

Road Trip for October 2016

Spooky Trails to Boo!

The days and nights are cooling off (somewhat) and the trees are beginning to exchange their summer green for fall's gold, orange and scarlet. Shadows are longer and deeper, as the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer. It's the time of the year to take a trip around the county to seek out the strange and unusual. Begin your tour on the Square in historic downtown Newberry.

While on the Square, look for the ghost at the Visitors Center, in the Old Court House. People who have worked in the Visitors Center think that it may be haunted by its founder: Mary Ann Butler Evans. Mrs. Evans established the "Ladies' Lounge" shortly after the court house moved into the new building on College Street in 1908. At the time, there were sitting rooms on the main floor and rest rooms in the basement. The ghost produces the sound of the Main Street doors opening and closing when no one is around. She also has been known to turn the basement lights off when they are on unnecessarily; however several repairmen have questioned whether it was necessary to turn the lights off while they were working in the basement.

Head east on Main Street. As you leave the historic district, turn left on Winnsboro Road. To the left, near the old Pizza Hut, was the original site of Aveleigh Presbyterian Church. Aveleigh was named for the church of the Johnstone family in Ireland. It was founded in 1835 and moved to its present site on Calhoun Street in 1852. The cemetery remained at the Winnsboro Road site until some of the graves were moved to Rosemont in more recent years. One of the graves that was moved was that of David Boozer (1788-1850). Though he was buried with his first wife, he is remembered today for his part in the story of his second wife whose exploits inspired the books La Belle and Another Jezebel. Legend has it that Mr. Boozer accidentally shot himself in the back so that his wife could get married again. Turn left on Mt. Bethel-Garmany Road.

This old road is a favorite of Road Trips because it closely follows the old road trace and passes through the gently rolling hills along the granite ridge of the county. This time of year the trees are beginning to show off their fall colors. At the intersection of Hwy 176, bear to the left onto Molly's Rock Road. Several stone monuments recall the time when stone-cutting and the quarrying of granite were important to this area. The old gravel road with tall trees follows the trace of the Buncombe Road closely. At the end of the gravel road, Molly's Rock Recreational Area offers a chance to get out and enjoy fall. At the end of the road, turn right on Hwy 176. The swampy area near King's Creek may call to mind old stories of the will-o-the-wisps that dart in and out of folklore. Turn right on Hwy 121.

The Annals of Newberry records a Revolutionary War incident involving Micajah Harriss and his brother-in-law James Sheppard which occurred near Indian Creek (which we're about to cross). The two were captured by Tories and sentenced to death, but the officer in charge kept passing the duty of killing off until no one was left to do the deed. Sheppard offered himself if Harriss could go free for the sake of his wife and children, but Harriss refused his brother-in-law, vowing to die together. Struck by their loyalty, the two were "paroled" and their horses taken instead. Turn left on Old Newberry Hwy. Turn left on Monument Road.

With the underbrush beginning to die back for the winter, the old road trace can be seen running close by the present road. The road crosses Indian Creek with two wooden bridges. Driving through this

road at this time of year reminds me of strange creatures from Appalachian folk tales, particularly the “behinder.” (No one knows what it looks like because it’s always “behind.”) This road commemorates the crash of two B-25s in 1943. The crash site is in the woods to the right near the other end of the road. On the right at the end of the road is the monument (for which the road is named). Turn right on Beth Eden Road. Turn left on Jalapa Road.

Somewhere in the woods between here and Jalapa is a place called “Fox’s Paradise” where foxes and sometimes ‘possums are kept safe by a ghost. According to legend a slave named Cuffee is buried near Jalapa and protects animals from hunters and dogs. At the end of the road, turn left on Hwy 76 and then right on Beaverdam Creek Road. Down the road to the right is Do-Si-Jo’s Corn Maze. (I’ve seen “Children of the Corn” too many times to be enchanted by corn mazes, but it’s nice to have one in the area.) Cross Bush River Road. The remains of an old wooden bridge can be seen to the left at the Bush River crossing. The old road trace is also clearly visible. At the end of the road, turn left on Rocky Creek Road. The antebellum Gilder-Sease House is immediately on the right. Turn right on Belfast Road. On a hill to the right, is the site of Old Kadesh Methodist Church. Even after the congregation joined with Trinity, the old church and graveyard were still used for funerals. Legend has it that a woman being buried in this churchyard awoke from a coma in the middle of her service. In later years, the figure of a woman could be seen peering out the upstairs window. Turn left on Trinity Church Road.

Down the road on the left is Trinity Methodist Church. Trinity was founded in 1835 when the older congregations of Shady Grove and Old Kadesh merged. On dark nights the sound of horse’s hooves has been heard in the vicinity of the church. (The sound of hooves is a common thread in many of Newberry’s old tales. Newer ghosts travel in cars.) Turn left on Silverstreet Road. Bear left on Hwy 34 and follow it as it becomes Main Street in Silverstreet. Turn right on Deadfall Road. Turn right on Hwy 121. John Belton O’Neal relates a story in the [Annals of Newberry](#) about a man who believed he was being “ridden by witches.” He was advised to get married so the witches wouldn’t bother him. To see if he could support a wife, he set an extra plate at dinner for a time, only to find that his “wife” ate too much. He decided to move to Edgefield instead. He later solved the witch problem by shooting a silver bullet at an image of the witch. (In many legends, spirits can’t cross running water. Since Edgefield County was across the Saluda River, this may have been the reason for changing counties.) If we keep going in this direction, we’ll end up in Edgefield (or at least Saluda), too, so turn around at the water treatment plant. Across the road is the Higgins Family cemetery. On the right is the Werts House (begun in 1896). Some people claim there is a ghost cat in the upstairs window.

Stay on Hwy 121 as it merges with Hwy 34. Continue on Hwy 34 as it becomes Boundary Street and return to historic downtown Newberry.