



Article & Photos  
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# Day Trip Destinations

## A Time Trip Through Cherokee County



History buffs and anyone else with a connection to or interest in Cherokee County can absorb themselves for hours at the Cherokee County History and Arts Museum on College Drive in Gaffney. A wide variety of objects, photographs, art and learning resources vie for your attention. Subjects range from American Indian and frontier life to American Revolution and Civil War history to industrial-era iron and limestone mining and textile milling. Fruit farming naturally is an emphasis.

Then there are the lesser-known aspects of the county's heritage. Nineteenth-Century horse racing, for instance—and moonshining. There are relics from "The Motorcycle Hospital" (a bicycle repair shop), a bulky meteorite unearthed by an area farmer, and reconstructions of a doctor's office of the 1940s and a Depression-era kitchen. An exhibit on Michael Gaffney, for whom the city is named, includes a deerskin-covered family Bible dating to 1788. The county's proud sports legacy, notably high school football and Limestone College lacrosse, isn't forgotten.

In sum, the facility preserves not only the dramatic and sensational aspects of county history and culture but also the ordinary, everyday slices of life from the days of our great-great-grandparents. Main displays were designed meticulously by professionals, but there also is a "grandma's attic" ambience instilled by countless artifacts, donated by area residents, that trigger old memories.

The museum, as its name suggests, also features the works of local artists and crafters. A 90-foot wrap-around mural depicts the Battle of Cowpens.

The museum building is a former elementary school. It occupies three-and-a-half acres in the heart of Gaffney, within walking distance of Limestone College. The site was the mustering ground for the South Carolina Militia during the War of 1812 and afterward.



More than 2,000 items are on display in some 8,000 square feet of floor space, including four galleries, the foyer, the main hallway and small nooks. Research rooms are available for historians and genealogists. The building also offers rentable space for conferences, wedding receptions, reunions and other events. Since its opening in 2008, renovated space has been expanded. Eventually, some 22,000 square feet will be available.

To date, permanent exhibits include:

\* "Land of Revolutions: Transitions in Politics, Culture, and Geography." Visitors learn about the local history of Native Americans, the American Revolutions, Fort Thickett, geology and mining through displays and interactive technology.

\* "Road to Prosperity: Infrastructure and Society That Have Brought Us to Today." This gallery chronicles the advent and importance of the railroad, interstate highways, textiles and modern industry. It also explores area agriculture and social life.



\* "Gallery of Heroes: Military and Political Service Honored." Exhibits in this room memorialize area citizens who have served in the military and public office. Uniforms, furniture and other objects are displayed.

\* "Heritage Hall: Local Memories Recalled." The museum has collected material highlighting notable people, places and events related to Cherokee County.



Exhibits are designed to appeal especially to students.

Educational devices include hands-on displays, intriguing "Did You Know?" quizzes and glossaries of terms used in some of the exhibit material. Children can dress in colonial-style clothes inside a replica of 18th-Century Fort Thickett. Curriculum and standards-based tours have been developed for school classes at all grade levels.

The museum currently is partnering with the Gaffney Visitor's Center and Art Gallery in presenting a Post Office Centennial Celebration exhibit. It photographically documents the history of the Post Office building opened in 1913 and the local postal service. The



exhibit, on display through November 15 at the Gaffney Visitors Center on West Frederick Street, is open Monday-Friday, 9-6, and Saturday, 9-1; no admission fee.

The Cherokee County History and Arts Museum is a function of the Cherokee Historical and Preservation Society (CHAPS). Annual CHAPS events include a holiday home tour, quilt show, antique car show, pottery show and Ghost Walk.

The museum is at the corner of College Drive and South Johnson Street in downtown Gaffney. Drive time from this area is about 30 minutes. Hours are 10-4, Wednesday-Friday, and by appointment. Admission is \$5 for adults. Visit the Web site at [www.cherokeecountyhistory.org](http://www.cherokeecountyhistory.org) or phone (864) 489-3988 for more information about the museum and related events.

