



This brochure compliments of
Walton County
Heritage Museum

All structures featured in this walking tour brochure are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1. 95 Circle Drive Chautauqua Building (c.1909). Completed in 1909 at a cost of \$28,000, the original building had a portico at each end in addition to the three across the front. The porticos were supported by a total of forty columns, representing the forty existing states. The building, topped by the “Lantern of Religious Trust,” was called the HALL OF BROTHERHOOD. Upstairs classrooms could be opened up to seat 1,000. An auditorium attached to the back of the building seated 4,000. Hurricane Eloise destroyed the auditorium in 1975.

2. 132 Circle Drive (c.1900). Prominent citizen and realtor R.E.L. McCaskill sold this property with a small frame structure to W.J. Davis for a family residence in 1914. Davis and subsequent owners have made various modifications to the original frame structure.

3. 144 Circle Drive. St. Agatha’s Episcopal Church (c.1896). The church was founded in 1890, and the building was completed in 1896. It is the oldest church building in the city, and its stained glass windows are of special interest.

4. 150 Circle Drive (c.1900). Now the PARISH HOUSE of St. Agatha’s Episcopal Church, this home served as a boarding house during the Chautauqua Era.

5. 168 Circle Drive (c.1895). The home is known as the CHARLES E. MURRAY HOUSE. Mr. Murray was the owner of the merry-go-round and the first theatre in downtown DeFuniak Springs.

6. 188 Circle Drive (c.1895). The THOMAS HOUSE is an outstanding example of Queen Anne style. Special features include a three-story round turret with conical roof, patterned shingles, a two-story canted hay, and elaborate verge board and truss work.

7. 208 Circle Drive (c.1902). This two-story house features special curved corners on its double verandas. These corners were created by heating

and bending the timbers into shape. Special notice should be taken of the diamond-shaped stained glass window on the right side.

8. 234 Circle Drive (c.1884). Known as the THOMAS T. WRIGHT COTTAGE, this charming board-and-batten Folk Victorian home was built for Col. T.T. Wright, an early developer of the Florida Chautauqua and DeFuniak Springs. Circle Drive was originally named Wright Avenue in his honor.

9. 262 Circle Drive (c.1904). The VERANDAS is an example of Folk Victorian style. The unique “steamboat” design features double wrap-around verandas on the front and both sides. The main house, maid’s house and other dependencies, and wood-frame wire fence have been painstakingly restored to their original design and condition.

10. 278 Circle Drive (c.1889). This house has the distinction of having been moved twice. It was moved sometime prior to 1907 from its location next door to the Episcopal Parish House to its present site. Its second move was in 1986 when it was repositioned again on its site.

11. 294 Circle Drive (c.1912). This house was built as a model house for the sale of “pre-cut houses” to be sold by the “One Price Cash Store” in DeFuniak Springs. The house has triple hardwood floors and double wooden walls that give it extra strength and durability.

12. 302 Circle Drive (c.1910). This wood frame house was a “pre-cut house” ordered through McCaskill’s “one Price Cash Store.” It was remodeled extensively in 1985.

13. Tree - Magnolia Grandiflora (c.1840). The tree has a spreading crown of 72 feet, is 60 feet high, and has a trunk circumference of 12.5 feet. The tree ranks as the eighth largest of Florida’s champion trees.

14. 392 Circle Drive (c.1900). The PANSY COTTAGE was the home of Isabelle McDonald Alden, an author with the pen name of “Pansy.” She wrote more than 100 books between 1890 and 1900. The Walton-DeFuniak Library has three of the books. Ms. Alden was also the aunt of author Grace Livingston Hill.

15. 404 Circle Drive (c.1888). The DREAM COTTAGE was built for Wallace Bruce, former U.S. Consul to Scotland and prominent leader of the Florida Chautauqua. The Folk Victorian cottage is one of the most historically significant homes on Circle Drive.

16. 470 Circle Drive (c.1887). The MAGNOLIA HOUSE is named for the twelve stately magnolias on the property. It is an example of Colonial Revival style. In keeping with southern architectural practices, the original kitchen was separated from the main house by a covered walkway.

17. 484 Circle Drive (c.1910). This Frame Vernacular house was built for the James Bullard family. It was remodeled extensively in the 1940s.

18. 504 Circle Drive (c.1940). This large two-story Colonial Revival brick house was built by Rubye Walden Burton. The only two-story brick home in DeFuniak Springs, the house has an octagonal window and a segmented arch pediment.

19. 534 Circle Drive (c.1938). This Masonry Vernacular house was built in 1938 for the Henry Elliot family. It has a cross gable roof with a gable porte cochere extension. Mr. Elliot was a local banker.

20. 550 Circle Drive (c.1907). This grand Queen Anne style house was built for Kenneth Bruce, son of Wallace Bruce. As a symbol of hospitality, the original wrought-iron gate has never been fitted with a catch for closing. The Bruce collection of armor, now displayed in the Walton-DeFuniak Library, was originally housed here.

A Walking Tour of Historic Circle Drive in DeFuniak Springs, Florida

21. 608 Circle Drive (c.1915). Dr. Albert Dye, from the Dakota Territory, was an early resident of this house, perhaps the only house in the area with a full basement.

22. 620 Circle Drive (c.1915). The Frame Vernacular style house was built for the L.I. Smith family. Dr. Smith and Dr. Albert Dye (see No. 21 above) were owners of a frontier bank in the Dakota Territory before they moved to DeFuniak Springs.

23. 634 Circle Drive (c.1922). The original house was built for the family of John L. McKinnon, author of History of Walton County, published in 1911 (and recently republished by the Walton County Heritage Association). The house was renovated and remodeled in 1993.

24. 650 Circle Drive (c.1905). Built for Judge Angus Graham Campbell, the house has had only two owners in its long history. An interesting detail of this house is the 45-degree “cut corner” with a window for increased view, light, and air circulation.

25. 676 Circle Drive (c.1905). The McLEAN HOUSE was built for James McLean. It is an example of French Colonial style and features a distinctive hip roof. Mr. McLean considered it “the best spot on the lake” due to the view of the sunset. The house remained in the McLean family for 85 years.

26. 702 Circle Drive (c.1915). The Bungalow style house was built by Thomas McConnell as a wedding present for his daughter. The house has a wide overhanging enclosed porch which protects it from the weather. This solid squared-up house with multiple dormers was meant to last for many generations.

27. 730 Circle Drive (c.1902). The house was built for T.M. McConnell, a wealthy turpentine dealer. The house features a large two-story bay.

Double verandas encircle the front and left side of the house.

28. 772 Circle Drive (c.1905). The Classical Revival style house was built for Stuart Knox Gillis, a teacher and prominent attorney. Mrs. Gillis stenciled various designs on the walls of the first floor, a decorative technique which was quite unusual at that time. The house was given to Palmer College in 1931 to be used as the home of its president.

29. 812 Circle Drive (c.1895). The Classical Revival style house was built for the F.Q. Terwin family by the well-known local architect, Duncan Gillis. It is the only known house in the area with reverse mansard eaves.

30. 836 Circle Drive (c.1910). The Classical Revival style house was built by local architect and builder Duncan Gillis for his own home. However, it remained unfinished until it was sold by the family in 1945.

31. 854 Circle Drive (c.1929). This Masonry Vernacular style house is DeFuniak’s only stucco house that meets requirements for listing on the National Register. It was built for D. Stuart Gillis, a well-known Circuit Judge of the First Judicial Circuit of Florida.

32. 1063 Circle Drive. First Presbyterian Church (c.1923). The original church was organized in 1883. The present building was completed in 1923 after the original sanctuary was destroyed by fire. It is one of two known buildings constructed of petronite blocks, which were being made in DeFuniak Springs in the early 1920s.

33. 1140 Circle Drive - L&N Depot (c.1882). The depot was built in 1882 and enlarged in 1909. As many as 4,000 passengers a day arrived at the station during the Chautauqua Era. The building is now owned by the City of DeFuniak Springs and serves as the home of the Walton County Heritage Museum.

34. 1264 Circle Drive (c.1885). An original Chautauqua building, the OCTAGON COTTAGE was the arts and craft shop. It was later used as a childcare center for children whose parents attended Chautauqua. In 1910, Wallace Bruce gave the Dream Cottage (see No. 15) to his son Malcolm as a wedding gift and remodeled this building for his residence. He lived in the Octagon Cottage until his death in 1914.

35. 1272 Circle Drive (c.1910). This Frame Vernacular style house was the home of the Dr. J.C. McSween family in the 1920s and was sold to Dr. R.B. Spires in the 1930s. Dr. Spires built the Lakeside Hospital next door and practiced medicine in Walton County until his death.

36. 1290 Circle Drive (c.1938). This building served as Lakeside Hospital until 1973. The upper floor has been converted into a spacious living area which creatively incorporates many of the hospital’s original features. Professional offices occupy the bottom floor.

37. 3 Circle Drive Walton-DeFuniak Library (c.1886). The Library is the oldest structure in Florida built as a library and still serving that purpose. It houses the Bruce collection of armor and other interesting artifacts. (See nearby historical marker for additional details.)

38. 14 Circle Drive (c.1887). The home WILE AWAY was built for W.J. Van Kirk, a land agent for the L&N Railroad. The three-story square bay is an unusual feature. Mr. Van Kirk’s original plat for DeFuniak continues to be used for property descriptions.

39. 62 Circle Drive (c.1907). The Queen Anne style house was built for Burruss Cawthon, a prominent local merchant. Outstanding features include the octagonal tower with tent-style roof, Doric pillars encircling the porch, hexagonal shingles on the upper story, central hip roof with four sloping gables, and the two-story bay.

A walk around Lake DeFuniak is a walk back into Victorian times when labor and materials were plentiful and elaborate architectural details were incorporated into the homes being built. Turrets, double verandas, classic fluted columns, gingerbread trim, and window dormers all resulted in interesting architecture.

When the railroad began operation in 1882, “Open Pond” was identified as a railroad stop. “Open Pond” soon became known as DeFuniak Springs. It was named “DeFuniak” in honor of Frederick deFuniak, Chief Engineer of the L&N Railroad. “Springs” refers to the almost perfectly round freshwater, spring-fed lake located in the center of town.

Cultural, educational, and religious activities came early when the town was chosen as a winter home for the New York Chautauqua. The Florida Chautauqua program continued from 1885 until 1927 and attracted thousands of visitors to DeFuniak Springs. Programs were held in tents and small buildings near the lake until the Chautauqua “Hall of Brotherhood,” with its 4,000-seat auditorium, was built in 1909. The growing town was the home of the State Normal School (c.1887-1905), Palmer College (1907-1936) and the Thomas industrial Institute (1913-1924). The Florida Education Association (FEA) was founded in DeFuniak Springs in 1886.

Influence of the Chautauqua movement is very much alive in DeFuniak Springs. The Florida Chautauqua Assembly is held annually in January.