

Timeless Treasures...

In the 1740's, the first English-speaking settlers arrived to establish roots along the banks of the Wateree River in central South Carolina. Today, Sumter County boasts a population of more than 100,000, and the city of Sumter is the eighth-largest metropolitan area in the state. This is the "Gamecock City" and county. Two hours from the beach, three hours from the mountains and an easy day trip from some of the Southeast's major metropolitan centers, we are truly in the middle of everything!

Progressive in outlook while preserving our heritage, Sumter recognizes that our unique history offers a depth that makes us different from many communities of similar size. An ongoing effort to protect and celebrate the triumphs--and trials--of those who have gone before means education and enjoyment for today's residents and visitors, and a truly remarkable legacy for the citizens of the future.

Over the past 200 years, Sumter has produced a number of citizens who have gone forth to make their mark upon our nation and our world:

- **General Thomas Sumter**, for whom the city and county are named, the "Gamecock General" of the American Revolution whose daring exploits helped turn the tide in the war for independence;
- **Angelica Singleton Van Buren**, the legendary White House hostess whose beauty and grace captivated our nation's capital;
- **Bill Pinkney** of the Original Drifters, the WWII veteran who brought Carolina "beach music" to the world, helped define an era and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame alongside the Beatles;
- **Jasper Johns**, Edmunds High School graduate and "pop art" icon who created a revolution in the New York art world;
- **Bobby Richardson** of the New York Yankees, a baseball legend whose name shines alongside such greats as Mantle and DiMaggio;
- **Mary McLeod Bethune**, advisor to four US Presidents and consultant to the United Nations, founder of Bethune-Cookman College in Florida, the Mayesville native who traveled from the cotton fields to the ends of the earth.

We are Sumter, South Carolina. Uncommon Patriotism, Progressive Spirit.

Take a trip through Sumter's history...

1. Sumter Opera House

21 North Main Street

Built in 1894 of Cumberland Bluff stone in the Richardson-Romanesque style, the focal point of Sumter's historic downtown features a 100-foot clock tower. The breathtaking Art Deco interior dates from the 1930's. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Guided tours available. (803) 436-2616.

2. Sumter County Courthouse

141 North Main Street

The Sumter County Courthouse, built in 1907, is the scene of court activities, special events and the annual dedication and lighting of the community Christmas tree. The third courthouse built since Sumter's incorporation in 1800, it has seen a century of continuous use. (803) 436-2100.

3. Sumter County Museum

122 North Washington Street

Built in 1916 by the Moses and Phelps families, in 1972 the former Williams-

Brice house and gardens became the central point of the Sumter County Museum complex. Period rooms, exhibits and an impressive textile collection bring back the days of yore. The Carolina Back-country Homestead re-creates life in the Sumter District at the turn of the 19th century. Tours available. (803) 775-0908.

4. Genealogical & Historical Research Center

219 West Liberty Street

Extensive archives, books, maps, papers and more comprise an impressive collection representing Sumter County's growth from the 18th century to today. Research assistance available. (803) 774-3901.

5. Hampton Park Historic District

(bounded by Hampton, Church and Winn Streets)

Sumter's historic neighborhood, with private residences dating from the 1840's, features a variety of architectural styles. The corner of Hampton Avenue

and Church Street is the home of Temple Sinai (c. 1912), which serves the Jewish community from throughout the region. On Calhoun Street, Grace Baptist Church (organized in 1900, present building dedicated in 1984) occupies the site of the former McLaurin School. Greek Revival cottages, imposing Queen Anne homes, Arts & Crafts bungalows and more re-create the aura of the past. Memorial Park (Hampton Avenue) is a beautiful neighborhood centerpiece.

6. Sumter County Cultural Center

Haynsworth St. & Mood Ave.

One of South Carolina's only self-contained cultural complexes, the former Sumter High School building houses Patriot Hall auditorium, the Sumter County Gallery of Art and the Sumter Little Theatre. Originally constructed in 1939 as Boys' High School and later the site of Edmunds High School, the building has changed and adapted to modern times while retaining its historic distinctiveness. Tours available. Patriot



Hall: (803) 436-2260. Sumter County Gallery of Art: (803) 775-0543. Sumter Little Theatre: (803) 775-2150.

7. Swan Lake Iris Gardens

822 West Liberty Street

Home to all eight swan species, Japanese iris gardens and Sumter's most festive celebrations, Swan Lake is a living scene from a fairy tale. This community treasure is a gift to the city from the Bland and Heath families. The Bland Gardens date from 1927. Open daily; free admission. Guided tours available with advance notice. (803) 436-2640.

8. Sumter Cemetery

West Oakland Avenue

Sumter's historic cemetery was chartered in 1857, although several stones pre-dating this time indicate earlier origins. It contains many graves of interest, including that of George Edward Haynsworth, who fired the first shot of the Civil War. Adjacent to Sumter Cemetery are St. Lawrence, Walker and Jewish Cemeteries, the final resting places of many noted citizens of the area's Roman Catholic, African-American and Jewish communities.

9. Morris College

100 West College Street

Morris College opened in 1908 as Sumter's first and only historically black college. Operated by the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of SC, it originally provided three levels of training in education, adding the Bachelor of Arts program in 1915. Today, more than 20 degree programs are offered. It is one of the few senior colleges built and operated solely under African-American auspices, and is a member of the United Negro College Fund. Dr. Luns Richardson holds the record as the longest-serving president of any institution of higher learning in SC.

10. Town of Mayesville

US Highway 76

In 1811, Matthew Peterson Mayes II gave this farming community its name. Landmarks include 19th and early 20th century homes that remain private residences today, and the Kineen Hotel, built in 1911. Mayesville was the home of Mayesville Institute, chartered in 1896 and known to locals as "Little Tuskegee." Its most distinguished alumna is Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune. The site is now occupied by Mayesville Elementary School, and the Institute's founder, Miss

Emma Wilson, is buried on the grounds.

11. Mary McLeod Bethune Park

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Road, Lee County

Educator, administrator, businesswoman --Dr. Bethune's accomplishments are a testament to education, a pursuit that marked her entire life. She was the first African-American named to the SC Hall of Fame, and was honored with a US Postage Stamp in 1985. The park is built on the site of Dr. Bethune's birth in 1875, the 15th child of former slaves. (803) 453-5860.

12. Concord Presbyterian Church

Brewington Road (off US 76)

Organized in 1808, the church was built on land given by General Thomas Sumter to the Concord Society. The present building was completed in 1841.

13. Goodwill Presbyterian Church

Highway 527, Mayesville

The first African-American Presbyterian church in Sumter County, Goodwill was organized by 100 black members of Salem Black River Church. The Goodwill Parochial (Day) School on the property, which operated until 1960, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (803) 495-3599.

14. Salem Black River Presbyterian Church

Highway 527, Mayesville

"Brick Church" was established in 1759 near Mayesville. The imposing brick building with its massive Doric columns was built in 1856, from bricks made on the church grounds. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

15. LeNoir General Store

Horatio-Hagood Rd. (off SC 261)

This pre-1825 establishment is a typical country crossroads store of the type not often seen anymore. Enjoy some penny candy and a display of area historical artifacts!

16. Town of Rembert

US 521

With a population of less than 500 (US Census, 2000), rural Rembert surprises and delights visitors with unique fine dining at Lilfred's restaurant and the action-packed African American Cultural Festival held each May at Greenfield Farms.

17. High Hills Baptist Churches

Meeting House Rd (off SC 261)

Statesburg's two High Hills Baptist



located almost side by side, are deeply rooted in the history of the area. The white frame structure belongs to one of the oldest churches in Sumter County, established in 1772 on land given by General Thomas Sumter. The present building dates from 1803. A custom of the time was for slaves to worship at the same church as their masters, in a gallery constructed for that purpose. The brick High Hills Baptist Church is home to the congregation formed in 1869 by the freed men and women of the original church. The present structure was renovated in 1983 and overlooks a spectacular vista of the High Hills of the Santee, for which the churches were named. *High Hills Baptist (1772) does not hold regular services. High Hills Baptist (1869) is active and can be reached at (803) 499-2311.*

18. General Thomas Sumter Memorial Park

Acton Rd. (off Meeting House Rd.)
General Sumter arrived from his native Virginia in 1765 and quickly distinguished himself as a businessman, patriot and statesman. He was one of the founders of the town of Statesburg and the last surviving general of the American Revolution. Near his tomb is a miniature brick chapel marking the burial spot of his daughter-in-law, Nathalie DeLage Sumter. It is one of the oldest Catholic chapels outside of Charleston.

19. Church of the Holy Cross

335 N. Kings Hwy (US 261)
In 1785, Claremont Episcopal Church was established on property donated by General Thomas Sumter. The Church of the Holy Cross, a National Historic Landmark, was built in 1850-52. This Victorian Gothic building is one of the few in the US constructed entirely by the ancient *pise de terre* (rammed earth) method. The adjoining cemetery contains many interesting tombstones, among them more than 100 veterans of the American Revolution, Civil War and World War II. Perhaps the best known is that of Joel Roberts Poinsett, a statesman, diplomat, scientist and botanist, the first American ambassador to Mexico, who brought the poinsettia flower to the US. (803) 494-8101.

20. Stateburg Area

SC Highway 261
The old "King's Highway" dates from 1698, when it was the Catawba Path. It joined Charleston with Camden and the SC "backcountry." In 1783, Stateburg village

missed becoming the capital of South Carolina by one vote. From Indians on horseback to the vehicles of today, much SC history has passed over this road, including the armies of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Points of interest include the town of Wedgefield, Poinsett State Park, the site of Manchester, Beech Creek (site of the final battles of the Civil War) and many privately owned historic plantation homes.

21. Poinsett State Park

SC 261
The moss-draped trees of Poinsett have stood guard over two centuries of history: the early Indians, the great antebellum plantations and the last days of the Civil War. Built in the 1930's, the park is a haven for outdoor lovers with picnic grounds, fishing, campgrounds and trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. It is adjacent to Manchester State Forest, a well-known hunting area. (803) 494-8177.

22. St. Mark's Episcopal Church

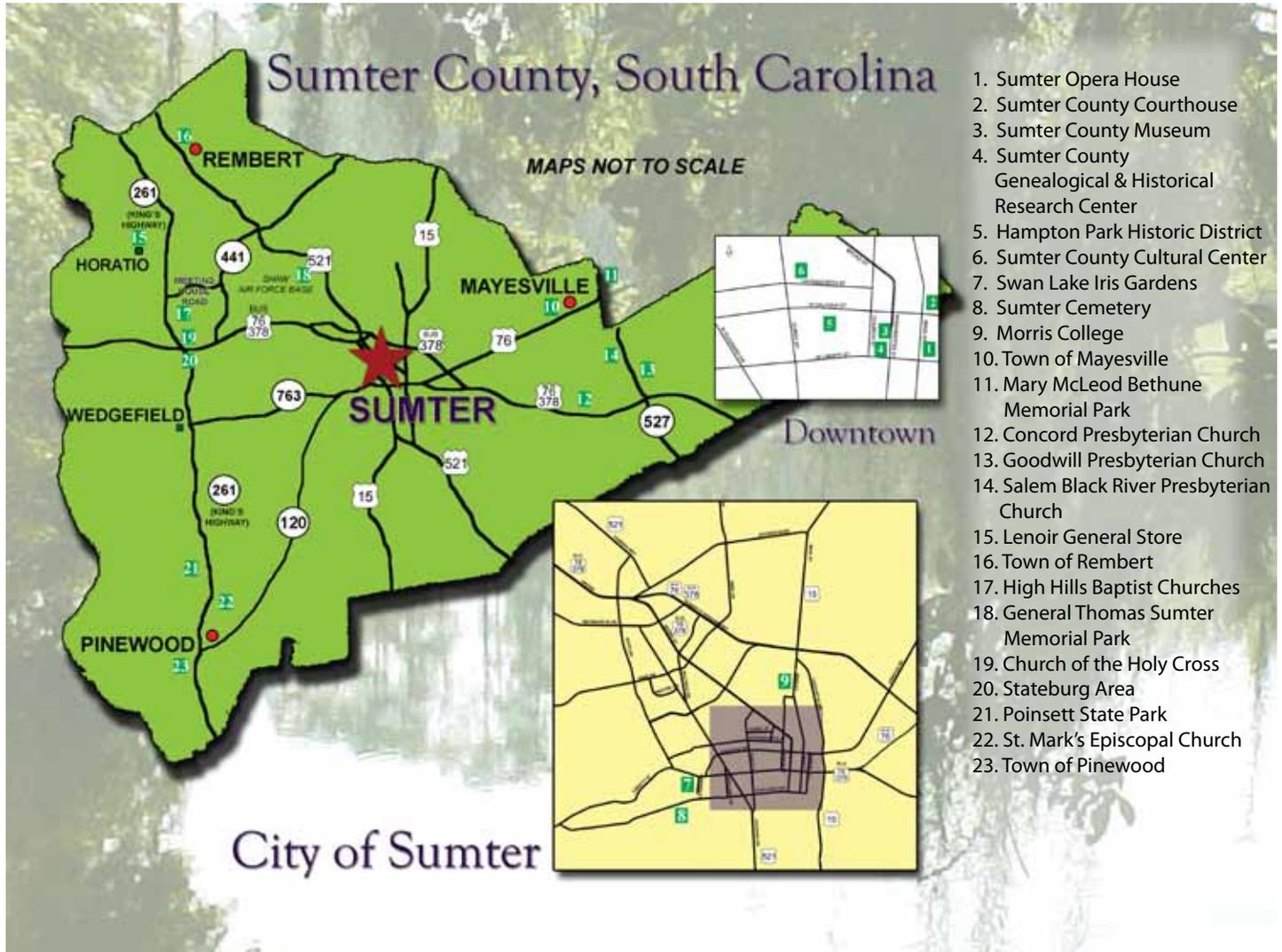
SC 51 (off SC 261)
Created in 1757, this was the first church organized in Sumter District. The present building was constructed in 1856. St. Mark's has been the house of worship for six governors of South Carolina, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

23. Town of Pinewood

SC 261 at SC 120
This quaint town sprang up on the Atlantic Coastline Railroad, and the restored train depot, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is a cherished area landmark. Nearby Sparkleberry Swamp is an area of remarkable unspoiled natural beauty.

From its beginnings as the “Carolina Backcountry” in the 1740’s to the prosperous 21st-century community of today, Sumter County has long been synonymous with Southern hospitality and tradition. From the quiet countryside to the newly revitalized downtown, the area is amazingly rich in culture and history.

Explore the Sumter County Museum’s exhibits featuring 200 years of Sumter history, or take a leisurely drive along the King’s Highway where moss-draped trees stand guard before antebellum plantation homes. Visit the Sumter Opera House, where modern entertainment takes place in a faultlessly restored century-old venue. Take a trip back in time as you explore Sumter’s timeless treasures!



Swan Lake Visitors Center

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