surrender.

Turn left on to Sam’s Lane. Follow the winding dirt road up the hill, through the oak groves to the parking area surrounding the one-story, cinder block building.



49 **THE BRADFORDVILLE BLUES CLUB** was once known as Dave’s C.C. Club and many locals still refer to it in that way. In the lexicon of the day, this is “the real deal.” This blues club is one of the last, classic, juke joints and still offers live music on Friday and Saturday nights. The club has played host to some of the most famous blues performers in the southeast.

Exit Sam’s Lane and turn right on Bradfordville Road. Make a left-hand turn back on to Centerville.



50 **ST. PHILLIP A.M.E. CHURCH** and **CEMETERY** occupies the northeast corner of Bradfordville/Roberts Road and Centerville. Thomas Jefferson Roberts established a cattle farm in this area around 1830. In 1875, the Roberts family transferred ownership of five acres of land to the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church so a facility could be built for the benefit of their former slaves. The church congregation was formally organized in 1891. Six years later, a one room school, Roberts Elementary, was constructed between the church and the cemetery that operated as a school for black children until closure in the 1950s. The current church building was built in 1963.

A few years ago, the fourth generation of Roberts family members deeded additional property to the Leon County School District and a new school. Roberts Elementary opened in 2001.



51 **SWAIN BETHEL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH** is on the left-hand side of the road. The original church was erected in 1885 and was rebuilt in 1961.

Continue on Centerville to Pisgah Church Road. Turn right. The road is well marked.



52 **OLD PISGAH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.** A wave of settlers from Georgia, Virginia and the Carolinas began pouring into the Red Hills even as rumors circulated that America would take possession of Florida from the Spanish. They soon called on missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church to come from South Carolina to tend to their religious needs. “Circuit riders” first conducted services on this site in the 1820s. Some ten years later, thirty-four charter members formed the first formal congregation.

The Old Pisgah United Methodist Church building was dedicated on May 1, 1859 and is one of the oldest churches in Florida. The classic Greek revival architecture features hand-hewn pews and clerestory windows. The church often served as a cultural center for the area – hosting political meetings, musical performances and other community events in addition to worship services.

When the church was first opened, women sat on one side and men on the other. Selected slaves were allowed to sit in the gallery.



53 Just past Old Chemonie Road, to your right, is **SHADY GROVE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH # 2**. The church was founded in 1825 by David Walker. It was rebuilt in 1984.

Approximately 1/3 of a mile down Centerville, the road will fork – separating Old Centerville Road from Moccasin Gap. Veer left - on to Old Centerville.

CAUTION!

Do not attempt the next leg of this tour if it is raining. The road-bed quickly turns to slippery clay and water overflows some low-lying areas. The drive is beautiful and rewarding in good weather – but can be hazardous under inclement conditions. If you wish to by-pass this road, stay on current path. Your last stop will be on your right.



54 The **CENTENARY CHURCH** and **CEMETERY** are located on a hill to your left - just after you make the transition from the paved to the gravel road bed. The church has an active, but aging, congregation. An African American school once stood to the north of the church, but was torn down years ago. This site is at high risk because the resources of the congregation preclude making needed repairs. Please respect the area by staying in your vehicle.

Return to Old Centerville Road and turn left from the driveway.



55 **OLD CENTERVILLE ROAD** twists and winds its way through ancient fields and towering oaks. It earned a Canopy Road designation from Leon County in 2002. The 6.4 mile road dates back to ante bellum times when it formed a portion of the wagon road network that linked North Florida plantations to vital markets. Main roads led to Tallahassee, FL and Thomasville, GA. These roads also connected with rail heads where goods were loaded on flat cars and pulled by mule to the port of St. Marks on the coast. The deep cuts seen on either side of the road are evidence of many years of use.



56 **OLD ST. PHILLIP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH (OF CHRIST)** and **CEMETERY** is less than three miles from the Centenary Church - located in a grove on the right hand side of the road. Evidence of a pre-existing building foundation can be seen in front of the current structure which was built in 1963. There is no record of a school or a cemetery being in proximity to this church – a departure from what would have been the case prior to 1910.

Pull in to the parking area in front of the church to turn around; then re-trace your path to the intersection of Old Centerville and Bradley Road. Turn left. Your next stop can be seen directly ahead.



57 BRADLEY'S COUNTRY STORE. Return to an earlier time when life was simpler and the country store was a place where you could buy penny candy and hear all the latest news. The Bradley family has been operating from this location since 1927 and they will be happy to take a moment to answer questions about the area.

Bradley's is a National Register of Historic Places site.

Your tour ends at Bradley's Store. Return to Tallahassee by reversing your route on Centerville Road.



*Photo of Willie Gardner at the Bradley's Country Store.
Photo courtesy of the Florida State
Archives Photographic collection.*

“MAIN ROADS, & CROSS ROADS” SITES

All About The Land ... Meridian Road

- # 1 - Windshield – ST. JAMES CHURCH
- # 2 - Drive through – THE MACON COMMUNITY
- # 3 - Windshield – MT. ZION at MACON CHURCH
- # 4 - Windshield – MACON MEMORY GARDENS CEMETERY
- # 5 - Windshield – HOME of HENRY and ANNIE MAE MACON
- # 6 - Stop – COTTON SCHOOL
- # 7 - Windshield – POPULAR SPRING / SNEED'S CEMETERY
- # 8 - Stop – ELINOR KLAPP PHIPPS PARK
- # 9 - Windshield – The ST. MATTHEWS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH (Cotton Cemetery)
- # 10 - Stop – MILLER'S LANDING / ROLLINS' POINT
- # 11 - Windshield – ELIZABETH POPULAR SPRINGS CHURCH
- # 12 - Stop – The ROYALTY NURSERY
- # 13 - Windshield – PAREMORE ESTATES
- # 14 - Windshield The OLD HAMMOCK SCHOOL / HAMMOCK COMMUNITY
- # 15 - Windshield – GARDNER FAMILY HOME
- # 16 - Windshield – The NEW BETHELONIA CHURCH
- # 17 - Drive through - the BLOCKER'S COMMUNITY
- # 18 - Stop – SMITTY'S JOINT (La Hacienda Restaurant)
- # 19 - Windshield – The OLD BETHELONIA A.M.E. CHURCH
- # 20 - Drive through – The KIRKSEY COMMUNITY
- # 21 - Windshield – BANNERMAN TOBACCO BARN and COMMISSARY
- # 22 - Drive through – The CHINA HILL COMMUNITY
- # 23 - Windshield – MT. PISGAH A.M.E. CHURCH
- # 24 - Windshield – The CHINA HILL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

More Than Just a Road ... Thomasville Road

- # 25 - Stop – The VELDA TEMPLE MOUND
- # 26 - Stop – MACLAY STATE PARK and GARDENS
- # 27 - Windshield - MT. PLEASANT PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH at LAKE HALL
- # 28 - Drive through – LAKE HALL / LAKE OVERSTREET COMMUNITIES
- # 29 – Windshield - OLD HORSESHOE CHURCH / SCHOOL
- # 30 - Drive through – LAKE McBRIDE COMMUNITY
- # 31 – Windshield – The OLD LAKE McBRIDE SCHOOL
- # 32 - Drive through – DAWKINS POND / LAKE IAMONIA COMMUNITIES
- # 33 - Windshield – SHARECROPPER'S HOUSE
- # 34 - Windshield – MT ZION CHURCH and SITE OF DAWKINS POND SCHOOL
- # 35 - Windshield – FLOYD CHAPEL LODGE and CEMETERY
- # 36 - Windshield – OLD SKEETER HOLE.
- # 37 - Windshield - BROWN BETHEL CHURCH
- # 38 - Windshield – The NEW HOPE CHURCH
- # 39 – Stop - DESOTO HISTORICAL MARKER and ROBERT E. LEE MEMORIAL.
- # 40 - Windshield – NEW HICKORY HILL CHURCH and CEMETERY
- # 41 – Stop – KATE IRELAND PARK
- # 42 - Stop – IAMONIA LANDING – OZ'S PLACE and Boat Landing
- # 43 – Stop - TALL TIMBERS RESEARCH STATION and the JONES TENANT FARM

Beyond The Shade Trees ... Centerville Road

- # 44 - Windshield – HENRY HILL PARK
- # 45 - Drive through - THE ST. PETER COMMUNITY
- # 46 - Windshield - ST. PETER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH and CEMETERY / RANEY SCHOOL
- # 47 - Windshield - MT. HOREB PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
- # 48 - Windshield – VICINITY OF BRADFORDVILLE ROAD AND CENTERVILLE
- # 49 - Stop - The BRADFORDVILLE BLUES CLUB
- # 50 - Windshield – The ST. PHILLIP AME CHURCH and CEMETERY
- # 51 - Windshield - SWAIN BETHEL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH
- # 52 - Stop - OLD PISGAH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
- # 53 - Windshield – SHADY GROVE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH # 2
- # 54 - Stop – The CENTENARY CHURCH AND CEMETERY
- # 55 - Drive through – OLD CENTERVILLE ROAD
- # 56 - Windshield - OLD ST. PHILLIP PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH (of Christ) and CEMETERY
- # 57 - Stop - BRADLEY'S COUNTRY STORE