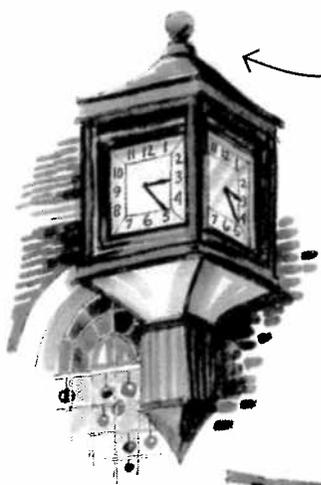


Two Days Away
with Diana Hollingsworth Gessler

THE FRONT PORCH OF THE *Lowcountry* Walterboro, South Carolina

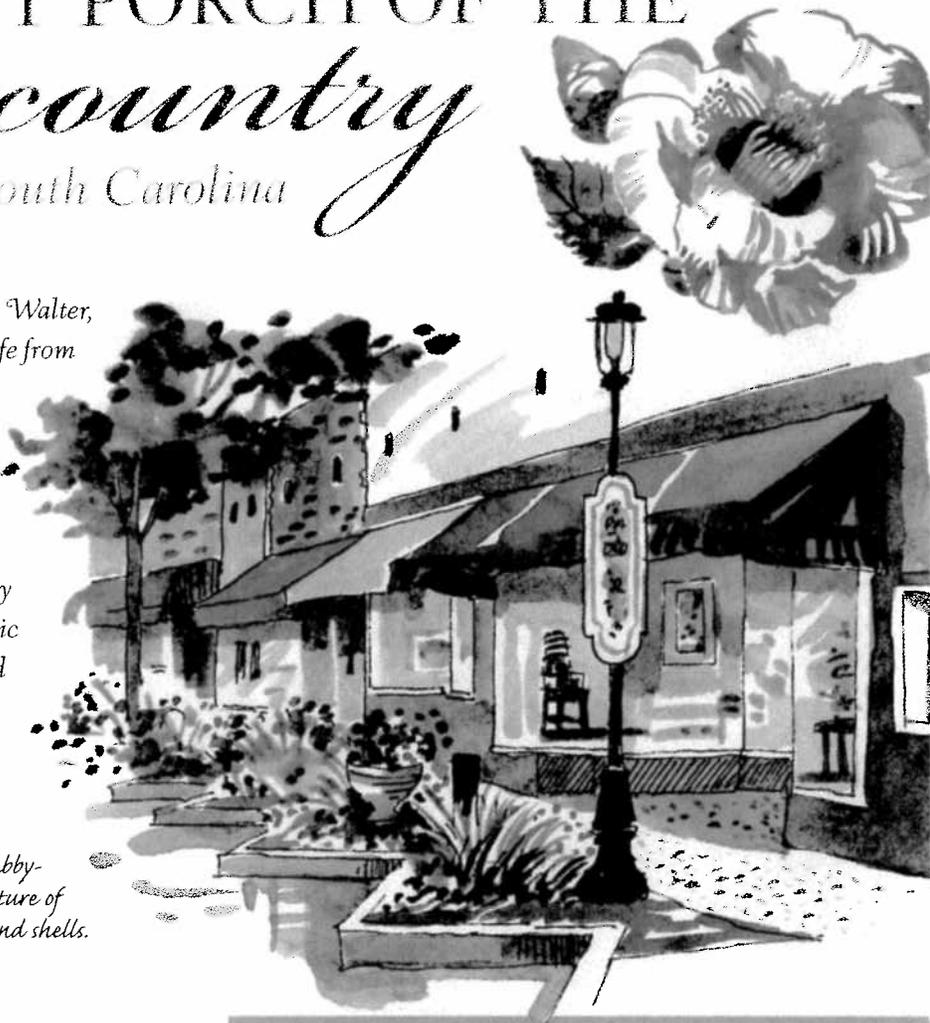
In 1783 two brothers, Paul and Jacob Walter, were searching for a summer retreat safe from malaria-infested areas and found what they called Hickory Valley. Then in the 1920s through the 1950s, travelers found "The City of Hospitality" to be an accommodating halfway stop between New York City and Miami, Florida. Today, Historic Walterboro has been revitalized, and visitors are now coming to hunt for treasured antiques and finding treasured places and people.

Sidewalks are paved with a tabby-like concrete that is a mixture of lime, sand, water, and shells.



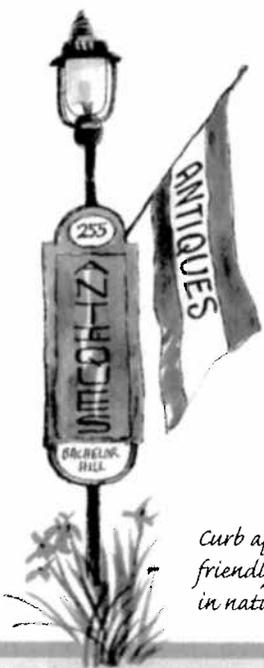
A symbol of downtown, the 1902 Slave Clock was so named because there are no works; it is run by a master clock inside Old Bank Christmas & Gifts.

The red rocking chair is the town symbol. Look for it!



Like the Walter brothers, we discovered Walterboro by accident. Paul and I detoured through here on our way to Charleston, and all it took was one glimpse at the Historic Downtown area, and I knew this was a town to be explored. We were not disappointed.

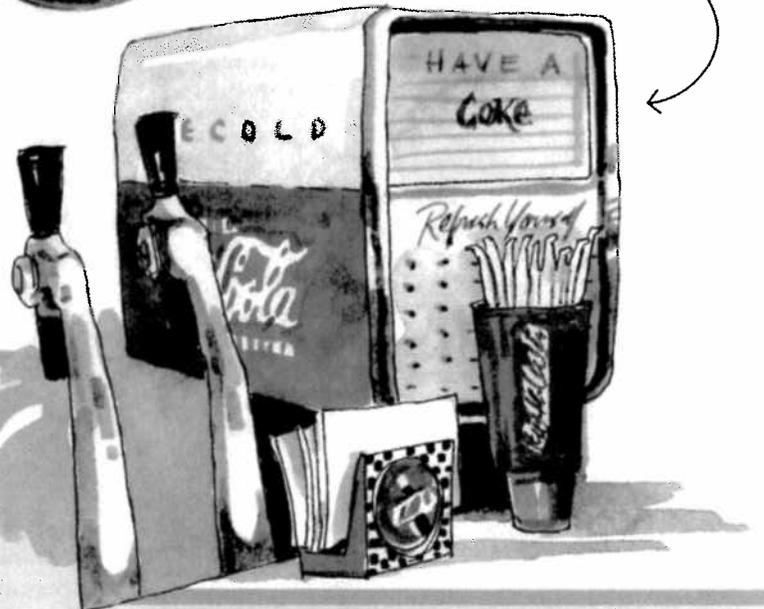
The town has come alive with friendly people who have made its revitalization their passion. You can meet many of them at Downtown Books & Espresso run by Catherine and her kids, or join in the lively conversation of the "Coffee Club" that meets twice a day (10 a.m. and 4 p.m.) at Hiott's Pharmacy. Cindy, at Old Bank Christmas & Gifts, sings out Christmas greetings to customers all year long, and her mother, Helen, is across the street at Infinger's Jewelry as she has been for 58 years. At Carmine's Trattoria, former soccer star/chef Guisepppe serves authentic Italian cuisine and "a lotsa" personality. If you want to really have a small-town main-street experience climb into a 1901 barber chair at Thurston's Barber Shop, where you can still get a straight razor shave.



Topaz ring at Infinger's Jewelry

Colleton's Fine Clothing

Hop up on a stool at Hiott's Pharmacy and order a pimiento sandwich and Coke float from this 1960s soda fountain.



Curb appeal: The signage is user-friendly, and curb plantings are wild in nature and seasonally colorful.

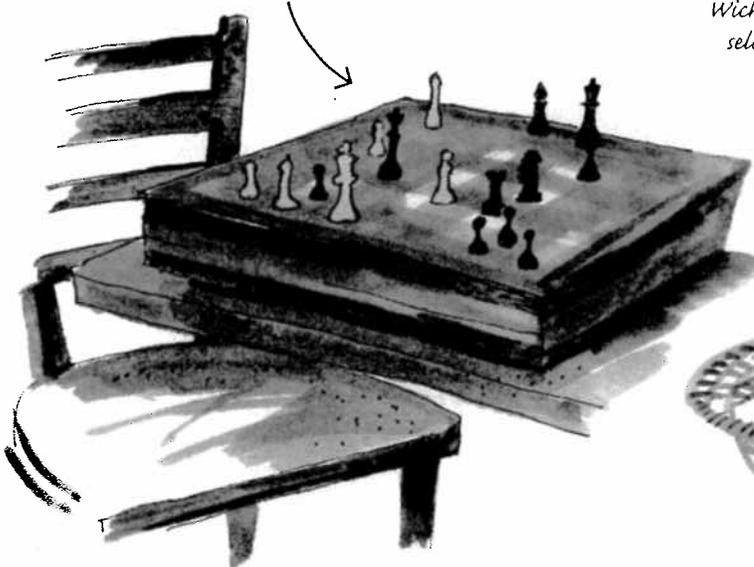
As an artist, one of the first things I appreciated about Walterboro's Downtown Antiques District was that, although it's inviting and has been spruced up, it seems unchanged and natural. Perhaps it is the original architecture, or Jorge's wild plantings that soften the angled curbs, or the merchants who've had stores there for almost 60 years. Whatever it is, downtown is a delightful draw for all types of treasure hunters.

Antiques emporiums abound in all varieties—elegant, shabby chic, American, European, and shops that have a lot of stuff and just smell old the minute you step in the door. Here's a tip: As you shop, pick up the free newspaper "Interstate 95 Antiques." It's a monthly guide to antiquing along I-95 from Fredricksburg, Virginia, to Melbourne, Florida, and is the brainchild of Walterboro dealer David Evans of Bachelor Hill Antiques.

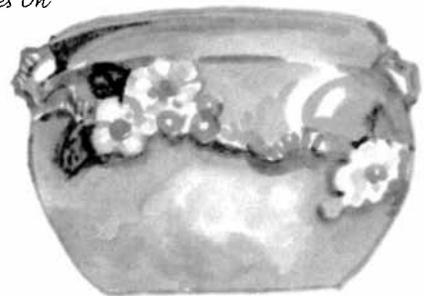
The creative treasure hunter will want to meander through the South Carolina Artisans Center, the Official Folk Art and Craft Center of South Carolina, which offers affordably priced works (\$1 to \$15,000) of more than 300 of the state's juried artists.

If you are searching for unique gifts, there are boutiques, bookstores, gift shops, and jewelers. And if you are looking for a restaurant, there is the Blarney Stone Family Restaurant & Irish Pub and Carmine's Trattoria right downtown, or for a real Southern cafeteria experience, try Duke's Barbeque outside the district.

Order a sweet bun and latte to go with your chess game at Downtown Books & Espresso.



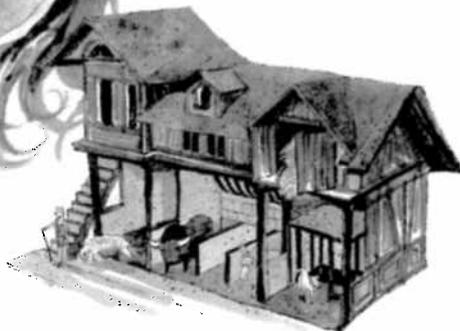
"Apple Blossom," Roseville Art Pottery, 1948. Antiques On Wichman has the largest selection of Roseville in the Southeast.



Elizabeth Mazyck's sweetgrass baskets at South Carolina Artisans Center.



The Hampton House Bed & Breakfast is listed in the self-guided tour as The Howell-Fishburne House, 1912.



The Forde Doll & Doll House Collection:

The doll stable is constructed of lithographed paper on wood and was made in Germany in the 1880s. The doll was also made in Germany by the Heubach Koppelsdorf doll factory circa 1900. Her head is bisque with hand-blown glass eyes and a human hair wig, and she has a composition body.

When you are ready to take a break from treasure hunting downtown, there are many other kinds of historical treasures you won't want to miss.

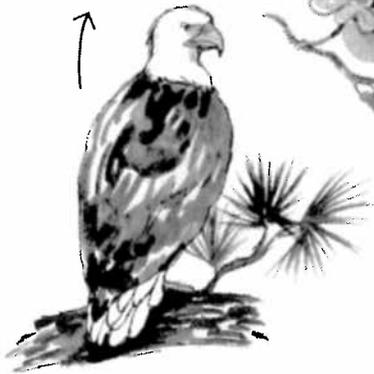
At the Walterboro Welcome Center or downtown shops, pick up a free copy of "Historic Walterboro: A Self-Guided Tour." The tour map allows you to drive or walk through two side-by-side historical districts (1.2 and 1.8 miles) with a variety of Lowcountry homes and landmark buildings from 1814 to 1929. An intriguing structure is The Old Jail (1856), which looks like a miniature castle and is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is now the home of The Colleton Museum, a small collection of artifacts lovingly contributed by local folks that represents a quaint time capsule for Walterboro and Colleton County.

A hidden treasure that even some locals haven't seen is The Forde Doll & Doll House Collection located within The Hampton House Bed & Breakfast. Artist Diane Forde and her husband, Henry, are the hosts of this beautifully adorned inn, and they have set aside a large room to exhibit Diane's extraordinary collection of antique dolls and the largest dollhouse collection in the Southeast. Prepare to be astounded! Travel tip: Stay at the inn and you can tour the grounds, view the dolls, and see the paintings, purses, and jewelry Diane creates—all at your leisure! Otherwise, private and group tours are by appointment only.



The Walterborough Library Society (Little Library) 1820, is not open to the public but is a tiny treasure on the self-guided tour.

There are more than 80 species of birds in the wetlands of the Great Swamp Sanctuary.



At the Great Swamp Sanctuary, hike the Old Savannah Road, a historical stagecoach path.



The Welcome Center at Exit 53 off I-95 continues the Lowcountry tradition of a Pass-along Garden by giving visitors seed packets of standing cypress, the town's native flower.



"It's three miles to the country," says Dargan Fishburne-Moore. That's the distance from her home in town to the family plantation of Grace Field. For that reason, Walterboro is destined to remain small as the surrounding private plantations and swampland protect it from urban sprawl.

Take a walk on the wild side one day at the Great Swamp Sanctuary that borders Walterboro on the west and is part of the ACE Basin, the largest preserve on the East Coast. Well-marked hiking and biking trails over boardwalks make it easy to explore this 800-acre black water, braided creek, hardwood flats swamp that is so typical of the Lowcountry. And it's free!

In 1942, the Walterboro Army Airfield served as a compound for German POWs and the largest camouflage school in America. It was also the final combat training base for the famed Tuskegee Airmen; their amazing story is told at the memorial park and The Colleton Museum. Known today as Lowcountry Regional Airport, the airfield now serves the general aviation community. Come Thanksgiving, claim the locals, the private jets of the area plantation owners and guests turn the runway into a mini LAX, offering quite a contrast to the usual unhurried pace of this charming historical haven.



A monument and memorial park honors The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II at Lowcountry Regional Airport.

French Garden House

www.frenchgardenhouse.com

Antiques & Shabby Decor to Romance your Home & Garden

Three Little Monkeys

3littlemonkeysboutique.com

Girls & Boys children's clothing designed and made in the USA.

THREE LITTLE MONKEYS
Children's Boutique