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**Blue Ridge History:
Downtown Walking Tour**

The town of Blue Ridge was once considered an elite health resort because of its pure mineral waters. Tourists would ride the train to town, eat dinner at the Blue Ridge Hotel, and take a leisurely walk to the mineral springs after dinner. (You can visit Mineral Springs Park as shown on the map.) Today, tourists can still ride the train and take a leisurely walk along Main Street and the other quaint streets of downtown, enjoying the antique and specialty shops, galleries, restaurants and small town atmosphere of Blue Ridge.

Blue Ridge was founded in 1886 as a result of the arrival of the Marietta and North Georgia Railroad. Because of the railroad, Blue Ridge developed as a center of business and in 1895 the county seat was moved from Morganton to Blue Ridge. In the early years, at different times, there were five hotels and several boarding houses in downtown Blue Ridge.

West First Street

1 Baugh House Baugh House, located at 411 West First Street, is owned by the Fannin County Heritage Foundation. Those interested in genealogy will find lots of helpful information inside. The home was built by pioneer John W. Baugh for his son James in 1890, from bricks manufactured at the Baugh Brick Co. in Mineral Bluff. 706-258-2645.

2 Blue Ridge Inn Bed & Breakfast 477 West First Street. The Blue Ridge Inn (Kincaid House) is a beautifully restored Victorian home built in 1890. It has 14 rooms, 8 fireplaces, 12-foot ceilings, original carved woodwork, heartpine floors and clawfoot tubs. 706-632-0222

West Main Street

3 Mercier Orchards Downtown 260 West Main Street. The People's Bank building was built around 1926. It features Doric pilasters, a glass block transom and elaborate cornice. Today it is the home of Mercier Orchards Downtown, a satellite of Mercier Orchards. Serving breakfast and lunch daily. Offering hard cider and wine tastings Take a peek inside the original bank vault, where you can sit for a group meal.

4 Coldwell Banker High Country Realty 247 West Main Street. Originally built by the L & N Railroad in 1895. By 1901 the first floor was occupied by the North Georgia National Bank and the top two floors were used by the railroad for offices. Later, the building became known as The Haight Building. Renovated by Coldwell Banker in 2006, peek inside to see original brick walls & architectural details.

5 Historic Fannin County Courthouse 420 West Main Street. The historic Fannin County Courthouse was built in 1937 after the previous courthouse burned in 1936. The courthouse is now the home of the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association. See the original courtroom,

and be sure to visit the art gallery shop and enjoy the work of local artists. On the grounds of the courthouse is a historic marker describing the founding of Fannin County. The "Statue of Liberty" was presented to Blue Ridge by a quirky resident.

Depot Street

6 The Blue Ridge Depot Although the first depot burned, the present station celebrated its 100th birthday in 2006. The railroad was, and continues to be, the central focus of downtown Blue Ridge. Quoted from In Touch with the Past: "The noon train from Knoxville stopped for 20 minutes for lunch. You could get dinner at the hotel or buy a dinner through the window for 25 cents. The morning train took four hours to get to Atlanta." The depot is owned by the City of Blue Ridge and leased to the Patriot Rail Company. Blue Ridge Scenic Railway was founded in 1998.

7 Blue Ridge City Park Blue Ridge City Park, once owned by the L & N Railroad, is the heart of downtown Blue Ridge. The park encompasses two blocks and is a popular place for picnics, community gatherings and festivals. The monument in the park was dedicated on October 21, 1937 in a ceremony attended by more than 2,000 people, to deceased World War I veterans from the Army, Navy and Air Force. Another memorial was added to the park in 2012 for William Clayton Fain, a leading Unionist in the state during the Civil War. A Fannin County lawyer and state representative, he served in the 1861 Secession Convention, where he opposed Georgia leaving the United States and refused to sign the Ordinance of Secession. Fain was captured and killed by Confederates in April of 1864.

Church Street

8 Blue Ridge Police Department 301 Church Street. Originally Blue Ridge City Hall and Jail, the building was built in 1936-37 as a WPA project of the Federal Government under President Roosevelt. Now home of the Blue Ridge Police Department, jail cells have not been used since 1999.

East Main Street

9 801 East Main Street, now an office/retail building, is location of the former Rialto Theater, built in 1925, with 500 seats and a balcony.

10 Blue Ridge Pharmacy 793 East Main Street. Blue Ridge Pharmacy was founded around 1900, was once located in the building currently owned by Coldwell Banker, and moved to an East Main location in the early 1920's. Today the Blue Ridge Pharmacy is the home to Blue Ridge Antiques.

11 The Hall Building 781 and 777 East Main Street are actually one building, circa 1900, one of the oldest structures in Blue Ridge. Once adjacent to the Royal Theater, during the 1940's the Hall family owned a men's clothing store and a women's dress shop here.

12 771 East Main Street was built in 1945. Downstairs was the original Rexall Pharmacy, along with Trailways Bus Station, and upstairs was the Butt Hotel.

13 1950's Gas Station 757 East Main Street. Now Love Dogs and Cats Too. There has been a service station at this location since 1940, the current building dates from 1950.

14 The Gartrell Building 733 East Main Street. A building has been in this location as early as 1909. It was once owned by Annie Gartrell, who operated the Gartrell Hotel upstairs. The entrance is in the back of the building, it is the current location of 2nd Story Entertainment, a family entertainment center with mini-golf, games and more. It has retained its original layout... get a glimpse of the building's earlier use.

15 High Country Art 715 East Main Street. Built by the Jones Brothers in 1945, one side was a grocery store and the other a pool hall.

16 The Tilly Building 695 East Main Street. Built in the early 1900's, the Tilly Building was actually used as an auto dealership with the showroom on the second floor and auto repair shop on the first floor

17 Mitzi's on Main 831 East Main Street. Built in 1925, the building housed a clothing store owned by Carl Hall during World War II. It was the location of the Western Auto Store during the 70's and 80's. Upstairs is a loft apartment with attractive courtyard garden below.

18 Hansen's Grill 530 East Main St. Built in the early 1900's as a hardware store. In the 1930's the building became a boarding house operated by Granny or Maw Blackstock. Cots would rent for 50 cents per night. Local legend says that you could get "a meal, moonshine, a room, and, if you wanted, a gal," according to Kathie Thompson's book, "Blue Ridge".

19 Cohutta Fishing Company 490 East Main Street. This small commercial building was built between 1900 and 1917 for a general mercantile and clothing business. Downstairs in the back was at one time a bottling plant for NuGrape Soda.

Sources: Blue Ridge by Kathy Thompson; In Touch With the Past; Blue Ridge 2007 Historical Calendar; Facets of Fannin.



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Main Welcome Center: 152A Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge, GA 30513 1-800-899-MTNS

Caboose Visitor Center: 230 Roberts Way, Blue Ridge

Downtown McCaysville Visitor Center: 53 East Market St.

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