

Self-Guided Tour of Significant Sites

Perry, Georgia

"Where Georgia Comes Together"

History of Perry

Nestled in the heart of Georgia lies the quaint but thriving city of Perry. Founded in 1821 through a treaty with the Creek Indians, Houston (pronounced "Howston") County extended from the Ocmulgee River on the eastern boundary to the Flint River on the western boundary. Incorporated in 1824, Perry received its name from Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry for his triumph at Lake Erie in the War of 1812. Perry still serves as the county seat of Houston County.

Originally called "Wattsville," Perry is now known to many as the place "Where Georgia Comes Together" because of its location at the intersection of Highways US 341, US 41, GA 127, and I-75. This prime location has encouraged tourism throughout Perry's history, and has been instrumental in making it the area's number one industry.

Located on Big Indian Creek, settlers flocked to Perry from the beginning to take advantage of the fertile soil and favorable climate. Planters focused on cultivating cotton, which remained the number one crop until replaced by peaches, pecans, asparagus, grains, and peanuts. The earliest industries in Perry were gristmills, sawmills, and cotton gins thus laying the foundation for the strong business environment enjoyed today.

Perry residents have always taken great pride in their cityscapes and residential areas. In 1948, the City of Perry was the winner of the Championship Home Town contest. Families painted their houses and landscaped their yards with colorful azaleas, camellias, and dogwood trees. Today, these plantings are still admired; the Dogwood Festival is enjoyed each Spring because of the many trees that beautify the town.

The State of Georgia built a complex in Perry in the late 1980s known as The Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter. This state-of-the-art facility has grown from 600 acres to now over 1100 acres. A new conference center was completed in mid-summer 2002. Not only is the official state fair held each October, but over 260 events occur at the facility on a yearly basis. Georgia's agribusiness is promoted, and the youth of Georgia are able to exhibit and compete at equine, poultry, and livestock shows.

Memorabilia of Perry's favorite son, Senator (Ret.) Sam Nunn is housed in the Board of Education building and open for the public to enjoy. From his early childhood days as a young boy growing up in Perry to the days, he spent in Washington, this tribute highlights his accomplishments.

The outpouring of team spirit and sense of community pride make Perry a good place to do business and a great place to raise a family. Perry has been the crossroads since the Creek Indians' early trade routes made the crossroads accessible for today 's travelers.

1. 800 MAIN STREET -NEW PERRY HOTEL

Originally built as the Eagle Hotel in the 1850s as a stagecoach stop, the name was changed to the Perry Hotel in the 1880s following the building of the railroad from Fort Valley to Perry. The telegraph office was located in this building as documented by the Home Journal in 1886. The old hotel was razed in 1924 and the New Perry Hotel was built to serve the rapidly expanding tourism industry caused by paved roads and the Florida real estate boom.

Proceed right on Main Street. On right:



2. 912 MAIN STREET

SITE OF FORMER PERRY BAPTIST CHURCH

This was once the site for Perry Baptist Church from 1848 to 1878, but this present building was built in 1891 by Mrs. Minerva C. Hook. Later in the 1890s, it became the home for the George Paul family.



3. 1002 MAIN STREET

FORMER COOPER-EVANS HOME

The two back rooms of this house were on the property in 1824 as the home of Daniel Hunt. The house was enlarged by Dr. Minor W. Havis in the 1850s, and the front corner of the property held Dr. Havis' apothecary shop. The J. Powers Cooper family lived here for over 100 years (1902 -2003), during which time the house was changed to a Neoclassical Revival style with a second story. Restored In 2003 by JMA Architecture.



4. 1006 MAIN STREET -THE BANK OF PERRY

The oldest banking business in Houston County, having been chartered as the Perry Loan and Savings Bank in 1889, built this building in 1981. This was once the site of a home built by W. H. Norwood in the 1870s, which was moved in the 1960s to Forest Hill Drive.

Across Main Street, continuing same direction. On left:



5. 1105 MAIN STREET

FIRST BAPTIST PERRY CHURCH

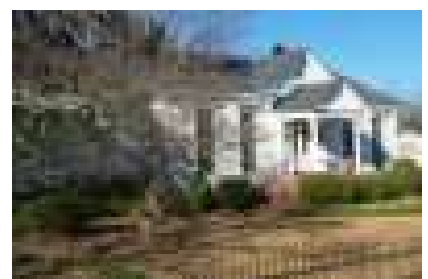
This fellowship was organized in 1838 with eleven members. Since 1838, this church has built four buildings, this one completed in 1967. Prior to 1967, it was home for the A.B. Schilling family, a German immigrant who came to Perry in the 1880s as a tailor merchant with only a coin and a pistol that his 13-year-old brother had made.




6. 1117 MAIN STREET

FORMER HOLTZCLAW HOME

Built as a family home in 1855 by Judge Henry Holtzclaw, it was purchased by George Riley in 1925, by Joe and Connette Gayle in 1961, and First Baptist Church of Perry in 2014. The wrought iron fence is not original to the home but was brought from Kentucky by the Gayles. During the War Between the States the silver communion service given to The Perry Baptist Church in 1854 by Amy Kelly was hidden in the attic of this home. The hole in the closet ceiling is still evident today.



<p>Continue one half block. Turn around at the shopping center.</p> <p>On left on Main Street:</p>	
<p>7. 1212 MAIN STREET FORMER HOLTZCLAW HOME</p> <p>Built in the late 1870s by Dr. Henry Holtzclaw, second President of Houston Female College. In 1925 Penn-Dixie Cement Company purchased the building for use as a club house and later as a residence for the plant superintendent.</p>	
<p>8. 1208 MAIN STREET PALACE BEAUTIFUL</p> <p>Originally named "Palace Beautiful," this house was built by Judge Samuel D. Killen in 1852 for his family home. Later it was owned by the Francis Marion King family until 1926 when it was sold to Penn-Dixie Cement Co. to be used as a club house. In the 1950s, it was bought and restored by Gardner and Laura Mae Watson to be used as a funeral home.</p>	
<p>9. 1100 MAIN STREET HOUSTON CO. BOARD OF EDUCATION OFFICE</p> <p>Formerly Perry High School, this building was built in 1925 and is the oldest brick school building in Houston County. It was the first consolidated school and had the first fully equipped science lab in the State of Georgia. An exhibit honoring retired Sen. Sam Nunn is housed here as well as a vintage 1925 classroom.</p> <p>Turn left on Evergreen Street. On left:</p>	
<p>10. 906 EVERGREEN STREET FORMER HOME OF GENERAL ELI WARREN</p> <p>This home was built for General Eli Warren, of whom the well-known Georgia annalist, Judge Richard H. Clark, has written that he "became so successful a practitioner that it may be doubted if, as such, in the meridian of his life, he had his equal in the State." General Warren sat in two constitutional conventions of Georgia, in both of which also sat his only son, and in one of which also his son-in-law, Colonel Goode; a coincidence never equaled in the history of this State. It was built before 1870 and was home to the Pringle, Moore, and Riley families before being sold in 1901 to Samuel T. Hurst, Jr., an early Perry town "Selectman." It remained in the Hurst family until 1942. Several of the original windowpanes have been preserved and still bear the dates of 1893 and 1894.</p>	
<p>11. 904 EVERGREEN STREET FORMER HURST HOME</p> <p>This mission style bungalow was built in 1912 by Samuel Hurst for his son. The M.M. Rainey's bought the house in 1926 where they lived for 61 years. Except for minor changes, its original state of beautiful woodwork and the tiffany style chandeliers have been preserved.</p>	

12. 902 EVERGREEN STREET
FORMER FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH PASTORIUM
Built by the Perry First Baptist Church in 1909 as a pastorium. It was bought and renovated by Dudley Jones in 1947. After the death of Barbara Jones in 2014, it was sold and is now a private residence.

On right:



13. 903 EVERGREEN STREET
CHILDHOOD HOME OF GENERAL COURTNEY HODGES
Built in 1893 by John Hicks Hodges. This was the childhood home of General Courtney Hodges, Commanding General of the First Army during World War II. He was the first soldier in the history of the United States Army to rise from private to four star general. General Hodges served in the Philippines, Mexico, and Europe in World War I.



14. 1101 BECKHAM CIRCLE
PRITCHETT HOME
This house was built by A. C. Pritchett, Sr. in 1938 on land formerly known as the George Miller farm. The foliage in these beautifully landscaped gardens display a lovely array of colors in both Spring and Fall.

Turn left on Beckham Circle. On left:



15. 1105 BECKHAM CIRCLE
NUNN HOME
Built in 1935, this was the childhood home of U.S. Senator from Georgia, Sam Nunn. This house exhibits a nice transition from the Colonial Revival architectural style to the Minimal Traditional style. In the park adjoining this property, many members of Perry High School's legendary basketball team honed their skills in the 1950s.

Take your first left, then right on Beckham Circle.
On right:



15A.
BECKAHM CIRCLE
SPRING HILL SCHOOL
Built in 1905 this one-room school was located in an oak grove on U.S. 41 three miles north of Perry. By 1915 it had been divided into a four-room school housing six grades. It existed as a community school until 1925 when the children were transported to the consolidated school in Perry. It was used a home until 1982 when it was sold to the Rehoboth Association to begin a new church, Rehoboth Baptist Church. In 2009 it was given to the Perry Area Historical Society to preserve as a one-room school. The Society moved it to its present location in August 2009.

Turn around. Turn 1left, then right. On left:

16. 1102 BECKHAM CIRCLE

BECKHAM HOME

Built in the 1950s on the corner of Evergreen and Main Streets by J.H. Power and sold to Joel W. Mann in 1862. The house was sold to the Board of Education in 1919 for use as an additional school. E. M. Beckham, Sr. bought the house in 1925 and had it moved on logs with "mule power" to the present location, restoring it the family home.

Turn left on Evergreen Street. On right:



17. 809 EVERGREEN STREET

Davis Home

This beautiful house was built in 1939, by Mr. and Mrs. Mayo Davis. Its classical symmetry, Palladian windows, rounded fan light, gable roof, and end chimney portray a good example of Federal and Georgian architecture.



18. 807 EVERGREEN STREET

HOUSER HOME

Built in 1940, this was the home of Hentz Houser who became a quadriplegic in 1951 at the age of 17. "Hentz of Things Not Seen" written by his mother tells the true tory of a young man who overcame complete paralysis to regain some use of his arms and to design a hand gadget or "picking up" items which became of interest to the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Continue on Evergreen, turn right on Duncan Avenue.

Go one block.

Before turning right on Washington, look to the left:



19. 904 DUNCAN AVE.

FORMER FELDER HOME

Built for the Edward L. Felder family during the 1850s, it later became the home of Andrew S. Giles, lawyer, Ordinary, and Judge of the 23rd Senatorial District, until his death in 1897. It was then purchased by Mrs. Minnie Couey, fondly remembered teacher at Perry Elementary for 42 years.

Turn right on Washington Street

Continue for one block. On right:



20. 802 WASHINGTON STREET

FORMER DUNCAN HOME

Built in 1835 by James Duncan, it originally consisted of two rooms and a kitchen. In 1877, Judge C.C. Duncan built the Victorian two-story addition. It was sold in 1981 by descendants of the Duncan family. Currently the home is a private residence.



On left:

21. 807 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER COOPER HOME

Built in the 1870s by Charles F. Cooper, Sr. whose family owned and occupied the home for over 90 years, this home is a rare example of the Stick style architecture used in the mid-1800s. Original to the house are 14' ceilings, intricate moldings, and heart pine floors. Mr. and Mrs. Wallis V. Hurlbutt bought the house in 1980 and made a complete restoration. In 2017 the house was inherited by Jim and Sue (Hurlbutt) Lay who continue to make upgrades to the house and property with focus on maintaining the original character.

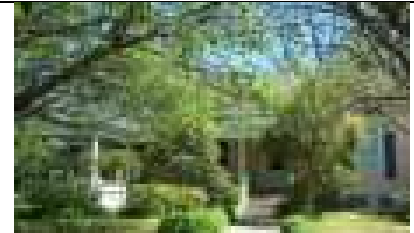
Note that the old barn at the south side of the property which is thought to have been a stable and the brick sidewalk leading from the front door are believed to be original.



On right:

22. 808 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER CATER-JONES HOME

Built in the 1870s by Fletcher Cater, grandson of James Duncan, this home was sold in 1944 to the Cooper Jones family. Cooper Jones was a legend in Perry, GA because of his cheerful greetings and customer pranks for anyone visiting his pecan business on Carroll Street.



23. 810 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER MILLER HOME

This bungalow was built in 1854 by the William H. Miller family but sold in 1873 to James D. Martin, Sr. In 1904 the home was purchased by Samuel L. Norwood, Sr. who occupied it for more than 50 years.



24. 900 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER VISSCHER HOME

This nine-room house was built in the 1880s by J.G. Visscher but sold to Marion Augustus Edwards in 1889 who lived here with his family until 1918.



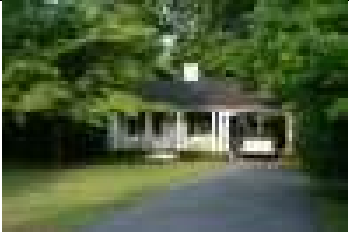
25. 901 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER METHODIST CHURCH PARSONAGE

The missionary society of the Methodist Church presented the trustees with \$845.80 in 1881 to purchase this property from Thomas J. Cater. This house was then built in 1914 as a parsonage for the Perry Methodist Church. It was bought and restored by the Felton Norwoods in 1958.

On left.



26. 903 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER EVANS HOME
This charming early American cottage was built in 1940 by Mr. and Mrs. Horace Evans, Jr. who lived here for more than 50 years.



On right:

27. 904 WASHINGTON STREET
PERRYS' FIRST BRICK HOME
Built circa 1920 by Lucille Cooper, this was Perry's first brick house. Former owners included J. J. Rooney, owner of the New Perry Hotel in the 1930s, and James M. Gooden, former principal of Perry High School. The O'Neal family bought the home in 1992 and added a second floor and additional space to the rear of the home.



28. 905 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER ROGERS HOME
This charming Victorian cottage was built in the 1880s for Mrs. Ida Cater Rogers on property given by her father, Thomas J. Cater. It was owned and occupied by her family until 1947.



29. 907 WASHINGTON STREET
FORMER HOME OF COLONEL H.P. HOUSER, JR.
This house was purchased in the 1920s by H.P. Houser and remained a home for the Houser family until 1987. It was the home for Colonel H.P. Houser, Jr., commanding officer of the 5th Calvary Regiment in WWII.



Turn left on Main Street. Go two blocks. On left:

30. EVERGREEN CEMETERY
Richard Smith, who purchased more than 20 lots in Perry in 1823, was the first person to be buried in the cemetery in 1826. This was also the site for the first Methodist Church, a log building built in 1826. Many of Perry's early residents are buried here.



On right:

31. LEGACY PARK

Built on the site of the old Perry Water Works and the previous land occupied by Matthews family, this passive park serves as a veterans' memorial and also honors Perry citizens who have made significant contributions to the city through time and talent.



Continue on Main St. to Carroll Street. On the left:

**32. 704 CARROLL STREET
DIXIE HIGHWAY SINCLAIR**

This brick building was built in 1931 by Henry Matthews as a Sinclair Station which operated on The Dixie Highway/US Hwy 41. The young Matthews couple lived on the second floor.



Turn right onto Carroll Street. Go one block.

**33. 735 CARROLL STREET
TOOMER BUILDING**

This ornate pressed metal building was built in 1905 by Amanda Toomer, sister of Nathan Toomer, as a merchandise store on the first floor and living quarters for the Toomer family on the second floor. It was converted to a funeral home in 1915 and the dearly departed were displayed in the front windows. Prior to 1905, this property was the livery stables for the Liberty Hotel located up the street.



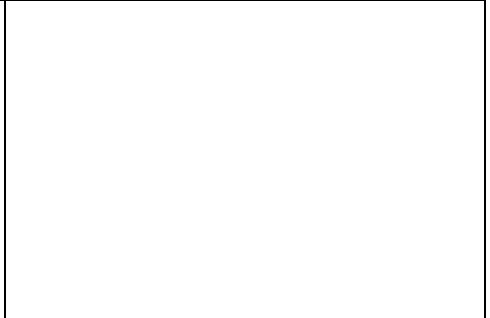
**34. CORNER OF JERNIGAN AND CARROLL STREETS
MASONIC LODGE**

Built in 1850 to house the Houston Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons # 35. The ground floor has been rented to several different businesses, including an insurance agency, grocery store, gas station, bus station, gift shop, commercial printing company, and a karate studio. The second floor where the Lodge Hall is located has also been rented by a doctor, bookkeeper and dentist. The lodge was built on a foundation of 16 x 16 timbers of old heart pine put together with pegs.



**CARROLL STREET
(ORIGINALLY NAMED MAIN STREET)**

This street was part of the Central Dixie Highway of the 1920s and 1930s. The colonial-style restoration project of the "Old Perry" business section was completed in 1976. Be sure to explore the unique gift shops and restaurants along Carroll Street.



Continue down Carroll Street and cross Jernigan:

**35. 801 CARROLL STREET
SITE OF OLD LIBERTY HOTEL**

The Liberty Hotel was built here in the 1860s and existed as a 16-room hotel until the 1880s. The name changed to The Planters Hotel before being replaced by a store and funeral parlor owned by George Paul. It later became a furniture store and currently houses a restaurant.



**36. 809 CARROLL STREET
SITE OF HOUSTON BANKING CO.**

Identified by the tiles on the front porch as the Houston Banking Company, it was known as such until the bank was purchased IN 1932 by the Perry Loan & Savings Bank. The Post Office was located here from 1932 until 1960 as it had been in the 1850s under the ownership of John S. Jobson.



On right:

**37. 801 CARROLL STREET
PERRY CITY HALL**

Located on the public square, also known as Lot 49 , bordered by Main, Jernigan, Carroll, and Ball Streets. The present building, dedicated in May 1950, is built on the same site as the first Courthouse which was erected in 1824. Extensive renovations of this building were completed in 2006. It was purchased by the City of Perry in 2021 for use as the city hall.



38. CONFEDERATE MONUMENT

Fundraising was begun in 1896 by Major Joseph Palmer and ground was finally broken in July 1907 for this monument by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. This monument of a Confederate soldier made of Italian marble mounted on a granite base cost \$2,000. A dedication ceremony was held on May 21, 1908, and members of the Perry Rifles fired a salute at the close of the ceremonies.



39. 900 CARROLL STREET

This building was built in 1925 and for most of its existence through 1950, it was a drug store, but later residents remember it as The Coffee Cup Restaurant, a favorite gathering place for members of the community to discuss the news and politics of the day.



On left:

**40. 901 CARROLL STREET
SITE OF PERRY LOAN AND SAVINGS BANK**

The Perry Loan and Savings Bank was built here in 1911. The building burned in 2008. It is currently an al fresco café.



41. 917 CARROLL STREET

Built between 1830 and 1850. The Kunz family operated it as a dry goods business here until the 1930s. It then became Houston Hardware, owned, and operated by the Andrew family. It is currently a children's clothing store.

Traversing the narrow space between these buildings was a "right of passage" from childhood for the children of the 1930s and 1940s.



42. 913 CARROLL STREET

FORMER COX HOME

The front portion of the restaurant was built after 1902 by Nora Cox. The back part of the house was possibly built in the early 1830s. Perry 's first kindergarten was started in this house in the 1930s, but today this building is a restaurant offering Southern fare for lunch and dinner.



Turn left on Washington Street. Go one block.

On left:

43. 1101 WASHINGTON STREET

FORMER KILLEN-STAPLES HOME

This house was built in the 1870s by Thomas Killen for his bride, Laura Singleton. It was home for the Killen family for more than 50 years, and for about 40 years was the home for Eric Staples, Perry High School's legendary basketball coach. It was sold as commercial property in the 1980s.



Continue on Washington Street for one block.

Turn left on Northside Drive. Go to the end of the block. On the right:

43A. 901 NORTHSIDE DRIVE

FORMER HOME OF DR. HORACE EVANS

This home was built as a family residence in 1926 by Dr. Horace Evans and member for the Evans family lived here until 1990 when the property was sold to the City of Perry for commercial purposes. It was leased to the Perry Area Historical Society in 2009 for a museum. The museum houses local memorabilia and records and is open to the public.



Turn around. Cross over Washington Street. On right:

44. WASHINGTON STREET

FORMER TRAIN DEPOT

This original Perry Train Depot was built in 1870 and was moved to its present location in 1985 and renovated it fronts current business use. The main telegraph office was located in the depot in 1889 under the capable ownership of Mr. E. M. Fuller, railroad agent.



Go one block. Turn right on Meeting Street.
Go one block. Turn right on Commerce Street.
Go one block. Turn left on Washington Street.
Turn left on Carroll Street. On right:

45. 1001 CARROLL STREET

PERRY UNTIED METHODIST CHURCH

Organized in 1826, the present sanctuary was built in 1860-1861. Take time to walk through the church yards and read the church marker on the front lawn.



Continue past Methodist Youth Center.
Left onto Macon Road for two blocks.
Turn right at first traffic light onto Swift Street.
On right:

46. 1100 SWIFT STREET

FORMER HOME OF DR. JOHN B. SMITH

Built in the 1879x as the home for Dr. John B. Smith, it later became the home of Dr. Ben Holtclaw. It served as Perry's first Georgia State Patrol Station for 1937 to 1940, when it was purchased by Dr. A. G. Hendrick to serve as Perry's first clinic. Dr. Phil Mathis purchased and renovated it in 1984 to serve as his offices. Today it is administrative offices for First Baptist Perry.



Proceed down Swift Street. Look to the left:

47. PRIVATE RESIDENCE

48. 1107 SWIFT STREET

FORMER EDGE HOME

Built by Dr. J.B. Edge in the 1880s, it was owned and occupied by the B.H. Andrew, Sr. family from 1891 until 1966. It continues today as a private residence.

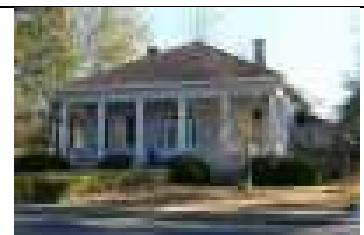


On right is:

49. 1204 SWIFT STREET

FORMER SWIFT HOME

Built in the 1850s, this was the home of Judge William Tyre Swift for whom Swift Street was named. SSS Tonic was first manufactured in this back yard by the son of Judge Swift. Mr. J. Meade Tolleson, Sr. purchased the home in 1929 where his family lived for 40 years. In 1988 it became a Bed and Breakfast known as The Swift Street Inn but today is a private residence.



<p>50. 1212 SWIFT STREET FORMER SINGLETON HOME It is believed that this "Sands Hill Cottage" was built on this site in the 1840s by George W. Singleton. The house remained in his family until 1962, when it was bought and restored by the Lawrence R. Clark family.</p>	
<p>51. 1300 SWIFT STREET FORMER THARP HOME This house was built in the 1870s by Dr. B.F. Tharp, a Baptist minister, and occupied by his daughter, Mrs. Claudia Tharp Lawson, and later by her son Hugh Lawson, Jr. and daughter Mary Lawson Duggan.</p>	
<p>52. 1304 SWIFT STREET FORMER HUGH LAWSON, JR. HOME This elegant cottage was built in 1941 by Hugh and Louise Lawson on land which had been in the Lawson family for 100 years.</p>	
<p>53. 1400 SWIFT STREET FORMER TOUNSLEY HOME This home was built circa 1850s. It was sold to L. S. Tounsley in 1882 who lived here with his family for almost 50 years. In 1933 the Alton Rainey family purchased the property and lived here for almost 70 years. For two years (1931-1933) it was home for Fred M. Culler, the tallest man in Houston County being 6'6" tall as reported by the Home Journal in 1891.</p>	
<p>Cross Swift Street. Turn around. On right: 54. 1303 SWIFT STREET FORMER WRIGHT HOME This home was built in the 1850s as a raised cottage and is a nice example of a Carpenter Italianate house that was at one time occupied by the Wright family. Purchased by the T. F. Hardy family in 1930s, it was lowered to ground' level. Note the originally roof on the house.</p>	
<p>55. 1207 SWIFT STREET This house was built in the 1890s and is a variation of Queen Anne architecture. Its steeply pitched, irregular roof shape; dominant, front-facing gable; partial width porch; and differing wall textures illustrate the eclectic style of the Victorian era architecture. During the early 1900s, the property housed Perry' s largest horse and mule barn which covered the remainder of the block.</p>	

**56. 1203 SWIFT STREET
FORMER WOOLFOLK HOME**

This home was built in the 1890s by John W. Woolfolk and members of this family lived here for more than 50 years. The tragic story of the a related Woolfolk family can be read in Shadow Chasers: The Woolfolk Tragedy Revisited.

Turn right on Second Street. On left:



**57. 1207 SECOND STREET
PERRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

The church was organized in 1846, but this sanctuary was built in 1849 on Carroll Street opposite the Methodist Church, and then moved to Second Street in 1958. An educational building was erected, and brick walls added to the sanctuary in 1960. A new sanctuary was built in 1999 and the original sanctuary is now a social hall.

Turn left on Sunset Ave. to Hwy 41 (Macon Rd.)
Turn left on Macon Rd. Go two blocks.
Turn right on Northside Drive. On right:



**58. 1015 NORTHSIDE DRIVE
FORMER MASON HOME**

This home was built in 1914 by Thomas Mason, Sr. and remained the property of the Mason family for almost 80 years. It was the first house built in Perry with plumbing and electricity as part of the original construction.



**59. 1121 MACON ROAD
FORMER SITE OF PERRY ACADEMY**

In 1824 the Georgia General Assembly granted a charter to Houston County Academy of Perry and in 1825 the first academy was built on this site by Thomas Justice at a cost of \$999. In 1826 the first Sabbath School was organized in this academy and was a Union school for all denominations. In 1950, an armory was built on the site and now the building is currently the Perry Events Center.

