

## *Union County Historic Sites*

**John Pratt Marker** – Union County Courthouse Grounds. This marker was erected in memory of John Pratt, the inventor of the first practical typewriter in Union April 13, 1831.

**Wallace House** – 430 East Main Street. The former home of W. M. Wallace was built about 1850. Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, and his cabinet, dined at the William Wallace House in Union on April 25, 1865. The house, located on East Main Street, was built around 1850. William Wallace was a general in the Confederate Army and later was speaker of the famous Wallace House during Reconstruction in South Carolina. Davis held his last full cabinet meeting in April 1865 before heading south, escorted by 2,000 cavalymen. He was attempting to avoid Union soldiers, who wanted to arrest him. After the election of General Wade Hampton as Governor in 1876, Wallace as a member of the General Assembly was elected Speaker of the House for the Democratic Hampton faction. Opposing them was the Republican Governor Chamberlain, who with this radical group was holding the State House. In the end, Hampton and the Democratic Wallace House prevailed.

**Union County Jail** – West Main Street. The Union County jail was designed in 1823 by Robert Mills, a South Carolina native and nationally known for his design of the Washington Monument. In operation until the early 1980s, there was only one successful escape. The building currently provides space for County offices.

**Union Post Office** – 130 West Main Street. The Union Post Office was constructed in 1912. In its history, it has provided space for Federal offices and is currently the District office for Union County Schools.

**USC-Union** – East Main Street. Get Your Start in Higher Education. USC-Union occupies two historic buildings. The old Union High School, which is the USC Union administration building, located at the corner of East Main and North Church Streets, and the Central Grade School at 309 Academy Street.

There are four main National Register Historic Districts in downtown Union: Downtown Union Historic District, South Street District, East Main District and South Church Street District, along with the following properties also listed on the National Register of Historic places.

**Corinth Baptist Church** – North Herndon Street. About one block north of Main Street, Corinth Baptist Church was the first black congregation in the City of Union and was organized sometime after the Civil War. The present church building was built in 1843 and was rehabilitated in 1991. It has been renovated and enlarged several times, and the most recent renovation was completed and dedicated in celebration of the centennial of the church.

**Fairforest Hotel** – 221 East Main Street. The Fairforest Hotel is a five story building constructed in 1924-1926. The Fairforest Hotel is significant for its association with the development of the City during the 1920s, a decade characterized by unusual growth, optimism, and community pride. The building was rehabilitated into elderly housing in 1993.

**The Inn at Merridun** – 100 Merridun Place. Bed & Breakfast, Weddings, Teas, Luncheons. Merridun was built in 1855 by Colonel Keenan, which was later, the home of Colonel Thomas Cary Duncan, who represented Union County in the SC Legislature where he served in both the House and Senate. But more importantly, he built the first successful cotton mill in Union in 1893. This began the history of Union as a textile community. In addition to building Union Mill, he also built Buffalo Mill and the Union Buffalo Railroad.

**Union County Carnegie Library** – 300 East South Street. In 1905, the first Carnegie Library in South Carolina was erected in Union. The Andrew Carnegie Foundation gave the City of Union funds to build the library with the stipulation that its yearly support be included in the City's annual budget. The library houses extensive genealogical records.

**Union County Courthouse** – West Main Street. The Courthouse, constructed in 1911 – 1913, is a neoclassical two-story brick and concrete building. The center of government in Union County, this building was fully restored in the 1970s. The building features beautiful curving staircases, a courtroom with balcony and a unique indoor fountain.

**Union County Historic Museum** – West Main Street. The museum offers history of Union County and South Carolina as well as many genealogical and historical artifacts.

**Episcopal Church of the Nativity** – This church is on the corners of Church and Pinckney. Dating from 1855, this one-story rusticated granite structure is Gothic Revival in style. The windows were designed by Louis B. Tiffany; the central figure in the United States associated the Art Nouveau Movement.

**Governor Thomas B. Jeter House** – 203 Thompson Boulevard. The Jeter House was constructed in 1859 by Thomas Bothwel Jeter, former Governor of South Carolina. He represented both the South Carolina House of Representatives and the South Carolina Senate. He also served as President of the Spartanburg and Union Railroad from 1861 to 1873. It is an outstanding example of early Victorian influence on the ante-bellum architecture. The interior features a curving staircase and decorative plasterwork in the parlor ceiling. The Jeter House is now the home of Colonel (Ret.) and Mrs. W.J. Whitener.

**Fishdam** – 14.5 miles southeast of Union on the Broad River. Fishdam is a pre-historic construction of hand-fitted stones. The structure spans the Broad River in a zigzag pattern and is easily seen when the water level is low. Its origin is ancient and unknown.

**Battle of Musgrove Mill** - The Battle of Musgrove Mill was fought 15 miles southwest of Union on the west side of S. C. Highway 56. The battle was fought August 18, 1780. The American forces defeated the British forces, under Colonels Williams, Shelby, and Clark under Col. Innis. Capt. Shadrick Inman was the hero in the battle. A marker in his honor is located at the battlefield. This property was named a state park in 1999.

**Muscogee Mill Battle Site** – 15 miles southwest of Union on the west side of S. C. 56 and on the north side of the Enoree River. A Revolutionary War Battlefield dating to 1780.

**Pinckneyville** – Northwest corner of Union County. 13 miles from Union and 1.5 miles from the confluence of the Pacolet and Broad Rivers. In 1791 two Circuit Court Districts were added to the seven districts in South Carolina. It is rumored when congress was looking for a suitable site for the nation's military academy, Pinckneyville was one of the sites considered, but lost to West Point, by one vote. Pinckneyville was something of a clock-making center and included a shop owned by Seth Thomas.

**Rose Hill Plantation State Park** – 9.5 miles southeast of Union on the west side of S. C. Highway 35 at its junction with S. C. 24. Rose Hill, an upcountry cotton plantation house was built between 1828 and 1832. Rose Hill received its name because it stands on a slight rise and was noted for its rose garden, which was said to contain 100 rose bushes. The three-story house was the home of William H. Gist, often called South Carolina's Secessionist Governor. Built of solid brick, which was covered with stucco when Gist renovated it about 1860, the walls are 18 inches thick, the ceilings are high, and the woodwork throughout the house is hand carved. In 1960, the house and surrounding 44 acres became a state park and provides picnic areas and nature trails, which are open daily, from dawn to dusk. It is furnished with many Gist pieces, plus appropriate period pieces. The mansion which now appears as it may have just before the War between the States may be toured for a nominal charge Saturday and Sunday 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and weekdays by appointment. (864) 427-5966. The mansion and gardens may be rented for weddings, receptions and other special occasions. Picnic shelters are available and may be reserved in advance for a nominal fee.

**State Capital Moved to Union County** - The state capital was moved to Union County when Gen. William Sherman was headed toward Columbia at the end of the Civil War, the seat of the state government was moved to judge Thomas Dawkins's home in Union County, "The Shrubs."

**Herndon Terrace** – Herndon Terrace, which was built around 1848, was the home of John Pratt, the inventor of the typewriter. Having perfected his invention during the Civil War, it was necessary for him to go to England to protect his patent. He designed Herndon Terrace for Zacharia Herndon, whose family members were lawyers and planters. The home, now a private residence, is located off the road near the corner of Wilson and North Pinckney streets.

**Cross Keys House** - Barham Bobo built The Cross Keys House on the Cross Keys Highway in 1814. Jefferson Davis dined there in 1865. Robert and Jean Spicer, who hoped to operate one room of the house as a bed and breakfast, owned the house.

**Blackstock Battlefield** - Eleven miles west of Union on the south side of the Tyger River is Blackstock Battlefield. Efforts are underway to have the battlefield made into a state park. This battle was fought on 20 November 1780 near Blackstock's Ford on Tyger River, within the boundaries of modern-day Union County SC but also close to its border with Spartanburg County. The American forces were led by the militia general Thomas Sumter (aka "The Gamecock") while the British were commanded by Lt. Colonel Banastre Tarleton. The British claimed victory, though they suffered substantially higher casualties than the Americans. Sumter was seriously injured during the battle and was out of action for about ten weeks.

**Old Union Cemetery** – Located just past Monarch, a short distance south of Highway 49, is the Old Union Cemetery. It was the graveyard for the old Union Church from which the names for the City and County were derived. Revolutionary War heroes buried there include Colonel John Sharp, William Sharp, Christopher Brandon, William Kennedy, Jr., Colonel Thomas Brandon, Major Thomas Young, James Shadrack, and Squire William Kennedy.

**Central School** – Located at the intersection of Academy and North Church Streets, Central School, built in 1891, was the first public school building in Union. At first, this school housed the elementary grades until the 1970's when the Union County School Board closed it. The property was then acquired by the University of South Carolina – Union (USC – U). After extensive and careful restoration and renovation, the century-old structure is the proud home of the UCS-U library, administrative and facility offices. Central School is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Padgett's Creek Baptist Church** – Padgett's Creek Baptist Church was organized November 22, 1784, and is the oldest continuous Baptist Congregation in Union County.

**Buffalo Textile Community** – Located about three miles northwest of Union, the Buffalo Textile Plant and Community are considered a prime example of a textile community. They are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a model of the plant and village are part of the textile display in the South Carolina State Museum. Buffalo is one of the mills built by Colonel Thomas Cary Duncan.

**Unique Union** – Although the name Union has been given to other counties, the South Carolina place name is unique, according to historian, Dr. Allen D. Charles. The Union Meeting House near Brown's Creek was a name used to describe a cooperative method of using a single church building for different denominational groups. Other counties named Union often reflect a penchant for the national union or for the process of joining land divisions. The Union Church was the origin of the names for both the City and the County of Union.