

# Thomson

Official Visitors Guide of  
McDuffie County Georgia



*McTell's 12-String Strut*

Honoring a local legend

*Paddler's Paradise*

Georgia's Little River Water Trail

*Quaker History*

Wrightsboro, Georgia

VisitThomsonGA.com

*Welcome Y'all*



*In McDuffie County, there are no strangers,  
just friends we haven't met yet.*



# Singin' the Blues

*Recognized as a top event by Southeast Tourism Society and the Wall Street Journal. The Blind Willie McTell Blues Festival debuted in 1993, as a way to promote the county and honor the music and spirit of Blind Willie McTell. The festival has been going strong ever since, and is still staged in the same grassy field it debuted in almost 22 years ago. >>*

The festival is named for Blind Willie McTell, one of the all-time greats of country blues guitar, who was born just south of Thomson, Georgia, in the area known

as Happy Valley in McDuffie County. He was inducted posthumously into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1990. One of his most famous songs, “Statesboro Blues”, has been a staple for blues bands for decades and has been covered by artists such as The Allman Brothers Band and Taj Mahal. Many musicians consider McTell an influence, including Bob Dylan, who paid tribute to him with his song “Blind Willie McTell”.

From the beginning the festival wasn’t just about the blues, but rather a celebration of roots music. You could hear Americana, Cajun influences, Country and touches of Funk and Soul. The kind of musical event Blind Willie himself would have really enjoyed. Many past performers have been American Music Award winners and Grammy nominees. The laid back vibe of the festival creates a great atmosphere to mix and mingle, get up and dance, or just sit back and sip an ice cold beer while enjoying some fantastic music.

Come for the music but you will get even more. There is a wide variety of food available from local food vendors; the local arts council has a booth with blues and music related art for sale; not to mention lots of camaraderie and people watching.

TIP: You can visit the grave site of McTell on Happy Valley Road adjoining Jones Grove Baptist Church (1062 Happy Valley Rd, Thomson, GA 30824). Pay a visit to the McDuffie Museum housed inside a former bank in downtown and see artifacts like the original tombstone of Blind Willie. Visit the gift shop for a memorable souvenir such as **Blind Willies Blues**, a DVD documentary about the musician.

## Fast Facts

When: First Saturday in May

Where: Stagecoach Rd., just off Hwy 78. North of Thomson, GA.

Tickets: On sale in early March  
Advanced tickets are \$30.  
Tickets at the gate are \$40.  
Children 12 and under are free.

To purchase tickets:  
[blindwillie.com/tickets](http://blindwillie.com/tickets)

The Festival is “Rain or Shine.”

Attendance: 2,000+ annually

Vendors: Food trucks, local restaurants and food vendors offer a wide variety of food, from snacks to full meals. Be sure to arrive hungry! The local arts council sets up a booth with blues/music related art and items for sale.

What To Bring: Cash is king! Most vendors do not take credit cards. All seating is lawn seating. Bring a blanket or low-back beach chair, camera, sunscreen. Tailgate tents are allowed in designated areas. No Coolers.

[www.blindwillie.com](http://www.blindwillie.com)



## Paddler's Paradise

*The beautiful Little River flows through the 15,000-acre Clarks Hill Lake Wildlife Management Area into Clarks Hill Lake and is truly a sanctuary that is great for bird & wildlife watching. Bald eagle nests, river otters, turtles, and many other plants and animals are abundant. This is also a great area to kayak fish—plentiful bream, crappie, catfish, and bass. >>*

This intimate river is also rich in history. It is the site of some of Georgia's first gold mines. The nearby community of Wrightsboro was settled before the American Revolution and was the southernmost point of Quaker migration. Fishdam Ford was just east of Rocky Creek on Little River and was a primary crossing for Native Americans for centuries. This area was also where William Bartram traveled with the survey team identifying the ceded lands.

## Fast Facts

1. **Best Access:** Put in and take out at HWY 78 Little River boat ramp.
2. The Little River has a negligible current at just about all times unless after extreme heavy rainfall. It can be paddled upstream with very little effort.
3. **Distance:** 7.8 miles to bridge at Wrightsboro Road. Option: paddle as far up river as you want and turn around to take out at the put-in.
4. Flat water, slow moving, no obstacles or rapids, slight current downstream.
5. Primitive looking and virtually no signs of development, houses, very quiet paddle.

[www.galittleriver.com](http://www.galittleriver.com)

The water trail is split into three sections, making for easy day trips.

Section one is called Storks Bend, the put-in point for this section is on Hwy 80 at the Woodruff Bridge (note: there is no boat ramp at this access point but it is still possible to put-in here). This section is shady and the banks are thick with huge sycamores, oaks, and towering ancient pines. The canopy is thick, shading the river with a tunnel affect for several miles. Within the first two miles, you may encounter a tree across the river that will need to be negotiated. There are few places to get out of the boat until you reach the Tom Watson Bridge at Hwy 78, 7.6 miles downstream.

Section two is called Smith Mill, the put-in is at the Tom Watson Bridge DNR ramp on Hwy 78. This is a cement ramp with a gravel parking area near on the southern side of the bridge. From this point you can paddle either upstream through section one or downstream. About a half mile down, there is a narrow channel entering the river from the north, you can paddle into it and it opens up into a natural pond of about 4 acres filled with fish and wading birds. Next is Fish Dam Bend, which has multiple islands, splitting the river in two. This area is a great spot to observe bald eagles and osprey in flight, roosting, and catching fish. Take-out point is Holliday Park on the northern bank, about 7.4 miles downstream. There is a large cement ramp located next to the boat dock.

Section three is called Raysville, this section of the trail is all lake paddling. Entering and exiting your kayak along most any bank here is possible. The shorelines and islands along this section have interesting features and are fun to explore. One island has a large nest on it, maybe either an eagle or osprey nest. This section is a leisurely 5.5 mile paddle to Raysville Campground. The ramp there is easily spotted next to a long aluminum dock extending out into the lake. The Hwy 43 Bridge will be to your west when you see the ramp to your south.



# Catch of the Day



***The McDuffie Public Fishing Area (MPFA) located in Georgia's upper coastal plain in Dearing, GA encompasses 570 acres of beautiful land, great fishing and hunting and trails for biking or hiking. Also on site are a warm-water fish hatchery and the McDuffie Environmental Education Center. >>***

Open daily from sunrise to sunset, the "State Pond" in Dearing, GA beckons visitors with an array of outdoor recreational opportunities: seven ponds for quality bream, bass and catfish angling; two archery ranges; a 12-acre dove field; several lakes for waterfowl hunting; a variety of nature trails; kids' fishing events and adventures held spring, summer and fall; and on-site campground. There's also a warm water fish hatchery and the McDuffie Environmental Education Center.

## MPFA Facts

1. Visitors may fish for largemouth bass, channel catfish, bluegills and redear sunfish. Bring your own bait and tackle.
2. The PFA holds Kids' Fishing Events (KFEs) during the spring, summer and fall months to encourage youngsters under the age of 16 to enjoy the sport of fishing. Two ponds stocked with channel catfish are reserved for Kids' Fishing Events.
3. During dove season, a 12-acre dove field is open to the public.
4. A variety of trails await the avid nature lover. Paths such as Blackwater Swamp and Longleaf Pine Trails offer a variety of geographic characteristics for their followers to enjoy.
5. Two archery ranges provide practice in both open ground and regular field conditions.
6. Camping fees are \$15 per night for tent sites with electricity and water and \$25 per night for 50-amp RV sites.
7. Covered picnic pavilions, tables, and grills are located throughout the area.



The McDuffie Public Fishing Area (MPFA) has a number of trails and roads that make for great hiking and biking, it's recommended that you obtain a free map at the MPFA office.

*McDuffie Public Fishing Area*  
4695 Fish Hatchery Rd., SE,  
Dearing GA  
706-595-1684

## Biking Trails

### Mountain Biking: McDuffie Public Fishing Area Archery Trail

- Over 2 miles of multi-use (hiking/walking, mountain biking) single track trail
- Negligible elevation gain, only 65-ft. over the 2 miles
- Go during the week and you're almost guaranteed not to see anyone else on the trails

### Mountain Biking: Gravel Mixer at McDuffie Public Fishing Area

- Over 3.5 miles of gravel/sand/dirt roads at the MPFA
- All of it is open to mountain bikes (except when closed and indicated by signage)
- Appropriate also for cyclo-cross bikes and hybrid bikes with tires over 32c in width!



Happy Trails

## Hiking Trails

### Hiking: Blackwater Swamp Trail

- Head to the main office and park at the end of the lake. Cross the dam and follow signage for the trail.
- Offers a unique boardwalk hike experience with a beautiful bottom-land swamp
- Bring insect repellent in the warmer months or you're likely to make many new buzzy friends!
- Distance: about 1 mile round-trip; easy, appropriate for any skill level

### Hiking: Lingleaf Pine Trail

- Park at the main office and walk back (away from lake) 300-ft. and you'll see the trail head
- Short 0.8-mile round trip trek through a canopied pine forest
- Easy, appropriate for even small children and senior adults



*"The lake is calling and  
I must go!"*

The boat ramp area or many shoreline campground spots at Raysville Campground offer excellent sunrise photo opportunities

### Paddle Island Adventure

Put-In & Take Out: Raysville  
Campground Boat Ramp

GPS: 33.638128, -82.476958

Distance: 8 miles round-trip

Difficulty: Moderate, only due to  
distance

Time Commitment: 3-6 hours

**On the water:** Leave the Raysville Campground boat ramp heading north towards the Lincolnton Road bridge. Go under the bridge, turn south and after 3,000 ft., begin heading in northeast direction in open channel. Continue in open water for approximately 2.4 miles and you'll come to a series of 6 islands. These islands are fantastic for relaxing, a picnic lunch and exploration! Return the same way you came.



## Happy Camper

*If it's rest you seek, there's nothing better than time spent at the lake. Come to Raysville Campground and sit by the campfire or glide around the lake. Most >>*

### Raysville Campground

6489 Lincolnton Road NE

Thomson, GA 30824

706-595-6759

[raysvillecampground.com](http://raysvillecampground.com)

- Located on the Little River section of Clarks Hill Lake
- 55 campsites all with 50-AMP electrical hookup
- More than 60% of the campsites are on the water, all campsites are considered "wooded"
- Access to swimming, fishing, picnicking, boat ramp and dock



### Raysville Marina

6584 Lincolnton Road NE # A

Thomson, GA 30824

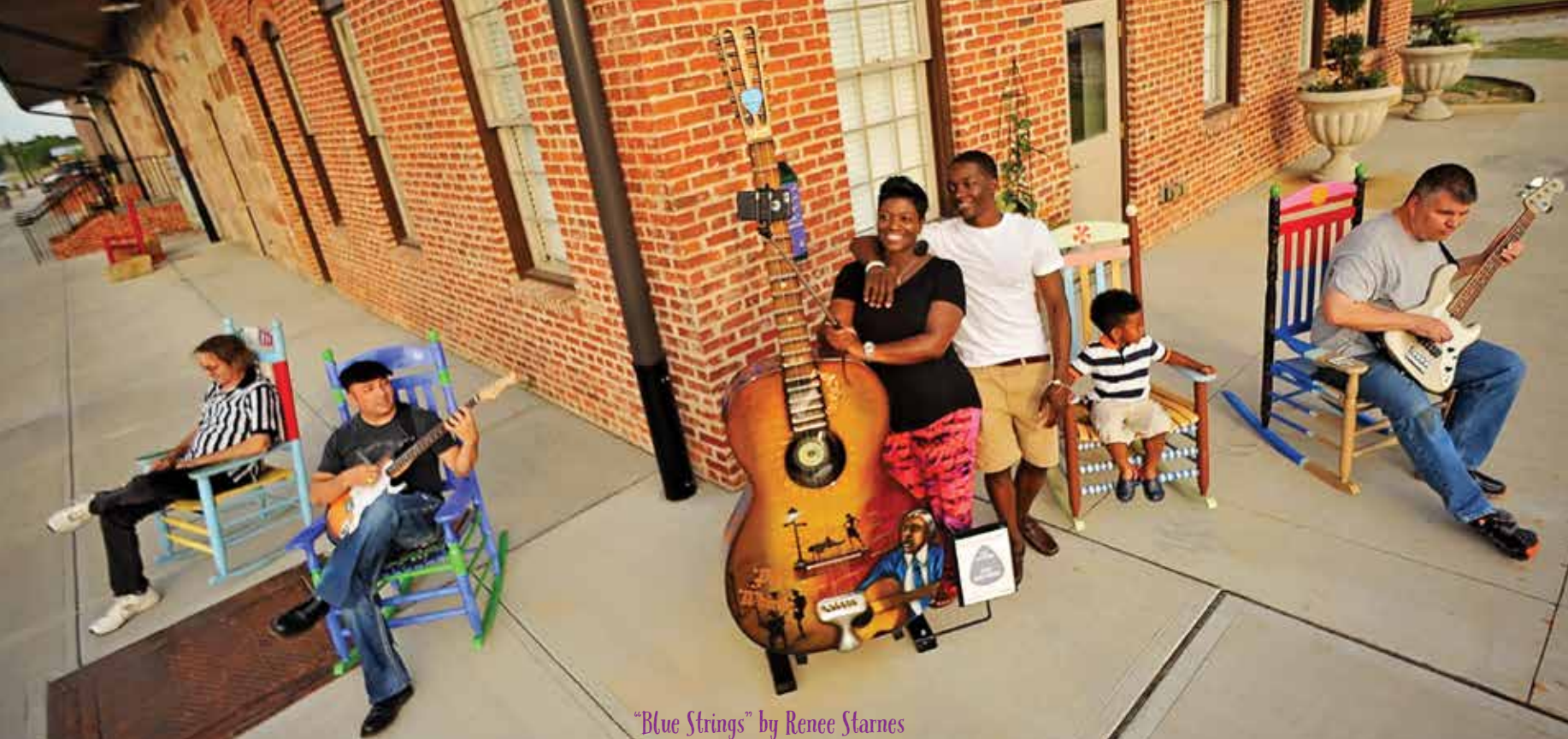
706-595-5582

[facebook.com/RaysvilleMarina](https://facebook.com/RaysvilleMarina)



# Fast Facts

1. Born William Samuel McTier on May 5, 1898 in the Happy Valley community of McDuffie County.
2. McTell's influence extended over a wide variety of artists, including the Allman Brothers Band, who covered his "Statesboro Blues."
3. McTell was born blind in one eye and lost his remaining vision by late childhood.
4. He was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Blues Hall of Fame in 1981 and the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1990.
5. His original gravestone bearing the name Eddie McTier is at McDuffie Museum.



"Blue Strings" by Renee Starnes

*Come on over to historic Thomson, Ga., to take in "McTell's 12-String Strut," 12 imaginatively painted guitars that grace the downtown area of Thomson. >>*

## McTell's 12-String Strut

The project recognizes and honors the legacy of Blind Willie McTell, his music and the fact that such an influential musician was born and lived in McDuffie County. McTell lost his eyesight in his childhood. He went on to become one of the most accomplished twelve string guitar players in his time.

The guitars are painted by local Thomson area artists. The core area for the guitars is the Downtown/ Main St area of Thomson, GA. The Thomson Depot location (shown above) includes an audio box that plays a sample of Blind Willie McTell's music as well as tell his story. Check the brochure rack behind the guitar for a location map.

McTell's 12-String Strut locations are subject to change. Visit [mctells12stringstrut.com](http://mctells12stringstrut.com) for the most up to date map and any additional guitars that may have been added.



"Braille Blues" by Adrienne Murphy



*"The highest happiness on earth  
is marriage."*

*~ William Lyon Phelps*



**White Hills Lavender & Herb Farm**  
1419 Fort Creek Road,  
Dearing, GA 30808  
(706) 595-5081



## Get Hitched!

*McDuffie County has several  
unique sites that are ideal  
for a variety of events.  
Weddings, receptions,  
holiday and tea parties,  
reunions, brunches, baby  
showers, equestrian  
events and more can be  
accommodated in Southern  
style and grace. >>*

**Thomson Depot**  
111 Railroad Street  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 595-1781



**Wrightsboro Church**  
4700 Wrightsboro Rd  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 595-1781



**Vows and Venue**  
4500 Whitaker Road  
Harlem, GA 30814  
(706) 829-2684

**Ashton Cole Place**  
2413 Old Milledgeville Rd. SE.,  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 799-1400



**The Barn at  
Sanderlin Horse Farm**  
5022 White Oak Rd  
Appling, GA 30802  
(706) 836-1369





Go Junkin!

*Visiting resale and vintage shops on vacation has become a trend. So much so, that the “thrift store road trip” is the new girlfriend getaway! >>*

Wherever I travel I’m always going to be on the lookout for an awesome place to thrift. Think about it. You’re probably going to do some shopping while you’re out of town anyway. Why settle for shopping only at brand name stores or expensive boutiques? Why not explore some of the local thrift stores or consignment shops, too? You’re connecting with people who live in the community. It’s a much truer and authentic shopping experience, and it is an effective way to get to know the locals.

Just a short drive from Atlanta and Athens, Thomson, Ga is a great place to make a quick Thrift Store Road Trip! Antique lovers will get a thrill hunting for their next purchase at one of the many thrift stores in the area. Stroll the tree-lined sidewalks of the historic downtown and you will find several places within walking distance. Located on the corner of Journal St and Greenway St, **Journal on the Green Antiques & Arts** offers over 10,000 square feet of antique treasures and artistry. Around the corner in Knox Shopping Center, **Laura Lane’s Home Décor and Gifts** is a shopping destination for dressing your home or the go-to place when it comes to picking up a gift for someone special. While you are there, don’t miss getting your paws on some spicy cheese straws locally-made by McDuffie County’s Chinaberry Foods. Take turns dipping into one treasure trove after another; if you like plundering through junk, fumbling through antiques, stumbling through treasures, and having fun, then you will love **Aunt Tique and Uncle Junk’s** located on First Avenue behind McDuffie Museum. Then scoot over to **The Saturday Market - Antiques and Uniques** on Augusta Hwy to ramble through quirky, eclectic, vintage, unique, and antique items. And if that’s not enough, a short drive from downtown, Sunset Auctions House hosts twice-a-month auctions that draw crowds from near and far.

After all that shopping, you may need to take a break and refuel, so why not grab a bite at a downtown eatery. Try Fernanda’s Grille and Pizzeria for a New York slice. Sit in the courtyard – an ideal alcove for eating with a view of downtown. Or, grab a hand-patted burger at **Hogie Joe’s Sports Grill**. If you are in the mood for soul food, no one does it better than **Ivery’s Restaurant**!

While in downtown, pay a visit to **McDuffie Museum** housed inside a former bank in downtown. See artifacts like the original tombstone of blues legend, Blind Willie McTell. Visit the gift shop for a memorable souvenir like a DVD documentary about the musician. In the museum’s theater, a converted bank vault, watch a 15-minute clip about McDuffie County’s famed Belle Meade Hunt. The museum also showcases the work of renowned folk artist Jake McCord, and houses the old front porch of Mr. McCord’s home. You can also catch a flick at the Thomson Twin Cinema, still showing first-run movies and 3-D shows.

## Go Junkin’

1. Aunt Tique & Uncle Junk  
210 First Ave.  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 595-2296
2. Journal on the Green  
117 Greenway Street,  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 986-5580
3. Laura Lane’s Home Decor & Gifts  
117 Nassau Place  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 699-4559
4. The Saturday Market – Antiques and Uniques  
925 Augusta Rd  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 466-1753
5. Shabby Chic Home Furnishings  
216 First Ave.  
Thomson, GA 30824  
(706) 962-1373

# Made in McDuffie

Below is a sampling of locally made products that are sold, shipped, showcased online or in their local storefronts >>



1. Handmade Goat Milk Soap, Just Great Soap, \$10, [theseecretcatalog.com](http://theseecretcatalog.com)
2. Crochet Cotton Washcloth, Annette Towes, \$8, [theseecretcatalog.com](http://theseecretcatalog.com)
3. Leather Keychain, Geppetto Leathers, \$8, [www.facebook.com/geppetto.leathers](http://www.facebook.com/geppetto.leathers), Also across from Walmart most Thursdays



4. Cheese Straws, Chinaberry Foods, \$7.50, [chinaberryfoods.com](http://chinaberryfoods.com) and Laura Lanes Home Decor and Gifts
5. Ceramic Dish and Bowl Set, Charles DeLoach, \$35, MAC on Main Art Gallery
6. Artist Smock, STATE, \$95, [statethelabel.com](http://statethelabel.com)
7. August Lohr, Double Vase / Ambrosia, \$60, MAC on Main Art Gallery



Our products page was curated by Adrienne Antonson, local artist and designer of the fashion label STATE and the mail order print catalog, the Secret Catalog. Adrienne has a way of finding distinctive products that are often overlooked.

Her studio is located in the heart of downtown Thomson. All items are made by hand using local sewers. Sustainable, organic, and recycled fabrics, reclaimed materials, and hand painting techniques are used in all designs.



*Shop for unique and funky original art, and find chic items for your home.*

**Anna Lou Designs**  
121 Nassau Pl.  
(706) 361-0766

**April's Bowtique**  
110 White Oak St.  
(706) 361-0041

**Classic Jewelry and Loan**  
1423 Washington Rd.  
(706) 595-1758

**Faith Hope & Love Christian Gifts & More**  
654 Main St., Suite 2  
(706) 690-5176

**Goody's**  
312 West Hill St  
(706) 595-8500

**Holley Jewelers**  
1259 Washington Rd.  
(706) 595-1245

**Lee Ann Cowart Interiors**  
222 Main St.  
(706) 597-8095

**The Luckey Charm**  
454 East Hill St.  
(706) 595-8610

**MAC on Main Art Gallery**  
107 Main St.

**Peacock Hill Gifts**  
1729 Washington Rd.  
(706) 595-6999

**Priss Pots and Tots**  
501-A Mt. Pleasant Rd.  
(706) 690-5085



*Sample the signature savories  
& sweets of Thomson!*

## Dine Around

**Angie's Steak n' Seafood**  
Open Thurs - Sun  
1961 Wrens Hwy  
(706) 595-0040

**Bob's Cafe**  
Open Thurs - Sat  
5240 Lincolnnton Hwy  
(706) 595-6637

**Delicacies Cece's**  
125 Main St  
(706) 872-5324

**El Kiosco Mexican**  
1068 Washington Rd  
(706) 595-2505

**Fernanda's Pizzeria**  
127 Main St  
(706) 595-7753

**Gracie B's**  
218 West Hill St  
(706) 962-8308

**Habaneros Mexican Grill**  
1435 Washington Rd  
(706) 986-5292

**Hogie Joe's Sports Grill**  
128 Railroad St  
(706) 595-7575

**Ivery's Restaurant**  
Lunch only,  
Closed on Monday  
112 Railroad St  
(706) 595-2666

**Kent's Diner**  
329 East Hill St  
(706) 595-2663

**Kimberly's Country Cooking**  
654 Main St  
(706) 962-1360

**Neal's BBQ**  
Open Thurs - Sat  
664 Augusta Rd  
(706) 595-2594

**Poppa's Finest BBQ**  
Open Wed - Sat  
1073 Washington Rd  
(706) 595-8074

**Sweet T's**  
Open Mon - Fri,  
lunch only  
352 Gordon Street  
(706) 595-7753

**Wrap Em Up Crepes & Cafe**  
Wed - Sunday  
1419 Washington Rd  
(706) 962-8801





## Tally Ho

***For over 50 years, the Belle Meade Hunt has majestically opened fox hunting season in Thomson, Georgia with the world's largest opening meet. Held annually on the first Saturday in November, the opening meet is a day filled with pomp, circumstance and miles of opportunity to ride across the rolling fields, through pecan orchards and historic countryside of McDuffie County. >>***

If you're ever lucky enough to be a part of Thomson, Ga's Belle Meade Hunt, an annual tradition the first Saturday of each November, you may just think you've died and gone to heaven. Mark your calendar and plan to ride tally ho with the Belle Meade Hunt, which marks opening day of hunting season. Wondering just what it means to

ride tally ho? Basically, tally ho is a fun name for "behind the pack in a truck."

The nostalgic experience begins after the blessing of the hounds with a Tally Ho Ride – also known as the world's largest moving tailgate party. Seriously. Follow along as fox hunters, in their scarlet coats and velvet covered helmets drag a scent through the fields, leading the dogs, while the Tally Ho riders eat and drink their way through the fields following the pack in wagons towed by tractors and trucks. The route is pre-planned so the folks in the Tally Ho wagons can have a good show. Feel truly part of a tradition as you join in the revelry, all in fun. It's a fascinating display of strategy and logistics, culminating with the sounds of the hounds' music and horses' hooves and the thrill of the chase through miles and miles of magnificent countryside for an almost overwhelming adrenaline rush!

As the hunt goes deeper in the woods, hear the hounds coming closer and feel the anticipation of something bursting out of the brush into the field where the Tally Ho crew is waiting and watching. A hunt guide explains the entire process as the Tally Ho group watches with bated breath and adds, there is hardly ever a coyote (and even more rarely a fox) cornered by the hounds at the Belle Meade Hunt. Those creatures are smarter than the hounds, for the most part.

As night falls, the hunt ends at a historic Quaker cemetery out in the middle of nowhere – perhaps next year some locale totally different; the Master of Foxhounds performs a roll call of the hounds as they mill around the horses, tails wagging like crazy, the happiest bunch of dogs you'll ever see. The Tally Ho riders bask in the tradition and mystery of a newly appreciated experience. Finally, once horses are unsaddled and dressed in blankets, hounds are kenneled, and hands are washed, everyone heads into the lodge for supper and a roaring fire (and maybe a nip or two).

## Fast Facts

When: First Saturday in November

Where: 4018 Wrightsboro Rd., just off Highway 78, north of Thomson, GA.

Tickets: \$50, sold in advance only. Tickets are on sale in mid September.

Call 706-595-2525 for ticket information.

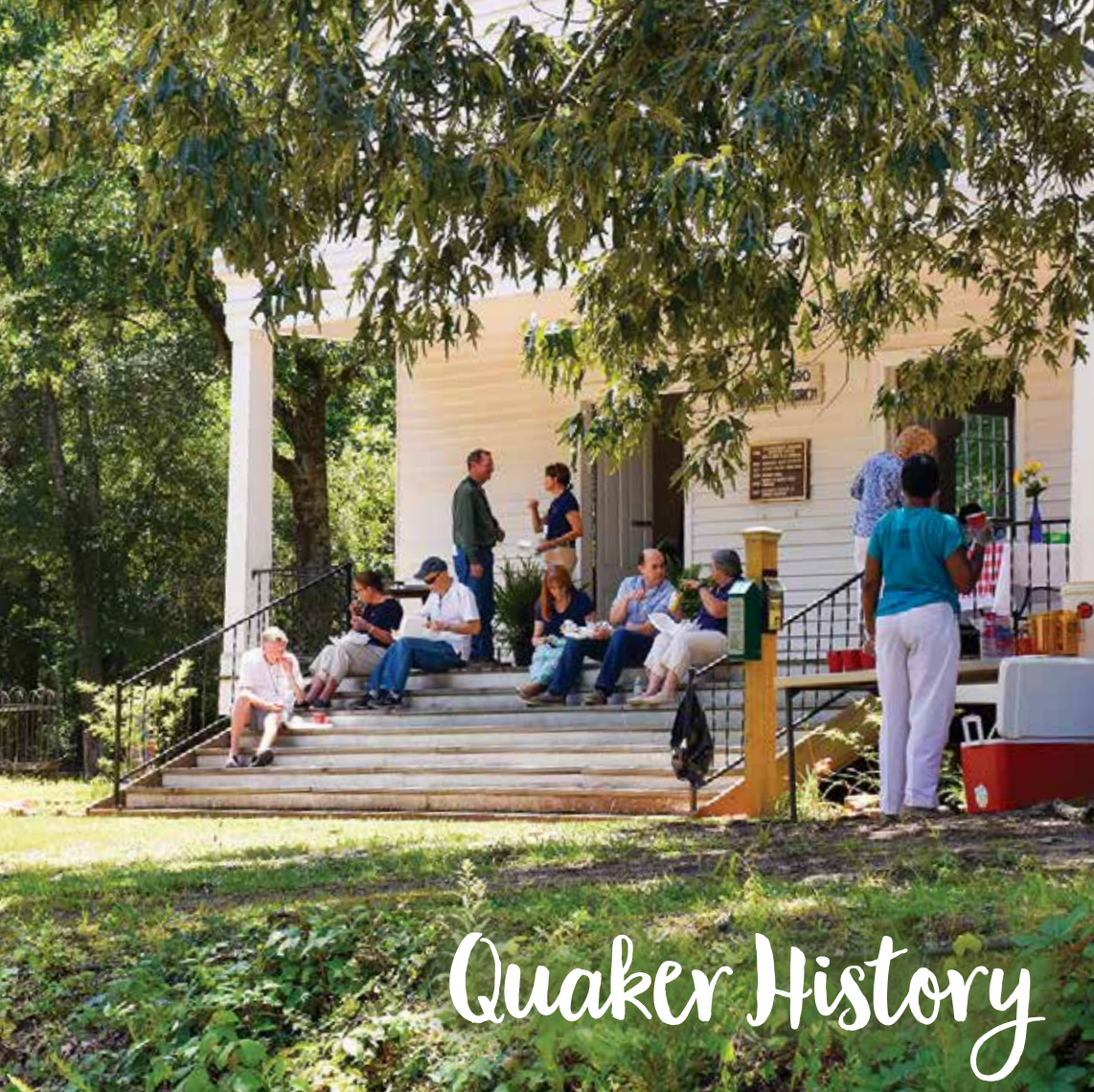
Attendance: 100+ riders, 500+ spectators

Event is "Rain or Shine." Dress appropriately for the weather.

What To Bring: Tailgating foods, snacks, beverages, coolers, blankets. This is a tailgating type of experience, that you can dress up or down depending on your taste.

Add On Events: The Hunt Club hosts a dinner the Friday night before the Opening Meet. There is a hunt breakfast before the Blessing of the Hounds and a barbecue dinner following the Tally Ho ride. Call in advance for ticket prices.

[bellemeadehounds.com](http://bellemeadehounds.com)



## Quaker History

*The Quaker faith arose in the mid-17th century in England to revive a more primitive form of Christianity. The practitioners were known as the “Seekers” or “the Children of Light”; their official designation is the “Religious Society of Friends.” >>*

Quakers settled originally in the Pennsylvania Colony, but gradually established meeting houses throughout the 13 colonies. Hard working and plain in speech and dress, the Quakers are often misunderstood. The faith requires ethical business practices, opposition to war, and a radical obedience to the teachings of Christ. It was not until 1688 that the first hints of an abolitionist sentiment arose from the Philadelphia Society of Friends. They issued the first statement against slave-holding by Quakers and followed it in 1696 with a formal Prohibition on the importing of slaves by Quaker traders. The prohibition did not extend to Meetings in other colonies. And, it was not until 1776 that the North Carolina

Yearly Meeting mandated the freeing of all slaves held by Friends; any slave holding Quaker in North Carolina, South Carolina or Georgia would be subject to disownment.

The families who would found Wrightsboro in 1770, and its short-lived sister community Friendsborough in 1776, came from the North Carolina Yearly Meeting groups. A schism in the Meeting, possibly over slavery, caused a group of Friends to leave North Carolina and relocate to Georgia. Colonial Governor James Wright promised them 12,000 acres of land below the Little River. The Quakers were to be used as a buffer between the Creek Indians to the north and Irish and Scottish settlers to the south. To receive a lot within town limits, one had to be a Quaker; several families traveled with the group, including the Watsons, the Wilsons, and the Ansleys who were not Quaker and, therefore, they only received acreage outside of town.

The town included house lots, stores, blacksmith shop, and other businesses vital to frontier life. The Quakers would have met in a modest log structure, probably with two doors, one for women and one for men, which would have more closely resembled a house than a church. Burial for a Quaker was a simple affair with the only expense being a coffin. The Friend would be interred free of charge next to the meeting house. Markers would be a field stone, a very plain tablet stone, or a pillow marker.

*William Bartram visited the Quaker village of Wrightsboro in 1773*

During and after the American Revolution, the political climate in Georgia was increasingly uncomfortable for the Quakers. The rise of Thomson as a railroad town, the acceptance of slavery in Georgia, and the resentment harbored against the Quakers for not fighting in the Revolution caused many Quaker families to relocate to the north and west. The Wrightsboro Monthly Meeting was laid down in 1807 and the town was lost to the forest. Wrightsboro survived as a village until the 1920s, but little remains physically of the settlement in modern McDuffie County.

## Fast Facts

1. Current church structure built between 1810 – 1812
2. Was an active church for over 150 years – until 1964
3. The structure is representative of Quaker, Methodist and Baptist church buildings of rural Georgia
4. Still in excellent condition today after over 200 years
5. Interesting cemetery with dozens of 19th century patinaed tombstones
6. The ancestors of Asa G. Candler, the founder of the Coca-Cola company, are buried at the Wrightsboro Methodist Church cemetery

# 19 Interesting Things About McDuffie County

Gold was discovered in 1823 near Thomson, GA, six years before the first American gold rush in 1829.



McDuffie County men like W.T. Fluker, Thomas E. Watson, and Oscar Dent owned or invested in gold mines anticipating a boom that never came. Many of these mines are now beneath the waters of Clark's Hill Lake.

McDuffie County was created on October 18, 1870, from Columbia and Warren Counties. The county was named for George McDuffie, a native Georgian and distinguished lawyer, statesman, governor, and U.S. senator of South Carolina.

McDuffie County's Belle Meade Hunt

Club hosts what is likely the largest opening day meet of any fox hunt in the world. Yes, that's right, the world!



McDuffie County's roots go back to the 1768 settlement of Wrightsboro, the southernmost point of Quaker migration in North America.

One of Thomson's most famous sons was Thomas Watson. Watson founded the People's Party of Georgia, a political party based heavily in the Farmer's Alliance and promoting a platform of lower tariffs for farm goods, political equality for African-Americans, the 8-hour work day, the direct election of Senators, and the prohibition of child labor.

In 1893, Thomas Watson introduced legislation for rural free delivery. This system allowed many rural areas access to the mail on a regular basis and gave residents increased contact with the outside world, and helped pave the way for the establishment of a modern parcel post system.



William Samuel "Blind Willie" McTell was born in Thomson on May 5, 1898. McTell produced such blues classics as "Statesboro Blues," later made famous by the Allman Brothers Band. In 1990, McTell was inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, his award has mysteriously disappeared.

Dearing actually had two names at the same time; the Rail Depot was Dearing and the Post Office was Lombardy.



Thomson, Ga., was once known as Frog Pond, because of a large population of Bullfrogs.

The first Methodist meetings in what would become McDuffie County were held at the Whiteoak settlement in 1792.

The Millen branch of the Thomson Company made shirts for the Army during World War II.

The "People's Institute" was the first recorded black school in McDuffie County, owned and operated entirely by black citizens; it was located across from Springfield Baptist Church.

Thomson has had telephone service since 1901.



Zebedee Armstrong was an African-American folk artist in McDuffie County who began creating "Doomsday Calendars" in 1972 after he said an angel visited him and told him the end of the world was coming.

William Bartram passed through McDuffie County before the American Revolution. At this time Wrightsboro, a major Quaker city was located in the county.



During the 19th century, Boneville, GA was a destination for wealthy Georgian's, they came to "take in the waters" of Sweetwater Creek.

Boneville was named for Jones Bones, an Augusta man who was interested in opening a factory there.

The area that is now McDuffie County was originally St. Paul's Parish. The original settlers of the area were the Creek, Cherokee, a few Shawnee and the relatively obscure Uchee Indians. Some 2,000,000 acres of Indian lands (now Columbia, Elbert, Greene, McDuffie, Warren, Wilkes and other counties) were ceded in 1773.



# Purple Passion

*Experience farming at it's finest! White Hills Lavender & Herb Farm is located in Dearing, GA. This small boutique lavender and herb farm offers tours, demos and classes to the public and by appointment for special groups and is truly one of Georgia's hidden gems.>>*

The farm, while over 30 acres, has 8 acres in cultivation with 14 varieties of lavender which fall in to two categories: culinary and aromatherapy. They also grow a variety of herbs such as rosemary, thyme, basil and calamint (a native Georgia mint). Touring of the farm and surrounding land is as educational as it is amazingly beautiful. With endless fields, blue skies, the heavenly aroma of herbs everywhere and a picturesque 1890s farmhouse.



Hands on classes & demonstrations



One of a kind products



Farm Tours

## Fast Facts

Organic lavender and herb farm

"Farm Fridays" events

Classes on cultivating herbs

Be on the lookout for non-growing season classes, such as baking with lavender (shortbreads, scones, cupcakes), key herbs for health wellness and nutrition, and spa grade beauty products.

White Hills Farm is located at 1419 Fort Creek Rd., Dearing, GA 30808

Phone: 706-595-5081

Hours:

Open on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

To stay up to date on classes and product offerings, visit them online at:  
[Facebook.com/whitehillsherbs](https://www.facebook.com/whitehillsherbs)



*One of a kind gifts*

## Art from the Heart

*A fun and unique place to shop for fun and funky art created by local artists and crafters in this local art gallery.>>*

The McDuffie Arts Council enhances the quality of life in Thomson, GA through a variety of art classes, art programs, gallery exhibits and special events. The downtown gallery is located on Main Street, across from the Thomson Depot.

Twenty artists are represented in the gallery. Artworks include paintings, pottery, sculpture, woodwork, jewelry, and stained glass. Classes and programs are ongoing, so please check the calendar at [MAConMainArtGallery.com](http://MAConMainArtGallery.com).



*Learn to paint classes-  
for all ages!*



## Fast Facts

MAC on Main Art Gallery is operated by a co-op of local volunteers and artists.

107 Main Street  
Thomson, GA 30824

Directly across from the  
Thomson Depot

Hours:  
Thurs- Fri: 11:00 am - 6:00 pm  
Sat: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

[MAConMainArtGallery.com](http://MAConMainArtGallery.com)



*Quarterly gallery open house*

# Sample Itineraries:

## Stay For A Day

- Take a Farm Tour or a workshop at **White Hills Lavender & Herb Farm**
- Lunch at **Sweet T's**
- Search for all of the “**McTell's 12-String Strut**” guitars
- Tour **McDuffie Museum**
- Shop for local art at **MAC on Main Art Gallery & Studio**, “pick” some great finds at **Aunt Tique & Uncle Junk's**

## Stay For Two

- Bring your kayak and spend the morning exploring **Georgia's Little River Water Trail**.
- Refuel at **Hogie Joe's Sports Grill** in downtown Thomson
- Grab your camera and visit some of the historic sites in the county, such as, the **Wrightsboro Church** built in 1810, the **Thomson Depot** downtown, or the **Rock House** (directions available at the Visit Thomson, Ga office).
- Have dinner at one of our local restaurants listed on page 23, if it is a Friday night, follow dinner with some live music at **Sunset Auction House and Bar**.
- Breakfast at Hotel
- Search for all of the “**McTell's 12-String Strut**” guitars
- Lunch at **Ivery's**
- Visit McDuffie Museum and view the **Blind Willie McTell Documentary** in the “Vault Theatre”
- Pick up some **Chinaberry Foods Spicy Cheese Straws** at **Laura Lanes Home Decor & Gifts**, browse for some souvenirs at any of the retail shops listed on page 22.



McDuffie Museum



*After a day of exploring, find rest in one of the area's lodging alternatives. >>*

No matter where you wish to lay your head, there are various accommodations that are available. From leading chain hotels with complimentary breakfast and WIFI access to a perfect campsite for your four-person tent which might include hook-ups and picnic shelters, we've got it all.



## Hotels

### Hampton Inn & Suites

I-20 and US78  
1702 Washington Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
800-HAMPTON

### White Columns Inn

I-20 and US78  
1890 Washington Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
706.595.8000

### Comfort Inn

I-20 and US78  
1893 Washington Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
706.595.6500

### Econo Lodge

I-20 and US78  
130 North Seymour Dr  
Thomson, Ga  
706.595.7144

### Express Suites

I-20 and Route 150  
2658 Cobbham Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
706.595.2262

### Rodeway Inn

I-20 and US78  
1847 Washington Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
855-849-1513

### Knox Terrace

106 Georgia Ave  
Thomson, Ga  
706.595.1202

## Campgrounds

### Raysville Campground

6489 Lincolnton Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
706.595.6759

### Big Hart Campground

5258 Washington Rd  
Thomson, Ga  
800.533.3478  
800.595.8613

### McDuffie Public Fishing Area Campgrounds

4695 Fish Hatchery Rd.  
Dearing, Ga  
706.595.1684





*Y'all Come Back*

*A little bit of the country is good  
for your soul.*



## Travel Distances

Columbia, SC	103 miles
Atlanta, GA	119 miles
Macon, GA	121 miles
Savannah, GA	167 miles
Charlotte, NC	191 miles
Charleston, SC	208 miles
Birmingham, AL	264 miles
Montgomery, AL	273 miles
Jacksonville, FL	287 miles



149 Main Street Thomson, GA 30824  
VisitThomsonGA.com