



The Vintage Rabun Quarterly

Hospitality on Main Street

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Blue Ridge Hotel Staff, 1912

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Place names quiz

- Please visit our museum and research library on Mondays and Fridays from 10 until 2 and on Wednesdays from 12:30 until 4:30.
- Group tours by appointment

For almost 90 years, the Blue Ridge Hotel stood as a landmark on Clayton's North Main Street. Built by A.M. Mauldin and his brother-in-law, William Crane, between 1858 and 1862 as a log trading post which eventually catered to travelers, the inn passed from family to family until it was torn down in 1949.

The David Duncan family operated the establishment in the latter half of the nineteenth century, until selling out to his son-in-law, Raleigh Cannon. J.H. Cannon had opened a mercantile store on the same block in 1909, and in 1916 he and his wife, Celia, bought out their Cannon cousins and became the new owners.

The Tallulah Falls Railroad came to Clayton in 1905, bringing tourists in increasing numbers, and hotels and boarding houses proliferated in downtown. During the Blue Ridge Hotel's 90-year existence, Clayton also offered the Bleckley House, Green Hotel, Wall House, Hamby Hotel, Clayton Hotel, Nicholson House, Beechwood Inn, Black Rock Lodge, Earl House, Mountain View Inn, Bynum House and Forest Hill Inn among others. According

to a daughter of J.H. Cannon, only the Blue Ridge and the Clayton Hotel operated year-round.

We know significant details of how the Blue Ridge operated, and many of these probably apply to all the tourist destinations. There were three bathrooms, one for each floor, and a washstand in each of the 26 rooms. The Blue Ridge was known for its "good eats", advertising to the traveler disembarking at the train depot "all you can eat for 75 cents." The dining room, to the right of the lobby, held three long tables for twelve and two smaller tables for six. In the "parlor" were settees, a piano and a card table. All fuel used was wood, including the cook stove and stoves in guest rooms. All eleven Cannon children, in addition to paid employees, worked night and day cooking and cleaning for the hotel guests.

The Blue Ridge Hotel also specialized in catering to traveling salesmen, or "drummers", as they were known. Their slogan was "A Lovely Home for the Commercial Traveler." It's hard to believe today, but the hotel's guest register was printed in *The Clayton Tribune* each



Blue Ridge Hotel, 1920

week. The establishment on Main Street was also a beehive of activity during court week twice a year. Judges, juries, and lawyers were all domiciled here, and the front room was a hotbed of political campaigning.

One can imagine this front room from the description in the newspaper when the old fireplace was removed in 1926 to be replaced with a modern heater. "Court officials who...have been gathering around from time immemorial expressed disappointment at having to look around for a cuspidor or a convenient place to spit, now that the fireplace is gone."

Clayton and Rabun County are still dependent on tourist dollars, but hospitality no longer includes providing places to spit. The train no longer brings visitors, but the modern highway brings far more, and Main Street now holds only one hotel.

Other Downtown Tourist Destinations



The Bleckley House
circa 1925

This building originally served as the county courthouse and was located in the square formed by Main and Savannah Streets. When a new courthouse was built in 1908, it was moved to S. Main St. and became a hotel. A team of oxen moved the hotel to a hill near the train depot, overlooking Clayton from the east. Porches and wings were added. It was moved for a final time in the mid-1960s when a connector road was built to the new Highway 441.

The Green Hotel was also known as the Green House and the Dozier Hotel. Mr. and Mrs. V.A. Green offered 25 rooms. Those with a private bath were \$25 per week in 1928, and those without running water were \$18 per week. The hotel was demolished in the 1970s, and today there remains nothing but a vacant lot.



Green Hotel, South Main St.



Wall House - Main Street - 1846

Located on the east side of north Main Street, this was probably Clayton's first hotel. In 1899 they advertised that it was "strictly first-class" with "clean beds, well water and the best furnished table." By the 1920s, it was demolished to make way for the Derrick Motor Co.

The Hamby Hotel opened on north Main Street in 1926 with Mrs. R.E.A. Hamby as owner and manager. It boasted 50 rooms, all with running water and phones. Rooms were \$2.50 per day. The hotel burned in 1936 and was never rebuilt.



The Hamby Hotel - Clayton

Very little is known about this hotel's origins. It was located on Chechero Rd. just a stone's throw away from the train depot. By the 1940s, it became an apartment building. By 1965, it was demolished to make way for Claude James' grocery store.



Tuscowilla Inn
Clayton, Georgia



Historic Place Names

How many do you know?

1. Chechero
2. Savannah Street
3. Chattooga
4. Tallulah
5. Warwoman
6. Pass Over
7. Kerbytown
8. Timpson Creek
9. Dividings

- A. This area was said to be named for the first Cherokee man baptized by missionaries before Rabun County was created.
- B. Tiger was called this in the latter 19th century after a prominent general store owner.
- C. This is an English approximation of a Cherokee word thought to mean "terrible", as in a roaring sound.
- D. The area that is now Clayton was called the Cherokee version of this word because several major trails intersected here.
- E. This creek and surrounding community is named for the English translation of a Cherokee word celebrating a heroine unknown to us by name.
- F. Before 1915, Mountain City was called this because it sits on the Eastern Continental Divide where one crosses from the Chattooga River watershed to the Little Tennessee River watershed.
- G. "Chichirohe" was the name of one of the Cherokee villages near the Chattooga River, first appearing on maps in 1777.
- H. Once thought to be named for a Clayton hotel owner, some believe it may be the English equivalent of the famous "Hiwassee Trail", because both words mean "grassy valley".
- I. This word was the name of a Cherokee village on the east side of the river that was abandoned, probably in 1760, because it lay on the route of two British Army expeditions.



What town is this? The building is Silas Dotson's store before the arrival of the Tallulah Falls Railroad.

Answers: 1-G, 2-H, 3-I, 4-C, 5-E, 6-F, 7-B, 8-A, 9-D ; The photo is a view of Pass Over (Mountain City) looking north, circa 1905.

Our new exhibit: Then and Now

The latest exhibit in our spacious museum is the second in one of our visitors' favorites, photos depicting exact locations taken decades apart.

The first of these displays was of buildings in downtown Clayton only. Our new version expands to cover sites all over the county, from Dillard to Tiger to Lakemont.

The photos at right are examples of what we hope you will find fascinating. The top photo was taken around 1950 and shows the courthouse, which was built in 1908, and the county jail in the foreground. It seems improbable today, but the Sheriff and his family also lived in the building. The contemporary photo shows the 1968 courthouse on the same site with a larger jail elsewhere.



Rabun County Historical Society
81 North Church Street
P.O. Box 921
Clayton, GA 30525

Phone: 706-782-5292
E-mail: rabunhsy@windstream.net

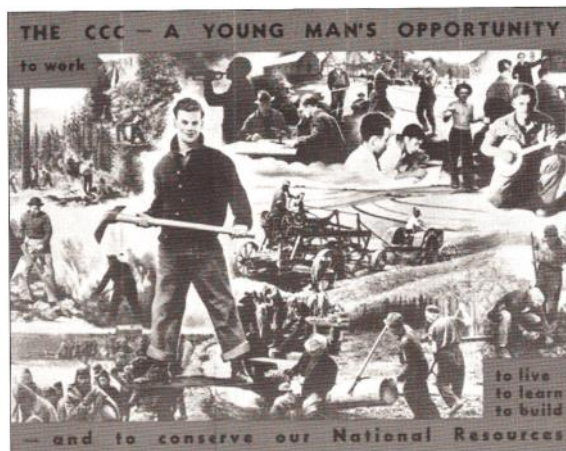


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www.rabunhistory.org

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Would you like to see hundreds of photos from our historic photo collection online? Would you like to be able to purchase a membership, buy a book or see our special online only exhibits from your computer? We are very pleased to announce our new professionally designed website. We hope you find it attractive and useful.



Recruiting posters like this one appeared during the CCC years, enticing young men to join the corps. (Courtesy of National Archives.)

This is our first special online exhibit, the Civilian Conservation Corps in Rabun County.