

It's almost Christmas and there are still so many things to do! One thing I need to do is to load the car with evergreens and visit friends and relatives who now reside in the county's cemeteries and churchyards. Since it's also time for a road trip, I'm going to save a trip and do both at the same time.

Begin your tour on the Square in historic downtown Newberry. Hop in the car and turn the heat on (or roll down the window depending on the day of the week). Head west on Main Street and turn right on Nance Street. Winter is the equalizer of the landscape. The same things that stand out in town will be standing out along the entire trip. Glossy-leaved evergreens dominate the winter garden. Camellia Japonica and Camellia Sasanqua with their shiny green leaves and flowers of pink, white and red (and all combinations thereof) is the dominant floral interest in yards. Turn right on Pope Street. Turn left on College Street and then right into Rosemont Cemetery, established in 1863. Take a moment to visit with Newberrians of times past. Turn right on Smith Road and follow it out as it becomes Pender Ridge Road. Turn left on Mt. Bethel-Garmany Road.

Down the road on the left is the old Kennerly House, a two story frame home built circa 1900. Across I-26 is the Brown House, a typical farmhouse with end chimneys made of granite. The egg-shaped water tower is also visible in the background. The granite in the chimney reminds us that there is a granite ridge which runs almost east to west across the county. In fact, just down the road granite outcroppings and boulders begin to appear. The old Mt. Bethel-Garmany School is also on the left. It is now a community center. Lebanon Methodist Church is on the left. It was founded in 1875, and its cemetery is down the dirt road to the side of the church. On the right, in a bend in the road is the Chalmers-Brown House. Begun in the 1830's, it was enlarged in the 1850's. The old road trace is visible in many places along the road.

At Hwy 176, jog to the right to stay on Mt. Bethel-Garmany Road. One of the hardest things to imagine is that during most of Newberry's history, this was all farm land. Today it is all pine forest. What few woods were here in the nineteenth century were deciduous. Turn right on Mt. Pleasant Road. Cross Heller's Creek. (We'll see this stream get larger later on in the tour.) Turn left on Hwy 34. Down the road on the right is the Munroe Wicker house, a nineteenth century farmhouse with many of its old outbuildings and barns still intact. Beyond it to the right is the Pierce Wicker house, a typical farm house begun in the 1830's. Turn right on Livingston Road. Turn left on Graham Cemetery Road. Down the road on the left is the Graham Family Cemetery. On the right at the intersection of Graham Road is the old Graham house, a small farm house built in the early nineteenth century. Turn left on Graham Road. Turn right on St. Matthew Road. Cross a larger section of Heller's Creek with an ample swamp. (It is a testament to the amount of rain we've had this year that the swamp has water in it.) An old road trace to the right indicates that this stream was originally forded rather than bridged. On the left is St. Matthew's Lutheran Church which was founded in 1827. The old cemetery is to the right. (A lot of my relatives are there.) Turn right on Broad River Road.

The Suber-Dickert House is on the left. Built by the Suber family in the 1850's, it was later the home of Col. Augustus Dickert. Down the road on the right is the Crooks House. Built in 1896, it has a wraparound porch with decorative brackets. At the corner of New Hope Road is an old store building with its front porch resting on piers made of pebbles and small rocks. This was Ruff's Store. The Parrot

House, a mid-nineteenth century farm house is off the road to the right. While crossing the first "fill" at Heller's Creek, notice the causeway to the old bridge below on the right. Down the road is the Cannon's Creek Fill. These "fills" were created when the Broad River was dammed for the Parr Reservoir. Just before Peak Road on the left is the site of the old Hope House, now occupied by a more modern log cabin. Cross Parr Road and Crim's Creek. Turn left on River Street to visit downtown Peak. Peak was established in 1850 as a depot on the Columbia and Greenville Railroad. It was named for H. T. Peak who was superintendent of the railroad. Follow the bend of the road onto Church Street. On the left is Mt Herman Lutheran Church which was begun in 1889. On the right is the cemetery, which began as a family cemetery and grew to include the church. Also on the right is Peak Community Center which is housed in the old Peak School (circa 1920). Turn left on Lon Stoudemire Road.

Cross into Richland County. Richland County was formed in 1785 when the Camden District was divided into counties. Turn right on Hwy 176. Turn right on Capers Chapel Road. Cross back into Newberry County. An old farmhouse on the right has Spanish Moss on a tree in the front yard. The front porch has the traditional blue ceiling. On the right is Capers Chapel Methodist Church. Founded in 1885, the church was remodeled in 1954. It was named for Bishop William Capers. In the churchyard, directly behind the church is an extremely tall monument which recounts the story of Tonsho Careve and his wife Florida Kelly. Careve sent his wife and infant son back to the Chapin area from Montana in 1920, and stayed behind to settle affairs, but he never made it past Wisconsin. See monument for details. From Capers Chapel Road, turn right on Hwy 176. Turn right on Hope Station Road.

St. John's Lutheran Church has served this area since 1754 and is usually considered the epicenter for the Dutch Fork. The "new" church is on the right, while the school, cemetery and old church are on the left. The old church was built in 1808. The site of the original church is marked by a granite monument on the other side of the cemetery. Return to Hwy 176 and turn right. On the right is the Stuck House which was built circa 1910. Down the road on the right, a row of Magnolia trees marks the entrance to the Summer family cemetery. Beyond that is the Summer-Huggins House which was built circa 1826. This was the seat for Pomaria Plantation and the origin of the town's name. A recent clearing of trees across the road opens up the vista to Little Mountain. Cross Crim's Creek into downtown Pomaria. The town was established in 1851 as a depot on the Greenville and Columbia Railroad and has some really nice nineteenth and early twentieth century homes. Bear right on Holloway Street and turn right on Main Street. The fancy brick building on the left was the pharmacy and doctor's office established by Dr. Zachary T. Pinner in 1905. At the intersection of Folk Street on the right is Pomaria Lutheran Church, founded in 1910. Turn right on Folk Street. Ahead on the left is Pomaria Cemetery. (A friend of mine once told me on visiting this cemetery: "There's a tombstone out there with your name on it.")

Turn around. Turn right on Holloway Street and right again on Hwy 176. Bear to the left on Hwy 219 and return to historic downtown Newberry.