

## Cave Spring, Georgia

### Early History

In 1802, the State of Georgia agreed to cede its Western lands to the U. S. government in exchange for money and the resettlement of the Indians out of Georgia. In 1828, gold was found in Dahlonega, Georgia, and this one event rushed the resettlement. That same year, the Georgia Legislature said that everything in Cherokee, Georgia (lands north of the Chattahoochee River) was now under the laws of Georgia. The U. S. government divided land into lots of 40 acres if it was thought that gold might be present or 160 acres if there appeared to be no gold on the land. Van's Valley and the area around what is now Cave Spring was sold by lottery in 40 acre land lots. The Cherokee s had already cleared much of the land.

After visiting the area, Armistead Richardson from eastern Georgia went home with a report that the land here was beautiful and would be a good place to move. His son-in-law Alexander T. Harper and family were the first to move to the area. He established a trading post here. In March of 1832, their son, Alexander T. Harper III was the first white child born in Van's Valley. Before long, Armistead Richardson moved to the area.

In 1836, eight Baptists led by Armistead Richardson formed the Baptist Church. By 1839, they had established a school, The Manual Labor Institute of Van's Valley. The School purchased 200 acres of land in the center of what is now Cave Spring from Richardson. In 1838, the Methodists formed the Methodist Church at Round Hill. By the mid 1850's, they also had started a school, the Cherokee Wesley Institute.

In 1844, the Georgia Baptist Convention met in Cave Spring, and the local Baptists gave the school and the 200 acres of land to the Georgia Baptists. Lott Hearn, a prominent Baptist in Georgia, bequeathed \$12,500 to the school and the name was changed to the Hearn Institute. By 1846, the educational emphasis was shifted from manual labor to preparatory academic work, so the Baptists decided to sell the city lots it owned to make extra money. At this point, downtown Cave Spring began to emerge. By 1852, the Village of Cave Spring town limits were described as "650 yards from a hickory tree near the town well" probably located on the Village Square, now known as the Veterans Plaza.

Sometime after 1846, O. P. Fannin, a teacher at the Hearn School, went to Connecticut and learned sign language so that he could teach some deaf children. When he returned, more deaf students were added to the school, and in 1849, the State of Georgia established the Georgia School for the Deaf in the Village. Mr. Fannin became its first principal teacher.

On January 22, 1852, the Georgia Legislature granted a charter, and "Temperance Town" became the Village of Cave Spring. By 1858, there were "70 voters" (white men only) in Cave Spring. Growth began, and dwellings were built, many of which were hand-hewn cabins.

During the Civil War, life was very difficult. Fannin Hall served as a hospital for a time, and many lives were lost on both sides. Hood's army (Confederate) marched through Cave Spring, headed toward the Coosa River. The Union army was right behind, giving chase. General Sherman was given orders to begin the "March to the Sea" from Atlanta to Savannah at that time.

The Reconstruction years were hard on the residents and there was a large exodus to Texas. Many of these people would carve G. T. T. (gone to Texas) on their doors and just leave. Most of the wealth was lost, and share cropping became a way of life.

On October 29, 1902, a large fire burned most of the wooden structures in the center of the village. The city council passed an ordinance that henceforth all structures built in the downtown area would be made of brick. However, due to another fire at the Tumlin Mercantile Store, owned by then mayor A. N. Tumlin in the 1930's, all city records to that time including this ordinance were lost.

Cave Spring is named for the natural limestone cave from which flows a crystal clear spring of several million gallons each day. The spring feeds the 1 ½ acre swimming lake in the shape of the state of Georgia built in the 1930's by the WPA.

Many historic buildings still remain in Cave Spring. In fact, over 90 structures in the downtown area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These listed below are a portion of that group of structures.



### 1. The General Store

The General Store occupies a structure that was built in the 1850's. It was the first post office in Cave Spring and later became Cave Spring's first "filling station". Legend is that an Indian Chief, Big Rattling Gourd, bit off his wife's nose because she was unfaithful. She is supposedly buried under this

building.



### 2. Masonic Lodge Buildings

This property was bought in 1858 by James M. Smith, a blacksmith, and he carried on his business there for several years. In 1869, Dr. Benjamin J. Strickland bought the property. He erected the two brick buildings now located there in 1884. The building to the East of the first two structures was built by the Masons in 1908. Today, this building and the one directly next to it are operated as one business, The Peddler.

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### 3. Cave Spring United Methodist Church

The Methodist Church was established in about 1838. The first Church property was purchased in 1842 on "Round Hill". In 1853, the Church moved closer into the Village and built a large wooden structure at the present site. The third building, created of hand-made brick, replaced the wooden edifice in late 1883. The church bell was cast in New York in 1856 and is mounted on the lawn in front of the church.



### 4. The Fred Forbes House

This property, located on "Methodist Hill" was purchased by Joseph Rivers in 1851. In the early 1870's, G. W. Irwin bought the property, renovated the structure, and most likely added the back section of the house. He operated it as a hotel. Today there are still room numbers over some

of the doors.



### 5. The Dickerson House

This house was built in the 1850's and purchased by Samuel W. Robbins. The house was completely restored beginning in 1972 by the Dawsons, who did all the work themselves. Their remodeling exposed an original two room log cabin with hand hewn beams and peg construction.



### 6. The Tumlin House

The Tumlin House, built in the 1850's, was purchased in 1890 by Thomas E. Dickerson and was given to his daughter Julia upon her marriage in 1896 to Albert N. Tumlin, a prominent businessman and political figure. According to 'The Georgia Free Lance,' the house was known as one of the "handsomest residences in North Georgia". The house now operates as a bed and breakfast by J. C. and Nancy Boehm. Nancy is the great-great niece of Julia Dickerson Tumlin.



### 7. The Moore House

This property was deeded to T. W. Herron in 1854, and he built some kind of structure, most likely a hand-hewn cabin, on it. After the Civil War, Pegram Moore, who was connected with the Hearn Academy, built the house that now stands on the property. It was operated as a boarding house by Miss Betty Wiggins for several years. In the 1990's, it was completely renovated.



### 8. The Lake-Montgomery House

Built in the 1850's, Green Cunningham purchased the home and 240 acres on September 10, 1879 for \$5,000. Constructed of handmade bricks, it has interior walls 14 inches thick with plaster laid directly on the brick. Perhaps the single most interesting element of the home is the gold leaf hand painted on the walls in the halls and parlor, still intact today. Prior to the Cherokees' relocation West, the land lot had been owned by sub-chief David Van, who had a two story, four room painted hand-hewn house with brick chimney and a detached kitchen on the property.



### 9. Round Hill

This property is the site of the first Methodist church and cemetery in this area. Today, it is still used as a cemetery.



### 10. The Simmons House

This dwelling was built in 1911 by Paul Montgomery and local carpenters, Henry Metcalfe and Jack Montgomery. It was purchased by Hattie Simmons in 1924. The house was renovated by the Mathis family in 1972.



### 11. The A. Josh Tumlin House

This charming late Victorian house was built in the late 1800's. On July 24, 1919, A. Josh Tumlin and his bride, Edna Caldwell, purchased the house from Paul Montgomery and resided there all of their married lives. The property formerly had a tennis court on the lower lawn. The interior of the building has the wainscoting typical of the period, high ceilings and a central hall featuring graceful columns and moldings.



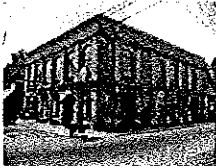
### 12. Presbyterian Church

The Cave Spring Presbyterian Church was established in the spring of 1871. It is the only Gothic style church in this area. Regular services were terminated in 1928, but were re-activated in 1958. The congregation was very small and Cherokee Presbytery made the decision to dissolve the congregation after a tornado hit the building doing extensive damage. Today it is operated as an art gallery.



### 13. The Rolater House

Captain Felix Corput, then mayor of Macon, erected this stately house around 1880 as a summer home and moved here at a later date. It was renovated in 1928 by Dr. Joseph B. Rolater, a former student at Hearn School. He lived in this house until his death in 1932. Dr. Rolater donated to the city the property that is now the site of Rolater Park, having purchased that land from the Hearn Trustees.



### 14. Bennett's Steakhouse

The land on which Bennett's stands was sold jointly to James M. Walker and John M. Carroll in 1869. These two men built the existing brick structure in the early 1870's on the lot and ran a business. It is now operated as Bennett's Steakhouse.



### 15. The Webster-Green Hotel

This property, in the heart of the village, could quite possibly hold the oldest structure in Cave Spring. A log cabin has been found in its interior, and work is being done to extract this structure. In 1847, the Hearn Institute sold this city lot #6 to Mr. Posey whose occupation was listed as "hotel keeper" in the census of 1850. In his household were five family members and six boarders. In 1854, Walter R. Webster, a director on the board of Georgia School for the Deaf, purchased the property. In 1865, Samuel Gibbons sold the property including a residence and hotel to Joseph Ford.



### 16. Love-Forbes House

This house was built possibly by Dr. William Love after the town was formed in 1852. Sometime after the Civil War it was sold to Joseph Ford, a well known businessman. At his death on the Selma-Dalton Railroad in 1872, the house and lot was sold at the courthouse. In 1919, C. S. Forbes purchased the house from Mrs. Molly Pullen who had often boarded students of Hearn Academy.



### 17. The W. T. McKinney House

This green stucco house was built on land lot #930, originally owned by A. T. Harper. Mr. Harper was the son-in-law of Armistead Richardson, founder of Cave Spring. Records show that he may have built a white two-story house on the property known as the "white house". After the house was destroyed by fire, the present house was built on the original foundation. The old smokehouse and stone terraces remain behind the main house. Dr. McKinney, the physician at the Georgia School for the Deaf, moved into the house in 1908. He built the first swimming pool in Cave Spring fed by a large spring on his property.



### 18. The Wesley O. Connor House

This one and one-half story board and batten building was constructed in 1869. It is an unusual example of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century eclectic architecture, combining features of the Gothic and Romanesque Revival styles. Its overall form, proportions, arrangement, materials, and details are generally Gothic Revival; its round-arched windows are clearly Romanesque Revival style. Both styles are relatively rare in Georgia. The house is significant as the home of Wesley O. Conner, superintendent of the Georgia School for the deaf from 1869 to 1916. His wife, Editha Simmons Connor, whose family originally owned the house, wrote a diary during the Civil War which has been published.



### 19. The Hearn Academy

school

replaced many of its services. It closed in 1926. This building, restored in the 1970's, can now be rented for weddings, receptions, and other social events. It is maintained by the Cave Spring Historical Society.

In 1839, The Manual Labor Institute of Van's Valley, Cave Spring was organized by the Baptist Church to be a "permanent school of high order." In 1845, it was renamed the Hearn Academy after Lott Hearn, a board member, who had bequeathed an endowment of \$12,500. The prospered as a preparatory school until 1922 when the development of public schools in Georgia



### 20. Old Baptist Church

Cave Spring Historical Society.

The Cave Spring Baptist Church was organized in 1836 with eight charter members, one of whom was Armistead Richardson. Services were held in the Hearn School until this building was completed in 1851. It contains beautiful stained glass windows and wide board floors. Heating and air and a restroom have been added. It is now often rented for weddings and is maintained by the



### 21. Hearn Inn

maintained by the Cave Spring Historical Society.

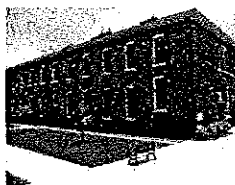
This stately old building was originally a boys' dormitory for the Hearn Academy. It later became a dorm for girls. The Academy ceased operation in 1926, and this building was used as apartments for many years. The Cave Spring Historical Society restored the house in 1980-81 for use as a bed and breakfast. It may be rented for receptions and other social functions and is also



### 22. Fannin Hall

in 1846 at the Hearn School. He soon made a trip to Connecticut to learn sign language. GSD was officially begun in Cave Spring because of this work at the Hearn School. When GSD moved to its new campus on Perry Farm Road, Fannin Hall became the Cave Spring City Hall.

In July 1849, the Georgia School for the Deaf was begun in Cave Spring. This structure was built as the administrative building of GSD by the State of Georgia. For a brief time during the Civil War, it was used as a field hospital by both the North and the South (at different times). Principal teacher O. P. Fannin, for whom the building was named, began work with a small number of deaf children



### 23. GSD Old Dining Hall

recently restored the first floor to be used as a Community Center and added the only elevator in Cave Spring.

This two-story brick building was constructed in the late 1800's by the State of Georgia. Originally, a second floor bridge connected it with Fannin Hall. On the first floor was a kitchen and large dining room for students and staff. This area features tall, round columns, beautiful molding and tile floors. The second floor is divided into classrooms. The City, with Local Option Sales Tax,



#### 24. GSD Old Wood Shop

The original shop building was built about 1856 by the State of Georgia to offer vocational training to deaf students. It was replaced by the present building in 1890. Printing, shoe repair, sewing, beauty culture and woodworking were just some of the training offered. The original building was made using old brick work. An addition was made to the front of the building several years ago, but it did not damage the integrity of the original building.



#### 25. The Asbury House

Dr. I. N. Culberston, president of the 5-man Board of Commissions at GSD, purchased this property from the Hearn Trustees in 1846. In early 1881, the T. W. Asbury family bought the present house which originally faced Asylum St. (now Padlock Mountain Road). The deed states that the property included four acres of land, a blacksmith shop, a doctor's office, and the house. Hand hewn logs and peg construction can be seen upstairs as well as the board-and-batten walls and wide heart pine floors. In one room there are the original wire hangers used for curing meat. The house is now operated as the Cave Spring Welcome Center and Museum.



#### 26. The Randolph Brewer House

A structure was built on this property, land lot #2, in 1850 by Samuel W. Robbins, the first preacher of the Cave Spring United Methodist Church. The original structure was unlike the house that is there today. This home is one of the earliest abodes in Cave Spring.



#### 27. The Garner House

In the early 1850's, Joshua Simmons donated the land for the Methodists to build a school. Money was always a difficult issue, so a deal was struck with the Masons in which the school would operate on the ground floor, and the Masons would occupy the upper floor. Eventually the school was split into primary and upper schools, and the upper school moved to a structure behind the Old Wood Shop (#24 on this list) and was known as The Cherokee Wesleyan Institute. The schools operated until the late 1800's.



#### 28. The Fincher-Ware House

The house was built in 1854 by Major Wharton of Virginia. Made of handmade brick, it contains carved porch balustrades and columns. The Finchers became the owners in 1906. Rob Ware, their grandson and current mayor of Cave Spring, is the present owner.



#### 29. Cave Spring Cemetery

William D. Cowdry, third pastor of the Cave Spring Baptist Church, purchased this property in 1841. He gave three acres to the Hearn School for town burials. Today the city owns the cemetery which is still being used for burials.

**HISTORIC TOUR OF CAVE SPRING, GEORGIA**

\*\*\*NOT TO SCALE\*\*\*

FINCHER STREET

ROME RD./ HWY. 27

CEDARTOWN STREET

BROAD STREET

FANNIN STREET

MILL STREET

HWY. 100

LEE STREET

PERRY FARM ROAD

HWY. 411

PADLOCK MTN. ROAD

ROLATER PARK

CAVE

SWIMMING LAKE



VETERANS PLAZA

TO MCKINNEY HOUSE 17

TO CONNOR HOUSE 18

TO FINCHER-WARE HOUSE 28 & CITY CEMETERY

TO ROUND HILL 9

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USPS

