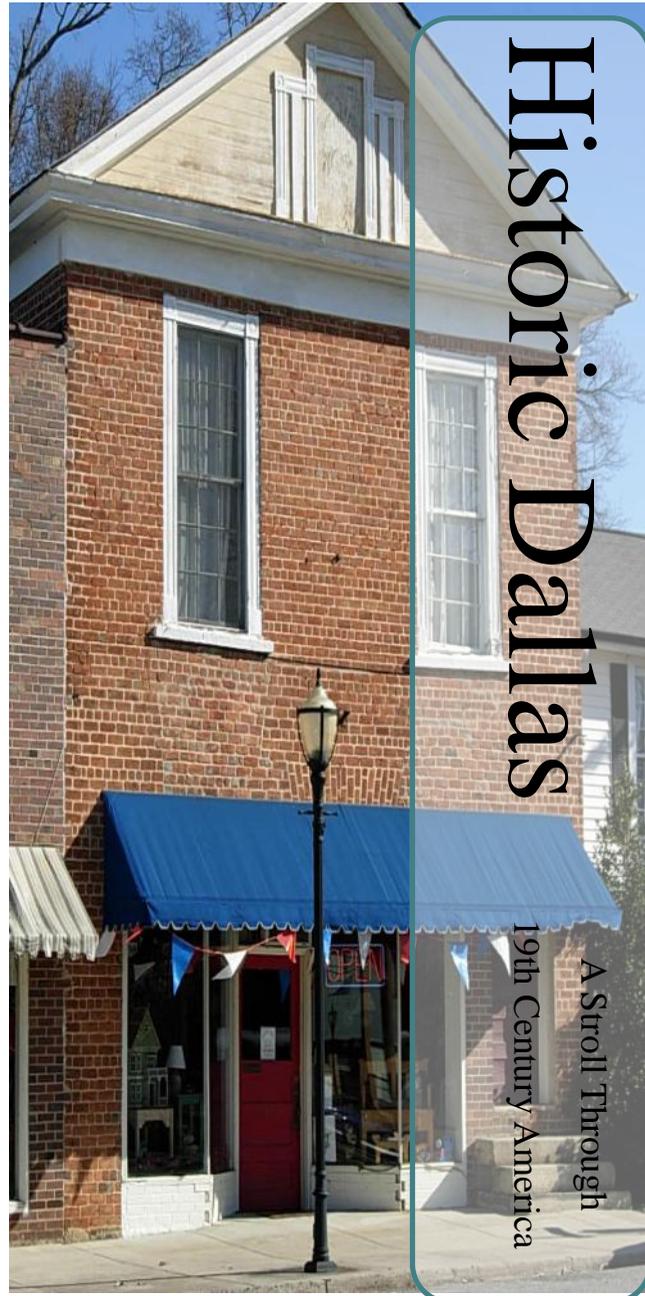




Gaston County
MUSEUM
of Art & History

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Historic Dallas

A Stroll Through
 19th Century America

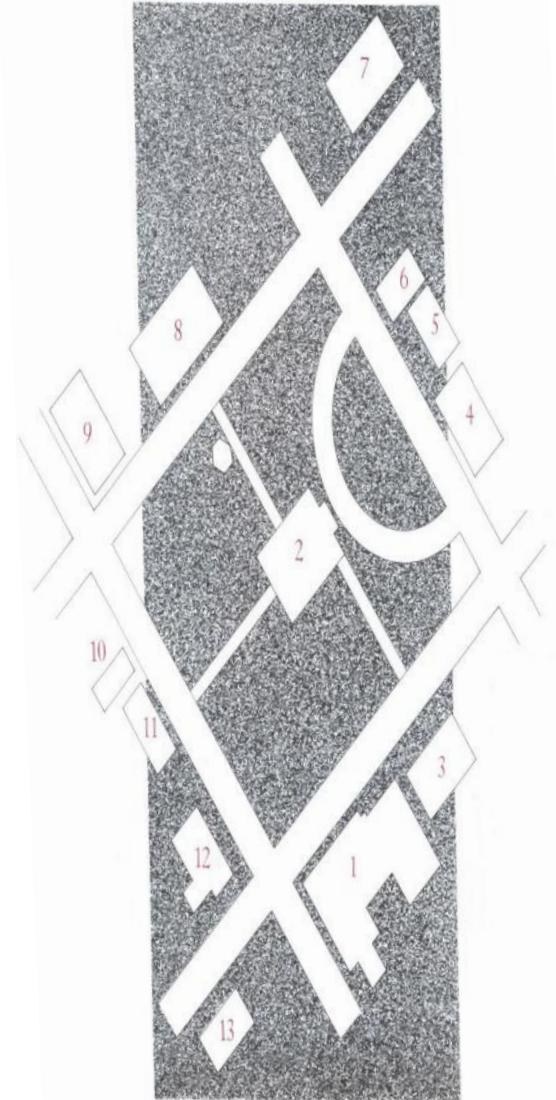
Dallas, North Carolina

Step out our door and back in time as you examine the buildings and houses that make up the Dallas Historic District. This fine collection of 19th and early 20th century buildings help tell the story of Piedmont village life.

The history of Gaston County dates back to the 1750's when the area was first settled by people of German and Scotch-Irish descent. Following their heritage, each group settled in geographic areas similar to their homeland. Today those settlement patterns still can be seen in the local family surnames and the clusters of Presbyterian and Lutheran churches in Gaston County.

Dallas was a planned community. When Gaston County was formed in 1846, no town existed within its borders. For convenience, the county seat was stipulated to be "no more that two miles from Long Creek Baptist Church" which is one mile east of the square today. The town name was chosen to honor the U.S. Vice President at that time, George Mifflin Dallas. The land was originally farm land owned by Jesse Holland, who sold seventy-five acres to the county for fifty dollars.

In the late 19th century, Gaston County experienced rapid growth with the development of the southern textile industry. Much of the growth was concentrated near a railroad intersection called Gastonia Station. As that tiny spot grew into a city, the focus of population and power moved out of Dallas. After three referendums, a vote in September 1909 to change county seats was passed. On January 1, 1911 the courthoguse in Gastonia opened and a chapter in the life of Dallas closed. Fortunately, the architecture of Dallas stands to tell us of the early years of the town and the development of Gaston County.



Art...and the Rest is History!

1 Hoffman Hotel

131 West Main Street
Daniel Hoffman, a local entrepreneur, was quick to see the need for a nice hotel in the new county seat of Dallas. In its busiest times, the Hoffman Hotel had forty-four rooms with simple beds and wash stands. The Greek Revival architecture has been embellished with a late Victorian porch. The locally fired bricks have been washed with a brick red pigment for uniformity and were *penciled* (or outlined) with white paint, a process that would have denoted the hotel as a fine establishment..



2 Former Gaston County Courthouse

Until the courthouse opened in October 1847, county business was conducted in a small log structure located on the

square. Originally, interior stairs from the first floor office area led to the courtroom above. The outside stairs and the belfry were added following a fire on December 12, 1874 which gutted the interior. Nearly all the documents inside were saved by men who braved the flames, pitching the papers to the women waiting outside.

3 Sandifer - Friday House

115 West Main Street
In 1903, state senator and attorney, Robert Sandifer built his house within easy walking distance to the courthouse. After the courthouse moved to Gastonia, Sandifer moved to Georgia and the house was bought by the Friday family. The house is in a vernacular classical style with a low hip roof covered in patterned shingles. Referred to as the "Dallas Shingle" this tin tile was patented in 1910 by local resident, Howard M. Clemmer. This roof shingle increased productivity with a locking spring that shortened the time required for installation. Reminders of his invention can be seen on several roofs in the area.



4 Matthews Hotel/White House Hotel

116 North Gaston Street
In 1870, Uriah Matthews bought lot #19 to build and operate a hotel which he later sold to Mr. and Mrs. J.B. White. Mrs. White's chicken and dumplings were famous throughout the area. The hotel has a center hall with large interior chimneys which are seen above the hip roof. The front porch still has original chamfered posts on the second story. The first story posts have been replaced through the years. Today the building stands as a private residence.



5 Holland-Friday House

128 North Gaston Street
This private home was originally bought and enlarged from a one-room store by Mr. J. Holland during the Civil War. He continued to expand the house, eventually adding the second floor. In the 1920s, the Friday family purchased the home and continued to enlarge it. This was the boyhood home of William C. Friday, former president of the University of North Carolina.



6 Rhyne Store

130 North Gaston Street
Moses Rhyne built this establishment in 1850. The store has a pedimented gable front with Palladian style windows placed in the gable end. Originally there was a center door flanked by windows similar to those on the second floor. As was custom of the time, living quarters were located above the store and reached by an interior staircase. Mrs. Margaret Rhyne was the daughter of hotel builder, Daniel Hoffman.



7 Former Gaston County Jail

108 East Trade Street
Built in 1847, the County's first jail was operated as a family affair. The sheriff's office and living quarters were on the first floor. Prisoners were housed upstairs. This is a unique architectural piece with the end wall parapets rising above the roof line. Cell block windows are dressed in granite quoins and sills and covered with iron bars. In 1901, a fire badly damaged the jail's interior.



8 Setzer Building

124-130 West Trade Street
Notice the façade near the roof line and you will discover the ghost marks of windows that once crowned the third floor. Dating from the 1870s, this property was constructed with two retail stores on the ground level and living quarters on the second floor which are reached by a center hall. The County's first Masonic Lodge met in the large room on the third floor which was removed in the late 1940s.



9 Bank of Dallas

146 West Trade Street
A casualty of the Great Depression, the Bank of Dallas began just after the turn-of-the-century with office space for rent. The bank operated on most of the first floor with Dr. S.A. Wilkins' medical practice in the rear of the building and attorneys, Oscar Mason, Sr. and Ben Dixon on the second floor.

10 Lewis Mill Office

117 North Holland Street
Although never considered a textile town, Dallas did have two early cotton mills. In 1904, Mr. R.S. Lewis constructed this office for his work with the Dallas Cotton Mill and the Morrowbb Mill next door to his family business, a large mercantile store. The Lewis Office also served as the town post office during Lewis' tenure as postmaster. The building has been extensively altered in recent years.



11 Smyre-Pasour House

113-115 North Holland Street
Built in 1850 by Dr. J.F. Smyre, this house is the oldest known residence in Dallas. In July 1851, it was purchased

by Eli Pasour, the first mayor of Dallas. The privately owned house remains within the same family today. The original portion was a three room house with separate kitchen and dining room in the back that were later connected. The northern addition was added in 1874 and was used by Eli's daughter, Hersilia, for tutoring private students.

12 Roberts-Lewis House



109 North Holland Street
This house was built in 1852 for John Roberts, the first Clerk of Court for Gaston County. The style of the house is in a vernacular style with classical touches. The front porch is a 20th century addition.

13 Carolina & Northwestern Railway Depot

215 West Main Street
Dating from 1901, this depot is typical of many that were built across America. The depot was originally situated three blocks east and was donated to the Museum in 1976. The depot was renovated as a mixed use space in 2009 and renamed the Anne Biggers Furr Learning Station. The 1940s caboose was donated by the Southern Railroad for adaptive use for the Museum in 1977.



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