

## CHAPTER 7

### HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

The City of Dahlonega was incorporated shortly after the discovery of gold in 1828 and continues to be influenced by gold discovery. Today, tourists come to see the historic town square, learn about its colorful history, and try their hand at gold panning. The following section briefly describes the history of Dahlonega and how it came to be what it is today.

#### History of Dahlonega

The discovery of gold in 1828 in present-day Lumpkin County caused one of the first major gold rushes in the nation. Miners poured into the Cherokee Territory, beginning a period known as the intrusion when the U.S. Army tried unsuccessfully to eject the intruders. Rough mining communities sprang up. The earliest of these was Auraria, located southwest of present day Dahlonega.

In 1832, the Cherokee lands, which had been seized by the State of Georgia, were distributed to the people of Georgia by a land lottery. Lumpkin County was created and Auraria temporarily served as the county seat until a permanent site could be selected. In 1833, an unnamed site, which would become the City of Dahlonega was established as the official county seat of Lumpkin County on Land Lot 950, 12th District, 1st Section. The new town was surveyed and the present day gridiron pattern with a public square was laid out. A permanent courthouse was built on the square in 1836 and residential and commercial uses developed around it.

In 1837 the Cherokees were forcibly removed from the territory to be resettled west of the Mississippi River. A location known as "the station" from which the State Historical Marker is missing was the local site for collecting the Cherokees for their removal via "The Trail of Tears."

The U.S. Government recognized the importance of gold mining in Lumpkin County and in 1838 established a U.S. Branch Mint at Dahlonega, for the minting of gold coins only. The branch mint operated until the start of the Civil War, ceasing operation in June, 1861. In 1871 the U.S. Government passed ownership of the mint to the State of Georgia for the establishment of North Georgia Agricultural College, now North Georgia College. The branch mint building burned in 1878 and in its former location the construction of Price Memorial Hall began in 1879. It was completed in 1880. Toward the late 1840's the easy gold began to "pan out" and many miners moved on to the gold fields in California and Colorado. However, the lure of gold was not forgotten in Dahlonega. New efforts at gold mining started again in the mid 1850's and the early 1900's as mining technologies developed.

In the mid 1960's, Lumpkin County moved its county government operations from the 1836 courthouse to a new site away from the public square. The old courthouse became a state



operated gold museum, and revitalization projects kept the historic square alive by attracting tourists to the colorful historical landmarks of this old gold mining town.

### Significant Historic Properties

The city of Dahlonega has numerous historic properties, be it houses, commercial buildings, public institutions, educational buildings, etc, throughout the city. A historic resource survey was done to identify and catalog the resources in the city, but the survey primarily focused on the Court House Square and the streets immediately surrounding the square. A total of 178 resources were identified in the survey, which is continuously updated. The complete survey is kept with the Dahlonega Historical Society.

The resources identified in this plan are those that are considered to be landmark resources. These are the considered to be the best example of a particular type of resource. Significant historic properties in Dahlonega are inventoried below and classified into three categories: Landmark buildings and structures; Residential, Commercial and Industrial Districts; and known and potential archaeological sites. For locations of these historic properties see Map 4.

1. Historic Lumpkin County Courthouse
2. Historic Lumpkin County Jail
3. Price Memorial Hall
4. Bl. Luke Catholic Church
5. Vickery House
6. Dahonega Baptist Church
7. Seven Oaks
8. Oaksho-Moore House
9. Moore Cottage
10. Moore Place
11. Mustering Grounds

 Dahonega Commercial Historic District  
 Part Street Historic Residential District



MAP 4

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

## A. LANDMARK BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

1. Historic Lumpkin County Courthouse  
The historic Lumpkin County Courthouse, now the Dahlonega Courthouse Gold Museum, houses the story of the nation's first major gold rush and is now the oldest public building in North Georgia. Built in 1838, it is significant in the areas of architecture, commerce, politics, and history.
2. Historic Lumpkin County Jail  
The historic Lumpkin County Jail was constructed in 1884, the fifth jail in the history of Lumpkin County. It is significant in the areas of architecture, politics, and government. Architecturally, the structure is Italianate in design and one of the most elaborately-detailed jails in the Georgia Mountains region. In politics and government, this jail is important as the fifth jail for Lumpkin County. The use of brick, the inclusion of the jailer's quarters and the conversion from wood to steel cells around 1942 represent changes that occurred in the criminal justice system.
3. Price Memorial Hall  
Price Memorial Hall remains essentially unchanged since its construction, which began in 1879. The building stands on the basement foundation of the United States Branch Gold Mint, which burned in 1878. It is significant for its architecture, which is a blend of Victorian Gothic, Italianate, Second Empire, and Classical Revival.
4. St. Luke Catholic Church  
St. Luke Catholic Church, formerly the Dahlonega Presbyterian Church, was constructed in 1899. The church is a typical Victorian-era church structure. Significant architectural details include a squared bell tower, beaded fascia boards, and pedimented porticas.
5. Vickery House  
John D. Fields constructed Vickery House, also known as the Old Fields Place, and now the Dahlonega Club, around 1860. The house is significant in the areas of architecture and education. The residence is significant architecturally as it is a Victorian-era house designed for a middle-class family. Ornamentation on the house includes turned porch posts, irregular roof lines, and beaded ceilings and wainscoting. However, the Vickery House lacks the more flamboyant Victorian-era characteristics such as turrets, bays, or elaborate shingling. The house is significant in the area of education as one of the first owners, B.P. Gaillard, was one of the most popular professors at North Georgia College from its beginnings in 1873 until his retirement in 1923.
6. Dahlonega Baptist Church  
The Dahlonega Baptist church was constructed in 1897 at a cost of \$4,200 and is located at Chestatee and Maple Streets across from the Smith House. The church is significant architecturally as it has retained its original form and squared bell tower. Details such as unique Gothic pointed arch windows with brick lintels, round Rose windows, and raised brick corner trim also contribute to the structure's

architectural significance. Colonel W.P. Price contributed \$1,000 to the construction of the church. The Baptistery under the church is lined with copper made from old stills donated to the church at the suggestion of Colonel Price.

7. Seven Oaks

The William P. Price home, also known as Seven Oaks, is significant in the areas of architecture and education. In architecture, the house is significant as it is a Georgian plan house, with four rooms over four rooms with a central hallway. This house plan was typical of the mid-nineteenth century, decades earlier than the more asymmetrical house plans popular in 1875 when the Price home was constructed.

The house still contains significant features of its original design including gabled window lintels, several original but simple mantels, and an original staircase. The Price House is significant in education as the original owner, William Price, was the President of the Board of Trustees of North Georgia College from 1870-1908 and was instrumental in the founding and nurturing of the school.

8. Galusha-Moore House

The Galusha-Moore House, located on West Main Street, was constructed in 1910. The house exhibits important architectural characteristics. Dahlonega's only four-square house is constructed of molded concrete block, often called granitoid, a scarcely used building material in the area. The house contains a two-story wrap-around veranda, dormer windows, and a central chimney protruding from a pyramidal roof.

9. Moore Cottage

The Moore Cottage was constructed in 1876 as the post-Civil War house of R.H. Moore and his wife, "Lucinda" Morrison Moore. The cottage is significant architecturally as it is a vernacular interpretation of the traditional Southern Raised Cottage, more commonly found in the coastal and piedmont areas of Georgia. Mr. Moore, a coiner at the U.S. Branch Mint from 1849-1853, also commanded a regiment in the service of the Confederacy.

10. Moore Place

Moore Place, built originally in the 1840's, was added to until reaching its present appearance around 1890. The two-story house exhibits a central hallway with equal rooms on either side, a two-story pedimented portico and paired double-hung sash windows. Of special note is the salt-box-like slope of the roof to the rear.

## B. RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

### 1. Dahlonega Commercial Historic District

The Dahlonega Commercial Historic District is an intact collection of late 19th century and early-to-mid-20th century commercial structures and several frame dwellings located around a public square with a two-story brick courthouse situated in the center. The district is significant architecturally for the intact condition of its historic structures and its distinct historic downtown environment. Architectural styles represented within the district include Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Victorian Eclectic. The Dahlonega Commercial Historic District is also significant as it has served as the commercial center since the town's establishment in 1833 and the original layout of roads and building lots continue to be utilized by the original town plan.

### 2. Park Street Residential District

The Park Street Residential is located next to the Commercial District. This neighborhood is named after an early resident, Thomas Park. This area is significant for its use of vernacular numerous vernacular buildings, some of which the original intent is obscured by numerous additions completed over the years. Secondly, this area is also significant for the broad time span represented as a residential district.

The street comprises of. Developments of the neighborhood begun from the 1840s through the 1806, though none of those residences are extant today. The early surviving residence is "Seven Oaks" (ca. 1875), a National Register of Historic Places listed residence. There most recent historic residence is the "Atkinson House" (1965) a Modern styled residence.

## C. KNOWN and POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

### 1. Dahlonega Consolidated Gold Mine

The Dahlonega Consolidated Gold Mine, located approximately one mile northeast of downtown Dahlonega, is a mining complex covering about 90 acres of mostly hillside, with some bottom land. Several historic buildings and structures are contained within this complex which include an assay building, a fire chamber and smokestack, the foundation walls of a stamp mill, and the subsurface remains of numerous buildings and structures - a chlorination plant, shaft houses, a machine shop, a boiler room, railroad tracks, sluices, and the mine itself.

The Dahlonega Consolidated Gold Mine is significant in commercial history primarily because it was one of the largest gold mines in the country at the time it was built in 1897. As the documentation of this site suggests, the

former gold mine contains potential archaeological significance and should be protected and assessed by professional archaeologists.

2. Crisson Mine

The Crisson Mine is located 2.5 miles northeast of Dahlonega on Morrison Moore Parkway East. Mining operations began there in 1847.

3. Mustering Grounds

The small one square block area which are the remains of Dahlonega's Mustering Grounds is a fraction of the original space.

## **ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

The threats to historic resources are various and often numerous. Most often the greatest threats come from demolition by neglect and abandonment of historic resources. This is closely followed by incompatible alterations or reuse. Development pressures also can negatively impact historic resources.

Protection of historic resources comes in many forms including; historic societies, historic preservation commissions, ordinances, grants, etc.