



The Canopy Roads of Beaufort County

A guide to the beautiful shady roads that characterize Beaufort County

McPhersonville Rd Canopy

Beaufort County's Canopy Roads



1

Old Sheldon Church Road is one of the County's most scenic highways and the best local example of a canopy road. A trip

down Old Sheldon Church Road offers glimpses into the past through the remains of the Sheldon Church ruins, the grand allees to several historic plantations, and views of former rice fields. Originally built between 1745-55, Old Sheldon Church (formerly Prince William Parish Church) was burned by the British in May 1779, rebuilt and then burned by Sherman's troops in January 1865 and never rebuilt. Members of the Bull family, the original property owners, are buried there. The ruins are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. At the corner of Old Sheldon Church Road and Cotton Hall Road, Tomotley Plantation (private property) has two magnificent live oak allees that date from the 1820s. There are also historic rice fields that can be seen from both Old Sheldon Church Road and US Highway 17/21. Further toward Yemassee, Brewton Plantation (also private property), dating from the early 18th century, features an oak allee that was planted in 1932. In 2003 Old Sheldon Church Road was designated a State Scenic Byway.

2

Cotton Hall Road was named after the Cotton Hall Plantation (private property) which dates from the early 19th century. The original house was burned in 1865 by Union troops. The exact age of the plantation's oak allee is unknown.



3

McPhersonville Road, a dirt road to the Hampton County line, was the main road to the historic village of McPhersonville, which was established in 1807. McPhersonville is now in present day Hampton County.



Canopy roads are two-lane highways and byways characterized by rows of trees bordering both sides of the road corridor with enough height, density and spread to create natural canopy over the road surface. Fifty years ago, most of Beaufort County's roads were rural two-lane highways, many of which were completely shaded under a canopy of oaks. Population growth along with residential and commercial development has rendered this a vanishing feature of the Lowcountry landscape. While most of the remaining canopy roads are not facing immediate threats from development, without recognition and protection of this unique resource, even removal of individual trees and aggressive tree pruning can erode what makes these highways special. The establishment of a Canopy Road Designation will provide the County with the necessary tools to ensure that all is being done locally to protect and preserve this precious resource. Beaufort County has taken important steps to protect the scenic qualities of its highways and byways. The designation of Old Sheldon Church Road in 2003 as a State Scenic Byway and the accompanying management plan represent the next step in moving the protection of scenic corridors beyond the regulatory environment to include public outreach and partnerships with SCDOT and utility companies to protect the trees along these roads. The purpose of this brochure is to provide greater awareness to both visitors and residents of the County's remaining canopy roads as a unique feature of the County's history, culture, and natural environment.

4

Old Jericho Road is a short stretch offering a rare glimpse of historic rural Beaufort County in the midst shopping centers, gas stations and restaurants. Old Jericho Road was a major road from the earliest settlement of Beaufort County and is one of two roads in Beaufort County that is in the 1832 Mills Atlas, compiled by noted architect Robert Mills. The Myrtle Bush farm house, located on the west side of the road, was built in 1921. The Myrtle Bush Plantation, however, dates from early 19th century.



5

Meridian Road connects Sea Island Parkway (US 21) with Lady's Island Drive (SC 802). While there is significant residential development along Meridian Road, the tree canopy has been preserved. Meridian Road followed the eastern meridian of the Beaufort Township in a survey done during the Civil War.



6,7

Along with its spreading live oak canopy, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, which turns into Land's End Road at the intersection of Club Bridge Road, passes some of the County's richest historic treasures. Penn Center was established in 1862 by northern missionaries and abolitionists as a school for free blacks and continued until the 1960s. Dr. Martin Luther King often used Penn Center as a retreat during the Civil Rights Era. Today it is a location for community services and retreats.

There is a museum open to the public on the grounds. Penn Center is a National Historic Landmark. The Brick Church, established in 1855 by Baptist Planters on St. Helena Island, was the original site of the Penn School. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Chapel of Ease was built in the 1740s by Anglican planters on St. Helena Island so that they would not have to take the long boat trip to attend church in Beaufort. It was destroyed by a forest fire in 1886. Only the tabby ruins remain today. The Edgar Fripp Mausoleum ruins and Fripp family cemetery are on the grounds of the chapel. The Chapel of Ease and Edgar Fripp Mausoleum are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Fremont located at Land's End was a late 19th century US Army installation with two gun batteries and a number of buildings. Today only the ruins of the two batteries and the fort hospital remain. The batteries are now part of a Beaufort County Park that can be accessed from Land's End Road. Fort Fremont and the Fort Fremont Hospital (private property) are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



8

The Avenue of Oaks is the allee leading to the Coffin Point Plantation House (c. 1801) at the end of the avenue. The allee dates to the 19th century. The Coffin Point Cemetery can be seen on the right side of the avenue. While the allee is accessible to the public, Coffin Point Plantation House is private property.



9

Pinckney Colony was the home of a prominent Roman Catholic lowcountry family. The first Catholic church on Pinckney Colony Road was built in 1915 and named St. Mary's in the Woods. The current church was built in the 1930's and renamed St. Andrews.



10

The Bluffton Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is at the eastern terminus of May River Road (SC 46). The Town of Bluffton was founded in the early 19th century by area planters seeking an escape from the unhealthy conditions present on Lowcountry rice and cotton plantations. The Town's location along the high bluff of May River offered cool river breezes especially during the summer months.